

Amelia 1B-1

Pell City 1B

(Talk about the founding of Pell City and the role of Sumter Cogswell)

Well, I know that in 1887, there were three men in Asheville who wrote the first charter for Pell City. I think that my grandfather, William Alfred Starnes, was among the three men who wrote the charter. Once the charter was written, Mr. Cogswell made the deal with a plowman from Taledega. The town was sold. And for several years, from 1887 the town continued to grow. The pipe company came here, and there were about 5 or 6 houses built and of course we always had the hotel, the Cornett Hotel. The Cornett Hotel was here before any of them came. So things seemed to be progressing. Mr. Hazelwood, Mr. Zak Hazelwood, had a big livery stable over here on this block next to us. There were several merchants here and particularly in the Maxwell building, which is the oldest standing building in Pell City that continues to be business. The hotel, so these things moved along smoothly. But then in the late 1800's, the panic came and the pipe shop left and moved to Anniston and continues to be there today. The town was in a terrible slump. At one time, when several of the men from surrounding areas came here, they found that the Maxwell Building had goats living in it, all of the windows were out, all of the grass had grown over the top of the houses, and it was really a disaster. About that time, Mr. Cogswell came through Pell City once again on a train. He had known that when he had first made the deal about Pell City that it was moving along smoothly. He was saddened to find that the Depression had come and Pell City had become a ghost town. So he moved on once again to Taledega. A young man about 28 years old walked in again and just made a deal to buy what was left. That is when he bought Pell City. (He began to work with real estate which was his major job during those years. My grandfather, William Alfred Starnes, was a young lawyer in Asheville at that time so in 1901 he began to make plans to move to Pell City. In 1902, he moved his law office to Pell City. He and a group of men worked together very diligently to improve the city. In 1903 Dr. Martin came. When Dr. Martin came he began to buy land, buy buildings and establish the first hospital. So Avondale Mills came to town, the town began to progress a great deal. The Union State Bank came in 1903. Mr. Cogswell and Aunt Liz always said 1903 was a wonderful year for Pell City. (Dr. Martin came to town, the town was growing and I was born in 1903.) So things began to work.) It is amazing to think back and just see the amount of progress that we have here. Because I can remember when I was in elementary school and went to the school that was here where the City Hall is that we walked everyday for lunch. I walked right down that street down there. And then the

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Courthouse was just a community affair. Everybody played on the courthouse square. We were not suppose to but we skated around it. And that's where many of my age group learned to skate was there. So all of these men have contributed a great deal to Pell City. We have had just a number of.. Mr Shockley was on the city council for 18 years or 20 years. When you think about that, that was a long long time. Dr. Claude Martin was on there close to 30 years, I believe. So these men worked very diligently to see that our town grew.

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(Mr. Starnes.....)

Well, Actually I think he grew up maybe in Watsville, after he moved to Pell City, I don't know very much about his law in there, but I know when he moved to Pell City he became a big part in this community. He wrote the first code, law code for the city of Pell City in about 1919. He was the city attorney and Aunt Liz always said that he was a good friend to man. That he was a poor man's lawyer. And that he wanted justice for all. He died before I was born so I never knew him but he had 5 children. He had Thurston, who was the attorney here, Orr, who was Aunt Liz's husband, he was a lawman, Whitson, who worked at Dinum(?) and my father, Gaston Starnes, who had a filling station and several businesses here in town, and one daughter, Catherine. His wife was Selma Eaton Starnes from Cole City, too. They were in community life for many years here and he was from what I hear a excellent lawyer and saw that I town grew.

(What are some of the things that stand out as you think back about growing up here...Are there some people or some events or anything ...)

Well there was so many things. One thing that I remember is that the telephone office was called the Central Office, as you remember. Penny Harmon's father owned the telephone office and so sometime at that time it was unheard of to have three or four ways of conversation, but we did. We managed to do that when Penny was on duty. We had the movie in town was a great part of recreation. I remember that once a year that the 4-H club from the counties came to Pell City. We always met at the high school and then we had a parade to town and one of the things that we were allowed to do was go to the movie. So that was a big event. We went to the movie and we saw people from all over the county which at that time was not so easily done. We had a big 4th of July every year. I can remember the wrestling matches down by the Union State Bank, I can remember the celebrations in town that we had at that time. We were so fortunate to have parents who entertained the teenagers when I was a teenager. In this house over here, Marie Smith Turner's mother always graciously opened her house to us and we had our little get togethers over there. Then Ms. Alice Moore was another person who opened her house. Mrs. French Witten opened her house, my mother opened her house and we had a big porch when we lived on Cogswell Avenue and that was also a center of activity there. I remember Mrs. Nelson, as a teacher that I will never forget. She taught me in the 5th grade. She taught Hugh in the 5th grade and she taught Gaston in the 5th grade. So she had a lot of wit about her and we enjoyed her tremendously.

(One thing that strikes me you mentioning Mrs. Nelson...My perception is that the quality of education in Pell City has always been high....Why do you think that is?)

True...I know that one of the major things is is that we had a strong family life here. I know that there was discipline in the home and I know that the parents were interested in their children. You know that even today we are fortunate in that aspect even though we have grown, the parents and families continue to be interested in their children and in the welfare of the children and in their educational process. I think that the people here in education have always tried to select excellent teachers and we have had some wonderful ones. You can remember Mrs. Lewis and you remember Jessie Armstrong, you remember many many people who were strong teachers. But I really think that it takes the community, the family and the educational system to work together and we have been very fortunate here for that. That's why I think it remains high.

(It seems that continues if though Pell City has grown and you have a lot of people who have moved here from elsewhere who don't have the long history of ties to this area. How do you think it is that people who have not grown up here seem to become part of the Pell City family?)

Well, I think that Pell City is considered a young town. When you look at the history of other towns, you see that it is a young town. The people of Pell City have always been open to progress. Their attitude has been to welcome new people to town and once a new person comes to town, I think that they find a spot in the community and they contribute to the community and we just continuously grow from this process.

(What kind of Pell City do you hope your granddaughter grows up in?)

I hope it will remain a little of the same and that we have successful progress. I hope that the industry and the things that we get are good for environment and good for our community. I hope that our churches will remain as strong based as they have always remained. I hope that we have a little of the same, a little of the new, and little of the progress in the future.

(What do you think is the importance or the significance of this centennial year calling attention to the city's past, gathering in so much of the historical documents and all and what do you think is the significance of all of this?)

Well, I think an understanding of the past makes a successful future. Up until this point we have not had any written

material or any thing concerning our history that kids can study. I think that they learn from past mistakes..

NEW SPEAKER.....Manufacturing, Hercules Pipe....

Mr. Cogswell really laid the foundation for the development of Pell City in just the very first few formative years. It kinda reads like a novel if any body ever choose to write about the development of Pell City.

The railroad as the very early beginning.....

(I guess the real story of Pell City began when a fellow that had built a railroad into the Broken Arrow area decided to extend that railroad into Pell City. Ultimately there was a junction formed right here in Pell City of three different railroads. It was not too long after that that a group of men decided that for economic development this would be a ideal location to spend some money in. So they purchased the surrounding 400 acres and unfortunately the first attempt to establish a city in Pell City did not fair too well and ultimately it kinda went to the way side. Then in the late 1800's a young insurance executive came through Pell City, was stranded here overnight, happened to find that the property was for sell by the Pell City Development Company, so he arranged to buy the property, arranged for a group of people to come out of Tennessee and upper part of Alabama and in one days auctioned off the principal acreage of the Pell City area. Of course those fellow really intended to get something started here. The first industry, I suppose, was the Hercules Pipe Company. They built on , built a plant on what is now our 19th Street South just south of town here in Pell City. The town had begun to grow. There was a hotel here, a livery stable was put up, and a number of people began to move in to Pell City.) ~~Then of course, unfortunately, there was another problem.~~ Panic came along. A lot of people moved from Pell City. In the intervening years a number of the buildings burned and most of the population moved away. That same insurance salesman, Mr. Sumter Cogswell, came back through in around 1890, saw that the property had grown up, was astounded at what had happened to the city that he had envisioned earlier when he sold the property to the investors out of the Chattanooga area and so he decided that he would just buy the property himself and build his own city. When he got back to Atlanta, he talked t to his new bride of less than two years. They decided to buy the property, they moved to Pell City and when they departed from the train here in what is now downtown Pell City, there were only about 40 inhabitants in the whole community.) It was a very small community and Mrs. Cogswell found herself in a backwoods community after having lived in Atlanta and

Cogswell

Memphis, Tennessee and being in the social whirl of two of our adjoining states. Mr. Cogswell moved his family into one of the local hotels the day they arrived in Pell City until he could get the additions added to a two room house that he had chose to move into here in Pell City. Of course once those additions were completed, they went ahead and moved into the house that still stands and is probably the most historic and most prominent old time structure that we still have standing in Pell City.

Over the years, I believe that Mr. Cogswell probably had a grand design for Pell City in the back of his mind. For in doing some of the research necessary to write the centennial history of Pell City, I found that he did things in a sequence that made a lot of sense. The very first thing that he went after was the mill. Of course at the same time there was some talk about establishing a courthouse here in Pell City. So with the establishment of the courthouse and the cotton mill, the true story of Pell City actually began at that time. Mr. Cogswell spent an entire lifetime trying to lay the foundation which I honestly believe is the true foundation, the real foundation upon which the future growth of Pell City has continued to depend on. He not only established the mill and used those people to make a great financial contribution in this area to the growth of the town, he was instrumental in getting the courthouse located here in Pell City and relocated here after a court battle that lasted about 4 or 5 years when the court was actually declared unconstitutional.)

After the mill and the courthouse was established here, we were fortunate to have a young newspaper man come to Pell City that established his newspaper and that in itself was a great contribution to the growth of Pell City. Then of course, Mr. Cogswell foresaw the need for a bank. He established the bank, served many many years as mayor, on the county commissioners, or on the city council of Pell City. In 1926 they established the water system with water coming from the Dunlap Springs area and then of course in later years, as the industry continued to grow in Pell City and the town began to grow, we were fortunate to get a lot of new industry in the later years.)

Alabama Power Company built the Logan Martin Dam and backed the lake up in the mid '60's things really began to hum in the Pell City area. Of course the lake in itself was a tremendous industry that was just dumped into Pell City's lap and of course fortunately we took advantage of it. A lot of our population today can be ..go back...can be attributed to the growth of the residential areas around Logan Martin Lake. Then the movement was started here in Pell City to build our Civic Center and which has really become of real importance to the entire south St. Claire County area. Just recently our city park was established and dedicated which I think

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will be a great boom and public relations item for future growth in the area. In the last few years we've been really fortunate to get a number of diversified industry to move into Pell City and at the present time we have some place in the neighborhood of 30-32 industries within the city limits and 2 or 3 scattered on the outskirts. Of course with the industrial park property that we have available now, with the real facilities and the very nominal price that the property can be sold for and of course all the other things that Pell City can sell to industrial prospects, we reasonably expect that our industrial growth will really continue and maybe even quicken in the future. We are really fortunate to have some really great industrial sites, rail sites, non-rail sites for anybody that might be interested in coming to Pell City. Of course with the lake, the living conditions, all those things rolled into one, with the transportation available, the rails, the interstate highway, we feel like we have something to offer in the Pell City area.

(Easy for newcomers to come in...Why???)

I moved to Pell City in about 24 years ago and just immediately I found that my wife and I were just accepted readily by the community. We got involved in community affairs. I got acquainted with a lot of older families here. Pell City has a pride. I think that Pell City has wanted to grow ever sense the very beginning date that the Cogswell's moved to Pell City and I think that a lot of people here, especially of some of the older families knew that the growth would be really great for Pell City. Of course with the establishment of the lake and the number of people who moved in almost immediately, the population began to swell I mean really fast. There has always been a lot of things going on in Pell City. The town does have a real pride. I think that a lot of people here are really proud of the progress and I think that a lot of people that have moved here in the last 15-20 years have certainly contributed to some of that growth and addition to some of the pride that you will find in the Pell City community today.

(How does community balance history with the growth...)

Well, we have had so many people that have moved into here into Pell City from not only other places in the state of Alabama but from a number of our other states, from as far away as New York. And a lot of those people have contributed greatly to what has happened just recently in Pell City. They are active in the civic organizations, the churches, in all facets of life in Pell City and it seems like that Pell City is just one of those places where people from all walks of life and from all the states and other locations that move into Pell City, they just seem to mesh into one good operating entity and everyone pushes for the growth of Pell

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City and the prosperity of Pell City. I think that even the newcomers have a certain sense of pride in the accomplishments Pell City and in what is happening and what will hopefully will continue to happen.

(What do you see as the value of this year long centennial celebration?)

I think that our centennial celebration even though it may last for a year will certainly be a tremendous benefit, especially to the local citizens because so many of our local citizens especially the younger ones are not aware of the heritage, the history of Pell City. It has made a lot of people become aware of how the beginnings of Pell City began, what they should be proud of, certainly I hope that it gives some people some incentive to save some of the historic, few historic remaining things that we have left in Pell City. Because very little is left that has been here for a long, long time. I think that if the younger people can establish a relation with Pell City and relate to the roots and the history of Pell City they themselves will grow up and continue that pride that has been.....

New Speaker:

In 1919, B.B.Commer come to Pell City and bought the Pell City Manufacturing Company which they changed the name to Avondale Mill. The Commer family was so nice to the people and the people and their company. They built a hospital, nursery, kindergarten and school. That was for the Avondale Mill employees. Then they built the ice house, laundry in Pell City and Avondale both used that. They were very interested in recreation. They built a softball park. They had one of the best bands in Alabama. Another thing that Mr. Commer done, he believed in vacation and giving the people a chance to travel and look. He bought a place in Florida and they named it Camp Helen. Back when I was small, at a younger age, my family, 5 of us went to Camp Helen for transporation, for food and good time for a whole week it costs \$11.00. Avondale Mill Sun was the paper we had here at our mill for the employees. That put it in things about our city, our town, and about our own community and then information about the Avondale throughout the whole company use. Avondale's homes were very nice. Houses in the Avondale area they had water, gas, sewer, paved sidewalks, and paved streets before the city of Pell City had it. The Commer's were very nice to all the employees and we had so many benefits working for Avondale. Avondale is what made Pell City what Pell City is now. In the late 1930's my mother come to work for Avondale Mills to help assist my father in educating that bunch of young-uns we had. About

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that time my mother worked 25 years in Avondale Mill in Pell City. She got a good many pins and different trip and things while she worked at Avondale at Pell City. One of the very important day in Avondale life, or an important thing that happen in Avondale. In 1948, July 3rd, Louie Clayton Hammick was hired to work for Avondale and on the 4th day of July, it was a holiday. The first time they had a 4th of July holiday except for World War II. I always said, they were so glad to get a Hammick to work in Avondale Mill that they give us the whole day off for a holiday. I don't know if that is so or not. Avondale during World War II, they made tent good, they make denim for the Navy and tent good for the Army. In 1963, they redone Avondale Mill, put air conditioning and we went off of denim during that same time and around 1964 we completely off of denim. We are on cordoray and drape good. Then 1967 (?) was an outstanding day for Avondale Mill. They put in a zero defect. They want us to have high quality, top quality with no defects in it. And the goal was do it right the first time. In 1971, I got a zero defect award for which we went to Williamsburg, VA. where all the SP (?) of Avondale Mill. Then....

By me working for Avondale Mill I built a house when I was 25 years old, have 5 bedrooms, I own a good bit of property in the old Pell City area. Another thing that Avondale did for me, they turn around to help me educate my children. My daughter, Jeannie Hammick, she is a school teacher. She spent 5 years on the mission field in Costa Rica. Burt, Jr. is a lawyer. He finished..got a degree in accounting at UAB, and then he got a law degree at the University of Alabama, then he turned around and went to Emory University and got a masters in taxing law. I have worked for Avondale for 41 years, July 3rd will be 42 years I have been with Avondale mill. I am now assistant roll cleaner in the spinning room. I have enjoyed working for Avondale mill. If I had my life to go over with I would come to Avondale Mill and raise my family and my life here has been very good days. If if hadn't been for Avondale Mill we wouldn't have a nice Pell City where all the convenience that we have at this time. I am Louie Hammick (?) talking here at Avondale Mill.

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(Over the course of the years, as the mill has gone through evolution, leading edge)

I think, I am a relatively new comer to Pell City. (I was not able to see the past but I am here to see the future and it is exciting. The thing that has stayed the same of course Avondale Mills textile business just like any body else we have to totally upgrade continuously to be competitive in the industry. There is one thing that is my opinion that has stayed the same and that's the people element. We still like to hire family because we know when we get a good employee that, someone such as Louie, that has been here 42 years, well you know that that is a good associate by his work record. So that is the thing that has stayed the same, the people, so yes, the machinery is totally updated and is continually changing, but that's the one thing that's not changed is the family element and the people.)

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(As a newcomer....How do you feel about the small town...how is it being a newcomer...)

I think that is the thing that is most impressive to me about Pell City. I've been here less than 2 years and it is like the town has just totally opened their arms. I think the reason that is is that it is so continually changing and new people are coming in, new businesses are locating in Pell City and it is definitely, you hear so many times well it is on the move, but I think that that totally characterizes Pell City. It is a city on the move and the thing that gives it a lot of charm and a lot of special place in everybody's heart is that it has still held on to the old and it has still proud of the past and has learned from the past, but looking to the future. I've lived in several communities after graduating from college and been in them but I have never been in any place that is more opens up their arms and opens up their community to new comers. I think your statement is very true that a lot of places that you go into in fact, my home town that I will always love and be very dear to me, my family, I'm from Ashland a little town 25-30 miles from Pell City, great community to live and grow up. But there is also a side of it that says somewhat closed to newcomers. I was a little fearful of that when I came to Pell City, wondering well, what's it going to be like. It is not that way.

(What do you see as the future of Pell City...as a business/manufacturing man's view?)

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I think the thing that Pell City is so right for business and for industry. I think that it is a situation that Pell City is going to grow in spite of everything. In fact it is just destined to grow. I think the future here we'll see more hi-tech jobs. Noting to Contel, the telephone industry, and their location here and their headquarters here, I think that you will see more of that, more of the hi-tech type business and again I think that that is part of the charm. You still got the manufacturing, and that is on one side and then the other. I think that is what makes it so special. You've got a great mix, you have both.

Louie....

We have two great highways, interstate 20 going east and west, and highway 231. You got a easy way into Pell City. Easy way out for trucking and bring stuff in. We are just 32 miles from the heart of Birmingham, a nice big town where you can easy shop and here from Pell City. We have got good schools, good ball teams, and good people. We are very friendly people here at Pell City.

(What do you see as the value of this centennial celebration?)

We are bring the people together. Our newcomers is fitting in and wanting to see what the town had looked like for years and years and they are really taking a good part and they..everyone is just kinda a neighbor type people here in the town. We are hoping to bring in more industry and more people to our area.

(What is value of this centinnial celebration?)

I think I can echo similiar comments that Louie made. It is just a chance to bring everybody together. It is an exciting time to look to the past and be proud of what we have accomplished but not only that but it is to look to the future. I think that we have a great past but the thing I am so excited about is the future. It is wide open and it is happening and that is the thing that pleases me. It is, like Louie said, it is a time to come together and I'm seeing a lot of that. We've got progressive leadership I feel in the community and they are working hard to make it a better place to live and I have, in just the two years I have been here, I have seen changes, growth and the statement I made a while ago, that it is growing in spite of anything that could be done. It is so right for industry and so right for growth. It is happening all around us.

(Anything.....)

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Nothing but support the centennial, support the community.
It is just an exciting time and I'd hate to miss it. I'd
like for everybody to be a part of it.

Louie...

I thank you....

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Paul Turner

When was it you came?

1938 ... September, I came to this area as a school teacher down to Easonville which is now under 14 feet of water I believe...well, it'll just a little crossroad practically with a TJ Harmond store, the main General store, and there was another little store, Harvey Davis had a filling station store, that was just about it, and a post office, cotton gin, Methodist Church, and our school.

We heard about the old houses that were swallowed up with the lake...remember any of them?

Yea, Grover Waitte home was one there and there was a big building, I don't know if the Harmond's owned it. I don't know who had owned it prior to their ownership of it. And Mrs. Spradley had a old home next to the school house with a pecan orchard sort of on it. I had a time keeping the boys out of it.

You remember any stories of that period, anything colorful?

Well, that's reaching back 50 years, Jerry, and uh, we had a good little community there with just the usual things happening.

How did you go from school teaching to get involved with the banking industry?

Well I was at Easonville from '38 to '42 out brake of World War II and I volunteered. After Pearl Harbor, I was inducted in the Army in June of 1942 and I spent 30 something months in the Army. And when I got back, Mr. Gibson who was the Superintendent of Education had an opening for me as Transportation Supervisor and Building Maintenance. The war times had prohibited from having getting school buses and so, they had used private ownership prior to that time and we put in a county owned system, bought 24 buses at one time. We went up in Indiana and brought them back. They were Chevrolets. And the county owned about 3 or 4 buses at that time. We used school boys quite a bit in our program in those days.

You brought 26 buses down from Indiana...

Yea, and after that in the early 50's we started a St. Clair Development Committee, Mr. Donald Commer was instrumental in that. And our purpose was to improve St. Clair county as much as we could. We had many programs, one was community improvement, cleaning up cemeteries over the

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county, fruit trees, the orchards, Mr. Commer believed everybody should have a fig tree in their backyard. He was very generous to the community in purchasing things and we doled it out. We worked with the farmers, the cattlemen, and we had a scholarship program that we would assist anyone that wanted to go to college we felt like they should go. And if they didn't have enough money well then we provided a small scholarship. We had several people to go to Jacksonville State, Auburn, Alabama, old Howard College at that time. Mr. Commer was footing the bill most of that. And we had a Library, county Library in 1955, we organized St. Clair Library system. I believe at that time Mrs. Mullin was state librarian, Shirley Brothers was working in it, and Elizabeth Beguard. We worked with those people. They uh, Joe Kilgrove was mayor of Pell City at that time and he provided quarters for us. First it was in the old annex building, I don't know whether you remember it, back of the old school down there. We had Frankie Gilcrease Oughtfry was the first librarian of the county, and Frank Palmer was the first book mobile driver. Those were the only two employees. Jerry, our first budget was \$6000 a year. We paid the libarian \$3300. She left the school, she was teaching in Ashville and took over that and Frank, I think we paid him maybe \$1800 a year. Avondale Mills, St. Clair County Board of Education, and the commissioner of St. Clair County, Judge Foreman was the chairman then, they paid \$1800 each for 3 years thats \$5400 a year, and the city furnished the building. The first 18 months the state furnished the book mobile and so all we had was the expense of gasoline and insodontals. And also the state furnished the first books, I believe \$3000, that was a lot of money then and bought a lot of books. Then one of our projects of development committee was St. Clair Federal Savings and Loan Association at that time. And we applied for a charter in 1955 and it was granted in 1956 of October. All of the partishioners of the for the charter are dead except me, I'm the remaining. Lewis Harrison was the first managing officer and Lewis developed wasn't lukemia but some sort of a cancer of the spine, died, and they talked me into coming in as the managing officer of the St. Clair Federal 1957. So I've been with that ever since I've retired. But getting back to when I came to this part of the country in 1938 to Easonville, Pell City was not the I don't believe it was the largest city in St. Clair county. That Ragland I believe had more population. The city limits of Pell City was just one mile, one square mile, and I believe the center of the town was where Thurmond Hinnerger built a house over here back of the courthouse. There were no paved streets in Pell City except I guess Cogswell, old 78, that was the pavement. The city limits did not go to the high school. Actually Pell City High School was outside the city limits and there were no sewerage system to the high school at that time. Over to the east, well to the Baptist Church, 231, then I guess a half a mile and across hill in to Glenn City we had a cross railroads then the other ways and

that was Pell City. Probably some wheres a 1000 population.
And the city leaders at that time?

Mr. Cogswell was the mayor at that time, and Mr. U.C. Martin was on the council I know, now I don't know when all these men served but Jack DeGaris was serving on it, Loyd Garrett, Lester Smith was on it, Mr. Shockly was one of the members of the city council. I think we had a two man police force, Mr. Houston was the chief, and maybe had one patrolman and the utility department of the city was Mr. Joe Lewis and James Tyus. And they had one pickup truck that was Pell City in those days. The old courthouse stood up there. Had a World War I cannon I think sitting or artilery sitting on the lawn.

Joe's been wondering where that cannon went...do you know?

I don't know where that thing, probably in a scrap pile some place. But Mase and Jones was the department store, of course the old Pell City Drug was still it was there, Union State Bank was on the corner up here. That was our only financial institution then until we organized St. Clair Federal in 195 - it opened in 1957. A lot has happened. Roger Moore was our principal of the Pell City High School.

You worked closely with Miss Roberts over the years...

Worked with Miss Roberts uh very, very close over the years especially after World War II when I got back and was working out of the superintendent's office. We tried to visit every school every at least once a week, Mr. Gibson or myself to see if they had any needs we could talk them out of or something like that and of course, I was pretty busy with the transportation program getting it started because we did our own maintenence on the buses. Then we did our own building maintenence. We had a crew, Carl Riddobotton headed it up and we started putting in door restrooms in all the schools. We didn't have any. Avondale Mills probably had the only one in the county, maybe Springville, but then we put in restrooms and lunchrooms for the schools. Of course, Pell City had some very progressive people, Lee and Joe Kilgrove, I think was one of the finest mayors, Sam Burt was a very fine mayor here, and Mr. Frank Embry, Mr. Thurnston Starnes, Mr. Thurnston Starnes took over for Mr. Cogswell after I'd gotten here. And by the way, I got married in Pell City. I had never been to Pell City much before that. My wife was from Mississippi, she's teaching school, started teaching school at Andolusia. That's pretty far away far so we just talked one night over the phone and she came up that Saturday and we spent the day getting married, on a Saturday, October 1, 1938, so we've been married 51 years.

While you were talking about the school system, it seems to

me even though Pell City has not been an especially wealthy area the quality of education has always been quite high. What has been the secret of that? Attracting dedicated teachers, good administrators, and providing quality education for the boys and girls here...

Apparently you had to marry them to get them here...(laughing)...

Well, Avondale Mills had affect, a lasting affect on education here. They provided their own school in the county system, they supplimented their teachers. So we had a little higher pay there and Avondale took care of the Junior High well up to the Junior High. ~~And we had some dedicated leadership in education~~ Mr. Roy Gibson was an outstanding educator, and Miss Iola Roberts hadn't been a better principal than Miss Iola. Now she stood for betterment of the kids and giving them opportunities for not only to learn reading and writing but also music and the art. Wayne Spradley is sort of an example of that because she encouraged him quite a bit. We've had some good musicians coming out. We had some good high school people, Mr. Roger Moore was a good principal, a Mr. Childs, Herb Childs we called him when he was playing football at Southern he was called "baby", "baby Childs", he was an outstanding preacher, and Orville Duran was a good one and the people I guess it was just a good breed of folks around here. Then you have the valley that's fed up Easonville and Cropwell area, those were, that's the oldest parts of the county so the oldest families that we had came from there. And Pell City when we got the city system of course we had the sales tax to suppliment that and the people here went over and above the advolowing taxes for support of the schools. I'd say dedication of teachers had a lot to do with it, good families.

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Having been here 50 years and involved with building the First Savings and Loan and now as the chairman of the board and building a new building here, how do you view Pell City's economic future?

(Well, Pell City, I think we are reaching the threshold of our opportunities. I think the future is just out there. It's tremendous. On our development committee, Heflon Haynes was a member, an official from Avondale Mills, he started the dam here and he said "we're on the threshold of something" and it's proven that. We are of course a bedroom of Birmingham but we have our own industries here too. We've had Avondale Mills, a continuous opperation for 90 years or something and the future is what we're going to make from the citizens of this community. I read in the paper recently that we've triple our population during the 80's and get out on that highway at times by george, and you can believe it. We can't help but grow because of our location.)
Transportation, we have the I-20, we have the railroad, it

used to be the Southern, I don't know what it is now but the trains go through everyday especially at night with their whistles blowing all night, and we have a fine airport here with soon be extended to take care of corporate jets flying in. We've attracted some real fine industry that of course Sandy Hill out here is good, of course ConTel coming out here recently, and I can't think of all the others in the industrial park over here but there's more that will be coming. And if we can get a good shopping area here well I think we can make it go. That'll, people say get a Walmart or a K-Mart or something like that, well any most kind of mart will suit me if we can get it here and get it going because I was recently in a Walmart in Leed's and about 2/3 of the tags were St. Clair county tags. The schools could live off the sales tax on an outfit like Walmart. But the future looks good to me Jerry, real good.

You mentioned the lake a few minutes ago, how do you see that changing Pell City when it came in ... any major changes?

Well, yes, we saw it at bringing people here to live here and people are going to spend some of their money where they live. And the influx of population from the Birmingham area well from all over to this attractive water front we have on this side of the river, I think it surpasses the Tias-diga side quite a bit, but people make your community. And we have some mighty fine folks moving in here.

Several people that we have interviewed have talked about Pell City as being a kind of place where even new comers feel almost immediately that their apart of the community and have an opportunity to participate in civic activities and other things ... what do you think, is there something unique about Pell City or the people in Pell City that makes it so easy for new comers to become apart of the community?

Well, people have always been to me friendly here and the people's that are coming in are well their upper, upper strata people and their well educated. And they like to participate in affairs and things of the community and I think its been a real good situation that's developed and of course we offer a lot in Pell City. I think one of the finest city facilities in the state of Alabama is on our lake down here, the city park that was dedicated last Sunday. We have like I said we have their not far from air transportation if they want to go someplace, rail transportation, our goods can be shipped in and shipped out by rail or by trucks so its. I've found that these people that's coming in alot from the North those fellows you couldn't hire to go back to live up there. They love it here and they love the warmth of the people, of course the warmth of the climate is something else like right now. We just feel like we've a big family around here. We know everybody or used to. And we have good churches Ty. We've had them

over the years. We've had some mighty fine ministers in this town. You've got to have some morals and Christianity and things of that nature to help a community to grow and be something.....Ya'll asked them, I've rambled on. I don't know what I've said but...

One thing historically, mill towns have a division between the town folks and the mill folks and the country folks. And that's broken down over the years, but back in the 20's and 30's and 40's was there a since of separate communities then?

Well there was to some extent Jerry. Like you say there was something, I don't know if there was a wall between them or not, but there was differences. See for years and years Avondale village was separate from Pell City and had their own water system, and the whole bit. But I don't whether it was in the 60's or late 50's we had a movement on here that was successful of combining the village Oakridge at that time and Eden down here into one city. And that's when Pell City became the largest city in St. Clair county. But I think that had a great affect on the relationship between the people of Pell City and the village and the surrounding areas.

You mentioned Oakridge and you live in an area called new Oakridge, you remember Joe Dolby

Oh, Joe Dolby's the one that did that ran all that water over there. Of course its in a little line but there was water. And Manning Waring, M.G. Waring was the mayor after Joe Dolby. I believe Manning was the mayor when they consolidated the cities. He participated in affairs. And when we organized the Library board we had representations of all sections on that first Library board of which had seven, about seven members. I know Manning Waring was one of them, and Faith Henderson was representing a group of PTA's I believe, and we had of course Mr. Commer was in it. I don't know, we've had some good leadership here.

The Commer's keep coming up and I guess they had as much economic and cultural influence as anybody on the town and the Roberts, can you think of any other who were cultural leaders or helped build ... I know when I grew up I got a feeling that we got exposed to a lot more cultural things than most small towns...

Yes, well Miss Roberts was the main leader in that but all through out the city we had fine people. Of course I in those days knew more teachers than anybody, like Jude Lewis was here for years and like I mentioned Mr. Childs and Mr. Duran and Mr. Moore and it's hard for me to on the spur of the moment to come out with the names of people who have been influential in cultural line but you take Mr. Baird Jones was very well known man here. He was a leader, and his wife of

course started the DAR thing here and we've had Miss Eubanks and that developed this Library to what it is. But I don't know, I just couldn't keep getting the names.

Is there anything else you'd like to say we didn't give you the chance to say?

No, I don't know, I think I talked too much without any organization to what I was saying. I was just rambling but Pell City is different city from 50 years ago. We have some of the same people but we have same good people and more good people here to help us out. Is that it?

Hugh Williamson

One of the things that has just come up in talking to Mr. Turner and a few other people are some observations of the quality of education in Pell City. You look at the area and we're not a wealthy area by any stretch of the imagination but yet we seem always to have provided to the children of the area a very high quality of education. You think there's something unique here, has it been in the quality of administration, or the quality of the teachers that have been attracted that has given us quality of education?

I think the quality of the teachers has probably the most important part. We've been able to attract some good teachers. We've been able to attract teachers who've grew up here and who have a selfish interest so to speak in the school system because it gave them their education and therefore their willing to try to do what they possibly can to improve the educational program for their children and for the other citizens of the city.

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What role do you think the educational system has played in the growth and development of Pell City over the years?

I think really having a good school system attracts industry, attracts commercial establishments, and it attracts people.

In the 50's and 60's we combined Avondale schools and became well gone through a couple of transitions over the years to come to the point where we now have a city system, how do you see that? Has that improved our quality of education? Are we in a better position than in the 60's?

Certainly! To a great extent...the combination of all the elementary schools, at one time we had Cropwell Elementary school, had Iola Roberts well Pell City Elementary school, and Avondale school. We brought all those things

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together under the title of Iola Roberts well at that time South St. Clair Elementary school. And then I think in the early 60's we re-named the school Iola Roberts school for the I guess the benefits of the people who loved and knew Iola Roberts. And she served 50 years here in this community. And as a result of the combination of all these schools into one large school, we were able to offer those children things like music, and art, and this type thing that they had not been getting in a small school.

Like all small southern towns up until the 60's we segregated systems, can you sort of give us a little background on how the black and white schools were meshed together and how those two systems were integrated?

I'll never forget the day after my boss at that time, O.D. Duran died, and his son came to me and brought his briefcase. And I opened the briefcase and there was some work in there that he had been doing towards the zoning this area and had all the children living in this area would go to at that time St. Clair County Training school, all these over here would go to Iola Roberts school, these on this side of town would go to Cropwell, and this type thing, and I thought this probably helped caused his heart attack. Because he was under the gun from a federal court order to do this and I thought this won't work. I said theres only one way to do this thing, and thats to make everybody equal and to pair these schools. Have certain grades at the old St. Clair County Training school which we renamed the Pell City Intermediate school, have certain grades at Iola Roberts, have certain grades down at Eden, and that way everybody will be exposed equally. So that's what we did and it worked very, very smoothly.

You mentioning Mr. Duran, and I remember him as my Junior High school principal and High School principal, what was his role in the school system here? What were some of his contributions over the years?

Well, uh, I remember one thing, O.D. Duran started the first small kids football program. He was very interested in sports and he also had a very high moral character, and imparted that to his teachers and his co-workers and his students. And he was elected superintendent of education and served 2 years and then very un-timely died after serving 2 years.)

What a, another thing that I recalled having gone to school here were the annual inspection day programs. Could you shed a little insight on what were the purpose of those programs and how they might have affected the quality of education here?

Well the purpose of those programs was to more or less

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show off what people were doing at the different Avondale plants. They not only had them here, they had them at Alex city, and Sysacagua, and where ever Avondale had a plant they had inspection day. And all the Avondale people would come in and go through the plant, they would go through the communities surrounding the plants, and then they would go to the school for a program. And of course Miss Iola Roberts loved this. And she started very, very, a lot of people on their careers by having them take part in those programs and to more or less feel like they were a part of the community and they were helping to show off what this community was all about.

I wonder if you might sort of hit some high points of how this area has changed over the years. You can recall when it wasn't quite what it is today...

I can recall when the population of Pell City, Pell City proper was less that a 1000 people. And according to the projections of this present administration we may approach 19,000 in the 1990 cencus. I loved it as a small town. I love it even more as a larger town. I think probably Avondale Mills has been the most stable affect as far as employment in this community. A lot of our people go out of town to work but with the coming of the lake, when Alabama Power Company constructed Logan Martin Dam and the lake happened, it became not only an attractive place for industry, it became an attractive place for people to live. And I think probably the lake had more effect as far as the growth of the town than any one single thing. It not only provides recreation, it provides beautiful home sites for people who work in Birmingham but want to live in a small town.

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Going back to Avondale Mills for a minute, they played a number of years a significant financial role in the school system, did they not provide some assistance for education...

Absolutely, absolutely. They, Avondale Mill at one time was furnishing us a building that housed approximately 450 students. Avondale Mills rented that building to St. Clair County Board of Education at that time for \$50.00 a month. They provided the lights, they provided the heat, they even provided janitorial service. There's no, there's no way to place a monitarial value on the contribution of Avondale Mills to our school system, our local school system. At one time the St. Clair County Board of Education did not even possess a school building in Pell City. The old Pell City Elementary School where the City Hall stand today was built by the city of Pell City. The old High School had burned which incidently was built by the people of Pell City and turned over to the County Board of Education, Iola Roberts was not yet constructed, so Avondale Mills provided the biggest portion of the education system as far as facilities

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was concerned.

Up until recently, the schools in Pell City were part of the St. Clair County School system or school district, but now the city has its separate school system is that correct?

That's right...

What were some of the events that led up to that decision, and how do you think that will effect the quality of education in years to come?

With no doubt in my mind that the time was right for Pell City to have its own school system. The people were dissatisfied with the progress of the system under the county and they were determined that they were going to make things better for their people. And at that particular time I happened to be mayor and I was also Assistant Superintendent of the county system, so it got to be right scary to be in a situation where the people on one hand were demanding that we have better schools and I was trying to hold the county system together. I finally made up my mind that the only way that Pell City was going to better itself educationally was to have its own system. And we made the decision and thats the way we went.

What a, you mentioned the fact you have served as mayor, what were some of the significant things that happened during that time....either because of your administration or in spite of it or...(laughing)...

Well, I guess one of the most significant things was the construction of our sewage treatment plant. The city of Pell City had been under the gun from the environmental protection agency and the waste management people in the state and the federal government. And I recall getting a letter from the state no the federal government stating unless we proceded with plans immediately to construct a new sewage treatment facility the city would be fined \$1000 per day. So several mayors had been under this gun but we finally decided to bite the bullet and go ahead and issue a bond. The issue we got the federal grant to do the major portion of it. But we had to issue a bond issue some where in the neighborhood of \$1,500,000.00 to help complete this thing. But without this thing nothing would be possible in this city now as far as new industry, new commercial establishments, new residential areas, because we were under a federal court order not to hook anyone else up to our present sewage system. And everyone used to blame Avondale Mills when they passed by that old plant, they'd say that's the dye, that's the dye, coming out of the Avondale Mills going into that creek...it was not. It was raw sewage flowing into the Coosa River. But now that problem is solved, and I'm happy to have had a part in it.

Moving on to a more historical perspective we of course in the course of interviews the Cogswell name and Starnes come up frequently in terms of men who have been significant forces in history of Pell City, I wonder if there are some other people that stand out in your mind as having played a significant role in government or finance or social life or made some significant contribution to Pell City down through the years?

Yes, there are alot of families in this town who have had a very important affect on this city. The Embrys, Mr. Frank Embry, has served as mayor of this city at one time, he showed me a letter he got approving a gas system for Pell City back in I think 1938. It was during the Roosevelt adminstration and he proudly showed me this letter stating that this had been approved and signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt who was president of the United States at that time. And the Holidays have been a very, very important not only in the business but also in the religious area of our city. Miss Molly Holiday was one of my favorite people and she and Mr. Roy would used to pick me up every Sunday morning and take me to Sunday School. I'll never forget one time I was about 9 or 10 years old, and when I came back my mother asked who all went to Sunday School with you today? I said just me and Molly and Roy. (laughing) But other individuals there have been alot people who have had affects on, Mr. E. H. Childs was my High School principal and probably had more influence as far as me going into education as any one single individual because he was my high school principal and I admired him and he encouraged me. And after my fathered died he more or less was a father figure for me.)

What about a, we were sitting in here today looking through one of Jack Locks scrapbooks ...of course we were talking about Pell City but certainly there were lot of rural, agricultural area around us. I imagine his influence on the lives of a lot of boys down through the years would be significant ...

(Professor Jack Lock was a unique individual. I've never seen a man who gave of himself so unselfishly. I remember during World War II when so many of his students were in the service, he wrote those people every week, every week, every boy that had gone through one of his classes he sent letters to. He wrote the same letter, he would duplicate them, but he would let them know what was going on on the home front. And encouraging them to come back safe. He was an influence in my life and not only in the fact that I took agriculture when I was in Pell City high school but he was my next door neighbor for about 10 years. After I grew up and married and had children of my own, and he took alot of time with my son. And I'm thankful for the time he did and the influence that he had on my son.

Shifting to the Centennial itself, what value do you think or what benefits or what ever do you hope will come out of this year's centennial celebration for Pell City?

I think probably we learn from history and if we can show where we have been and where we have come to and try to focus on where we're going to that this will be one of the most important events that has ever taken place in the city of Pell City.

We spent some delightful time with your granddaughter yesterday, and as you think about her and as she grows up and if she should decide to stay in Pell City, what kind of Pell City do you hope she has?

I hope she has one where the finest school system not only the state of Alabama but the United States exist. I hope she has the advantage of being able to better herself socially and to find employment if that's what she desires, and I hope most of all that she realizes a sense of history and what her family means to her. One thing we need to focus on I think in this next generation is the importance of a close family ties. We need to make sure all of our families live together, socialize together, and that they bring out values that they have realized.)

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If it would be possible to do this, to distill in one descriptive term or just a few words, how would you describe Pell City today?

Pell City is a mixture of many interest, it's becoming a small metropolopolis more or less. It has so many people from so many different backgrounds. But this is good because the more people you have and the more diverse their backgrounds, the more cosmopolitan your city's going to become and more that the city is going to progress not only from the talents that these people bring to it but from the talents of the individuals that have been here all their lives.

Is there anything else you'd like to say we haven't given you a chance to say?

No, I can't think of anything. I think you pretty well covered it Ty.

You served the crucial period when the schools were intergrated and of course you grew up in Pell City when it was a totally segregated town and now in the 90's its totally integrated town, have you ever, have the race relations been pretty harmonious, has there been pretty good progression there, has there ever been any real strife here?

There was strife on a couple of different occasions during the integration process. I recall one in 1970-71 when

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we had to close school for about 10 days. We formed a bi-racial committee and we got some of the more influential people in the black community together with some of the influential people in the white community and were able to settle down these people and get things moving again. We had another little flare up approximately 2-3 years later. We had the bi-racial committee in action and they immediately came in and helped to settle this problem. I think probably one of the people who have helped to more or less pour oil on the trouble waters more than anyone else is Professor Walter Kennedy. And he was a very, very influential person in the black community and he worked with us very closely and was able to steer us in the right directions.

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Hugh Holiday

(talking) What do you see Pell City is going to be like 5 years, 10 years, 15 years down the road as oppose to what it is today?

I'm very optimistic about it. I see us continuing to grow and of course I think we have a quality of life here now thats unsurpassed and of course I'm interested in maintaining that quality of life. You know for short periods lived in other parts of the state, lived in Birmingham for a short while, of course I don't think Birmingham has anything on us in terms of quality of life. In terms uh of course we don't have the retail stores and things like that. Of course that may be being so close to Birmingham may be part of the problem but in terms enjoy leisure time I certainly think Pell City is a great place to live, a great place to grow up. If you had kids I can't think any other place in any other place that I'd want to raise them. You have the good school system and it sort of a area that I had growing up that the parents can keep up with their kids. You know its not like a big city and they go off and their gone at night and you don't know where they are. Here if you're out the next morning when I was growing up remember anything I went out and did at night my grandparents or parents would know about it by 7:00 the next morning. And I think thats good.

Let me ask you more about that...What was it like growing up in Pell City? What was Pell City like when you were a boy?

It was I was just trying to think of course I played little league baseball, anything you wanted to do. I remember that uh my cousin and I when we were in High School we enjoyed hunting back then. Of course, I say back then ... this was in the 60's, within 30 minutes we would get out at 3:00 in the afternoon within 30 minutes we could be out somewhere hunting quail. A lot of thats gone but of course thats because of the residential development in the area. It was a great place to grow up. At the time I figured that everybody knew my business and all that and I couldn't stand that, but I really enjoyed it. I wouldn't trade it for anything. Like I said, I think I was afforded every opportunity growing up here in terms of school. In terms of recreation, I know Mr. Williamson who just left here a few minutes ago, I know he was one of the people I admired because he was one of the men who took an interest in us. He helped us organize sort of an informal little football league one time and we all played in that. And there were some other people like that took an interest that I really appreciate. I have a high regard for today because they took the time to get involved in activities like baseball, football, basketball, things like that. And of course you had Logan Martin back in the 60's it came into being or in existence. It was just a good place. And probably plus the

school I guess that uh I went off to college and I don't think that I was far behind anyone when in other words out of some of the schools in Birmingham. So the school system here was a good school system.

You mentioned your family and of course your family has a tradition of leadership and public service in the Pell City area. I wonder if you might highlight some of the contributions your family has made to Pell City.

I don't know about leadership. I like to think possibly we've involved in public service type things. I think thats important for everyone to do. I know I wasn't around at the time that my grandfather was a County Commissioner for a good number of years, my father served in the State Legislature. He's a now Circuit Judge here and he served ... involved in several civic organizations. And same with my grandfather, I think its very important though. Here again its just not them. Pell City is blessed with a lot of people who do that and thats one of the good things about this community.

Pell City does seem to have a lot Civic pride, its you mentioned a sense of responsibility to serve the community - uh-huh - Why, Do you think theres something unique about Pell City or about the people that live here, that generates this kind of feeling, this kind of sense of community pride and service?

Well I think you are sort of touching on it. When you are proud of where you live, you are always striving to make it a little better. The people I think that they know that they have a life style here I mentioned earlier is unsurpassed. And I think that has a lot to do with it and I think we have a lot of pride in this community and the people here, the reason it is that we have pride is because people work hard. Its sort of a snowballing affect kind of thing.

Looking back again on your growing up years here and even now, I wonder if there are some significant individuals here that come to mind who have either been an outstanding influence on your life or have been significant figures in the community?

Well uh first and formost you and everyone would do this and say well my father - sure - you know, and everyones going to say my father. Outside of that theres almost more that you can count. Like I mentioned Mr. Williamson, Bobby Gene Adams, L.N. Barber were baseball, Mr. Truitt who was a teacher in the Junior High School and seemed to take an interest in me. You always you know when I was playing in the for his basketball team plus he was a good teacher and uh, when you start doing something like this you always afraid to leave someone out. And theres so many I can't recall. Those are just some that come to mind. I mean, I

don't know.

After you graduated from High School and went away to college, got your law degree, obviously a sharp, competent person ... your the kind of person who could do well anywhere and probably could have a great future anywhere...Why did you decide to come back home?

Well this is where I was raised first of all and I can kind of rehash some of the things that I've already told you about. Its sort of like you really have the best of all worlds. One is you see it as a growing area where in terms of your business that there'll always be opportunities. In terms of recreational opportunities I've gone through some of those and of course if you enjoy boating, if you enjoy just about anything that you can do it here and you can do it without a lot of problems as you might get into some Atlanta, Birmingham, or wherever you have to, for example, if you enjoy golf or tennis your not standing in line for a tee off time or a tennis court. If you like hunting, fishing I mean the opportunities are just uh I mentioned the thing about High School you can't get out as fast as you used to into a hunting area but theres still many, many of them. And secondly, I was talking about Birmingham is close by. We're so close if you anything that you could that anybody living in Birmingham can do, we can do here. It's just a matter of jumping on the Interstate and running down there. So I mean I see it as an area that has everything to offer and like I said its my home. And I guess thats the main thing.

One thing Mr. Williamson was talking about when he was here was the period of time when Pell City school's were intergrated and some of the people that were involved in making that a comfortable transition as it could've been. How do you think that period of time has affected the city and the relationships of people? Do you think its left scars, do you think the city's better for it?

Quite honestly and I guess it speaks well of the city I don't really remember much of that. I do remember going to college and making friends with people or becoming friends with people that had gone through some very bad things in terms of the Birmingham schools. And they had experiences that I didn't have to deal with and I guess that speaks well of the community that the transition was from segregated to intergrated schools apparently came off with little or any problems. I remember and I don't want to talk about the specifics but I remember a friend that a school in Birmingham and talking about the students fights, kids just getting up and leaving school, and all that kind of stuff during that period didn't happen here far as I know. And here again like I said the I think that sort of speaks well in that I don't have any vivid memories of that.

What about the influence of churches and religious organizations in the general moral and ethical climate in the community? I guess I'm thinking about that in the context is that one of the things you seem to hear as you go across the state, the country perhaps people decrying the decline of morality, of course drugs, you know and other things that seem to prevade almost any community. Yet I sense here that theres still a strong religious and moral and ethical influence on ...

Well I think there is. I don't want to be naive about anything and hear no evil, see no evil, but quite honestly, its sort of like I was mentioning earlier. I know Pell City has grown since I was coming through the school system here in the 60's. (If I had a place to raise a kid today Pell City would be it. And essentially its because of the we do have strong the church influence in the community, strong value system here, and a good thing here we haven't gotten to the point I don't think where as I say parents are able to keep up with kids and I think that is important. Your not, you'll have your kids when their out and people usually know if their doing something it usually gets back and everyone's held accountable for those kinds of things which is great I think.) Like I said I don't want to be naive about it. I'm sure that maybe their are some people in our schools that get involve in drugs or whatever I don't hear alot about it. And I think I would. I mean you always hear a little here or there but its nothing widespread which is good.)

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Hugh, now as the Democratic nominee for the State House Representatives, your father served for several terms in that, you've seen your family been active in politics for the better part of the last half of the century of this county, where do you see us in the year 2000 as a community? What kinds of things do you see down the road as far as development? Are we going to become another Shelby county or do you see us developing in another direction?

Well I, of course that's hard to say. I do see continue growth development coming whether we like it or not. Just by the fact that we are located on a major transportation corridor between Birmingham and Atlanta, I-20, and I think where we end up I...one of the things that I...concerns me is that we don't let it in other words we don't follow behind the development and we end up like some of the areas you hear in other parts of the country where they have had this development and all of a sudden they come to realize that the water systems and sewage system and their air and everything all of a sudden inadequate to handle the population. Like I said I think we are going to grow and I think its important that we begin to look and see where we want to end up with this thing. And I think its time to do a little planning. Like I said I don't have a crystal ball but I think its system we make arrangements for being able to

afford people adequate water supply and just the whole thing as an interest structure that all that entails. That may not be a very good answer but that's kind of hard to say. I see the one of the things is that we will continue to grow in terms of people locating, living here. I think that's going to happen. Part and parcel with that you're going to find some retail development. One of the things that's held us back I believe in the at this point and time is being so close to Birmingham. It's just easy to jump in your automobile and drive down to the Galleria and that's hurt retail businesses here in this area. But as we grow and the population becomes such that retail businesses will begin to figure they can make a very good living here.

One last question I have considering this Centennial observance for the city not only the events that have been planned but just the gathering of historical information, the interviews that we're doing with the citizens who have lived here all their lives and who have some significant recollections, gathering together documents, and photographs, and other things that sort of layout the history of Pell City. What do you think is the value of a Centennial Celebration like this? Why in a forward looking progressive time like this do we need to look back and dwell in the past?

Uh, well it's uh, of course there's Pell City and this area. We have traditions that I think that keep us firmly planted in the ground so to speak and it's important to be aware of those traditions. And Centennial celebrations I think bring those things to the forefront and let us focus for a short while. I think, and just give the people of Pell City a pause to celebrate as to what they have accomplished in the last 100 years. As I say, we have a lot to offer here and we're not a big metropolitan area but we have I think more to offer than like I said I made a choice to move back here when the time like I said I always intended to never really thought I'd end up in Birmingham, Atlanta, or anywhere like that, but, I lived a short while in Birmingham, never any doubt I'd move back here. And just to celebrate what we have, what we've accomplished.

Wayne Spradley

Why don't we start Wayne just by you telling us a little about growing up in Pell City, and what it's been like over the years, and how that's influenced your art style?

Well living in Pell City when I was growing up was about like living on a farm. You were so close to it. And all the nostalgic scenes and things I paint are from that era you know. We fished and hunted where houses are right now. And

uh where's these of subdivisions are moved in. And stayed on the river alot. Had a great school system here when we was growing up. Of course, I didn't take advantage of it like I should. All I wanted to do was paint, that and play sports. All mine started in kindergarten. From there on up Miss Iola Roberts used me a lot to do the art work in the schools when I was growing up. Every year we would have a AvonDale Mill Inspection and we'd have to do the stage flats and lighting and things like that to a...for the program when they'd have the inspection. And Mr. Comer, and all the AvonDale Mill officials would come over. Everybody would wear white shirts and overalls.

PS 15

What do you remember about those Inspection Day Programs besides having to paint all those flats and dress up for it? What kind of programs were they?

They was mostly patriotic, that and believe it or not back then it was environmental too, farming, things like that. Avondale Mills was in to cattle business pretty good too here in Pell City actually it was down at Avondale Lakes. We would have all those type programs and not only that for Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, they were all big productions Miss Roberts would put on for us. And course theres about five of us that stayed out of class and did the art work for it. So I didn't go to class too much from the fifth grade on. I didn't miss, we had to make it up plus doing the art work too.

PS 15

(talking) ... As I walked out the door a minute ago I saw Tom Lovett going up the hill carrying his painting in the rain and I was struck by the difference of how you and he came from identical, same neighborhood, same street, same everything and your nationally known, most successful artist from this part of the country and theres Tom trying to sell his pictures for five dollars to get something for the weekend. And the thought hit me, how do you see other artist coming along out of Pell City? Do you see other kids from Pell City following your footsteps?

There was a great deal of talent in Pell City. I'm not familiar with the younger ones but take myself and Butch Lonigan, we grew up on the same street. His daddy was a sign painter. I was a scrapping artist you know, trying to be, and he was my idol as a painter. And come to find out, Butch had me as an idol as a painter. And Butch and John Lonigan are father and son. And second, they have a National Parks contest and this is national and there something like 2600 entered this contest and what amazes me there were two from the same street in a small town like Pell City made the top 100 out of that 2600 in a small town like Pell City so.

Why do you think something like that happens? Influence of the people?

Because of Miss Iola Roberts and her influence on the arts. She was not only a pusher of fine arts but she was a pusher of the theatrical arts and singing. We always sang, everybody did if you went to Avondale Mills. I would say she was the big pusher of the arts in Pell City. And whats happened now is the results of that plus we have had some good art teachers in Pell City, Miss Armstrong was the, I guess you would call it the Junior High art teacher at that time. There was no Junior High when I was coming along. It was Grammar school and High School. Then when I was in High School it was Miss Mays, she was the art teacher. And we had trips to the Museum that educated us into the Arts. And I think Pell City for the small city it is, is well educated in the Arts and appreciate art. And I find that not so everywhere I go. There a lot of towns thats lots bigger than Pell City thats not as educated as Pell City is in art. And its simply the reason that Miss Iola Roberts made a big impression on everybody.) And my wife Pat pushed me, she's my pusher.

You travel a lot in art shows and things like that, how would you compare the quality of life in Pell City with some of the other towns that you go to for art shows and things?

I wouldn't trade it for nothing. Pell City is the ideal place to live, it's been good to me I guess from day one. And I've been half way around the world and there's no place to me better, it may be its home I don't know, but I've been a lot of places and done a lot of traveling and Pell City is the ideal spot. The ideal town for anybody.

Do you see it changing a lot as outsiders come in as the population increases, do you see that quality of life changing?

Yea, I do. And mostly for the better. Because Pell City's kind of like a boom town. I mean you come from when I was growing up to 2500 population, today its 17,000 and thats only been an increase in the last 10 years or 20 years.

Theres been off and on and I admit I started most of it talk about having some kind of cultural center in Pell City, an artist, writer's, some sort of cultural center to perserve the things Miss Iola Roberts started. Do you think there would be a future for that sort of thing to have some sort of civic culture center?

I think so. I think the town needs it. The more the newer people that are coming in that wasn't influenced by Miss Roberts can be taught the things that we were taught. Especially in my case the fine arts of painting and I don't know anything about the theatre or anything like that. I know how to make a flats on stages, but far as that that's it.

Slipping off the arts for a minute, you grew up in the mill village like I did and it was a separate world really in those days to some extent. The mill had its own school, own laundry, and your social life was pretty much, do you have any memories of growing up in that kind of mill village environment that you think worth sharing?

Yea, lots. There was always something to do for the kids. Avondale Mills seen to that. We would take trips, have big barbeques, and have kind of like a club that we would go to read comic books and play games, and things like that, and play sports. They furnished a lot of things for us and of course the Boy Scouts and there was always something to do for us kids at Avondale. People up here in Pell City they really didn't have as much to do as we did. Because Mr. Commer furnished all that. He furnished the money to support these, they even had a band at that time. And at one time they even had a real good band.

At one time Avondale Mill's baseball team was ranked best in the Southeast...

Oh, yea, they would pay those ball players, well give them a job so they could play baseball. And they had some outstanding ball teams. A lot of them went to the pros.

Talking about today, the ball teams still play on Avondale Mills property still Avondale Mills ball fields where most of the ball playing is done...even though we have that huge thing down at the Civic Center, that's more adult softball.

It's all being utilized.

Do you feel like ... in growing up in Pell City did you ever feel that division of town and mill village and country folk...did that affect you growing up?

Oh yea. The growing up was the Avondale's Bulldogs and the Pell City's Panthers, we called them city slickers. The city boys, we always wanted to beat, well we called it town school, that's what we called it, the Pell City school, the school right there. That's where our enemies were. They may come over to the village and we'd may rob them. Throw rocks at them. Before we got of what you might say Grammar school, I mean uh Junior High, we all went together. They all went to school here and we went to school there but we played on the same football team and that same bunch went on through High School together only lost one ball game in three years.

This whole year of Centennial celebration theres a lot of events going on and of course doing this video history project and gathering together a lot of newspaper clippings, and documents, and photographs, and things like that, ... what do you think is the value to the community of having an

event or an activity like this?

Well it helps to educate the community in the arts that's for sure. And it makes other towns around, well people in other states too, recognize Pell City. I mean it puts their name out where it can be recognized. And they come to see what we've got. And that's why our population increasing so, these events like we're having.

As far as you've grown up here and become a successful artist and raised your children here do you ... what do you see down the road for Pell City as far as a place to live...is it on the threshold of a major change?

We're on that change now for the better. I mean its growing, more jobs, a lot of more people moving in, and it's getting bigger and better.

Do you have any observations you'd like to make about things in general or any remeninces you'd like to...What was the worst trouble you got into as a kid?

Oh man...we didn't really get in any trouble but it was something funny that happened. Everybody laughed about it sinced it happened. One time we had a swimming hole by the railroad track, you'd have to cross the company pasture and highway 78 and then another company pasture by the railroad tracks was the swimming hole. One day a gang of us was going across, just had crossed the first pasture, got up to the highway 78 that was the main highway going through Pell City, and this green car with official use written on it Southern Railroad stopped us and said "Boys, somebody knocked out that switching light out" you know. And we said we didn't do it. He said he would have to take all you boys names to find out, we've got to get to the bottom of this because it was dangerous knocking that light out. He said I'm going to have to take your names. And I told him, you can't hurt me, my momma and daddy are Christians. And we didn't do it but we were scared for about three days. Everytime a car would come up the street we'd run hide. But we didn't do anything wrong.

Growing up, was there a feeling that and I've heard people say this that everybody in town knew everything you did...kind of like you couldn't get away with a whole lot because there was such a network between the families, the mothers there was such a communication, was that ...

Yea, you couldn't get away with anything, not in Pell City, not without somebody knowing. Sooner or later it would get back to mamma or pappa and back then if they had the laws they do now they'd get all our parents for child abuse because we were punished practically every day. I've got a photograph of Avondale Mills taken in 1941 and it shows all

the employees plus all the back of Avondale school. And the first thing I noticed was the stairs going up to the Kindergarten. My mother used to whip me everyday to get me to go to Kindergarten. All the way up those stairs to the room but just one year is all she had to do it.

Thats a side of Iola Roberts we haven't talked about because she was a noted disciplinarian. Do you remember any story about her...

Yea me for one. She had this thing where she would grab your chin and shake it. And I had my chin shook just one time, thats all it takes. She was a real disciplinarian. She would grab your ear too.

My father went to his grave with a half inch scar right here and he always swore that was from Miss Roberts thumbnail...

She would sure do it, she would really shake it. I had it backwards, it was like that...

Can you think of anything else as far as ... I know most of the historic town is here, the mill, and the mill village and one of the things trying to do in this is to preserve the flavor of the old club house. I remember talking about Halloween, every Halloween there was a spook house and your grandmother and my grandmother and all of them would get down there and do children oriented things. I remember that about one of the things about growing up here was there was always that network of old women who have been in the mill and who sort of took an interest in the kids. Do you remember any of that?

That's right. That's one thing about Avondale Mills and Pell City, the parents always participated in almost everything we did. I mean it wasn't 100 percent naturally but it was a high percentage of the parents that would come and participated with the kids in all the acitivities. Of course we had our meanness but it wasn't nothing bad. It was just mischievious boy stuff but they would have all these big Halloween parties, Christmas parties, Easter Egg Hunts, things like that, swimming parties. In the summer time Avondale Mills would have a bus that went to Avondale Lake twice a week to carry the kids swimming and there was no swimming pool around here at that time. We would uh we couldn't hardly wait til time for that bus to go. We'd be on it going to Avondale.

Avondale Lake is completely underwater completely now under Logan Martin but as an artist I'm sure you remember some of the details of it...can you describe that lake a little bit?

I can remember all of it. I'm in the process now of doing paintings from memory of back then around the lake and

4A-1)

different places around Pell City. There's one painting that's hanging up in the mayor's office now that's the old fish traps that was on the old Cousa River. And for the people who lived in River Oaks they're living on top of the hill that overlooked the fish traps at that time. And we've spent a lot of time in Avondale and then go across the mountain there down to the river and thats where the fish traps were. Just back and forth.

Trans-5

5-1

Dean
Cox

(talking)

Well you grew up here and uh we're very active in sports when you were younger, particularly golf, uh, maybe you might start by reminicing how the recreational facilities in this town were when you were child and how they have changed and what kind of things, thinking of particularly golf, and tennis, and water sports, and things ... Have you seen that sort of change in the last 25 years?

Well since we were growing up we have Pine Harbor Country Club has opened and so has Albine Bay, so the Pell City Country Club is 30 years old. Now it was here when I was about in the 5th grade. Before the people in Pell City had to go to Talledega, Talledega Country Club, to play golf. So now we have three more golf courses, golf facilities. The Civic Center I think from a recreational stand point and full time recreational director has been a real big asset. Of course that came in the mid-70's, early to mid-70's, formalation of it. So theres alot more to do for the kids now I think than when we were growing up.

You think that has helped Pell City attract new businesses and new residents and that sort of thing?

Yes, I think thats one of life style enhancements really for the whole area. The quality of life. I've had people come out here from Birmingham and tell me they wouldn't move back to Birmingham under any circumstances. You have the lake, of course the lake has gotten more promident even when we were growing up, water sports, that seem to draw people like a magnet. People want to live on the lake, they want to be near it, they want to have a cabin on the lake if they can't live here. So you just have a little better quality of life I think in a smaller town. Very similar to people who like to deal with smaller companies, you get better personal service that the big city businesses sort of dehumanizing some what. People get caught up in the rat race sort of speak and this a little more laid back style of life, style of living, and people I think this is the attraction and contributing to the growth of the area.

You grew up in the Pell City school's system and then went away to college and then spent a number of years about 15 years or so and had a position - Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation - and could have stayed in that sort of situation and been very comfortable. Why did you choose to come back to Pell City and take the big risk of opening a new bank, and what drew you back home?

Well I saw a oppportunity that I thought somebody was

going to fill, me or some other group or another bank, a larger bank. When you have a population that triples from 1980 to 1990, and probably doubled from 70 to 80, you got more people. Those people want services and banking here again I mentioned a go dealing with the bigger institutional you deal with the less personal service you're going to get. And people like to know the banker they're dealing with so that has, I saw that opportunity and I felt now was the time to try to fill that void. As far living I did work for 15 years with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. And I got to travel extensively with the FDIC, primarily with the southeast and I saw a lot of different places. And Pell City to me was the most attractive place to live that I've seen. And primarily the people, the people are a big asset to this area. And it means a lot like you and I have talked since you've been back and you see people you haven't seen in 20 to 25 years, but, those people care a little more about you and what happens to you than oppose to a big city transit area. So that was a major attraction and this is were I wanted I've been trying to work to get back here when this new bank opportunity presented itself.

Your dad has been a dentist here for half a century I guess and your mom is in retail operation here, now your wife is in retailing, and your in the banking business, what do you see as the future for our retail growth here?

The mayor, Jerry as you know, has put a major emphasises on this to try to develop retail in the city. And I think when you get in a growth situation like we're in where you have a population tripling over a 10 year period, that void you're going to have people recognize that void. And as oppose our people having to drive to Birmingham for goods and services the entrepreneurs are going to see that void and fill it. And I think over the next 2 to 5 years you're going to see a tremendous expansion particularly down 231 with the city sewer in the ground now and the proposed five lining of that highway, the stretch 3 miles of the highway. You're going to see a lot of business pop up in the larger chains such as K-Mart, Wallmart, Winn-Dixie, grocery stores and retail outlets to purchase men and ladies clothes and things like that. Because its sort of like the bank opportunity we talked about awhile a go, somebody going to see that retail need and fill it and make some money doing it.

From a social standpoint I know traveling around the southeast and coming back to Pell City do you see any change in the last 20 years as far as the social life in Pell City goes?

Well you have I think you have more parties. Here again you have a bigger crowd of people that are looking for things to do and I have seen an increase in social functions. You have things such as the Civic chorus, and different cultural

events. But still I think all in all the people go to Birmingham quite a bit for that. That has not developed to a level it needs to be.

One of the complaints I hear a lot is the teenagers have nothing to do. Like when we were kids you rode around Sams or the Dairy Queen and now they ride around Hardees or the Dairy Queen. What kinds of things do you think we might see by the year 2000 to accomodate the teenage kids?

Well you and I never had trouble finding something to do. I think you're like me, I've never been bored. And particular like this Library, and the job you've done here in promoting it. I think kids need to quit so much TV and spend more time reading in a place like this and utilize the Library more. The opportunities will be there here again for the entrepreteur types to put in like somebody mentioned to me the other day about a batting cage, baseball like the put-put golf course and a batting cage with an iron miked pitching machines which I think is a good idea. Bowling alley, I think you will see here although its a tremendous capital investment within the next 10 years you'll see a bowling alley coming here. We've had a lot of marinas, boat sails, water sports, the golf courses here have had a big increase in membership. You've got softball leagues, very structured softball leagues, for the kids to play, organized activities more so than the schools sports. So I think there's plenty for them to do.

(talking) In looking in our growth patterns they say we're second or third fastest growing county in the state in Alabama, why do you think that's happening? Just spill over from Birmingham or other reasons?

Well I did several feasibility studies when we did the new bank project and those figures are correct you've used, second fastest growing county in the state from my research. I think you're getting a big overflow from up north and I think you'll continue to see that over the next 15, 20, 25 years. People getting out of the cold weather into the sun belt, so Pell City and Florida getting saturated. And the people are now settling into this area, for example. I think its the quality of life and life style is attractive to a lot of people as opposed to Atlanta and Birmingham. (We don't have a lot of problems that Atlanta and Birmingham has, crime related, traffic problems, that type thing and you get people from up north that live down here and you ask them, they don't want to go back. They are glad to be here. They want to stay here. They didn't know there was such a nice thing you could play golf here ~~in the middle of January without having to shovel snow.~~ The people of the area are a big draw, they are friendly, the southern hospitality means alot. It's not just an expression and I think people care a little more about other people down here than in some of your bigger

Py 55

cities and I believe that's been a major contributing factor. You can work at a job any where but then you go home. We're close enough to Birmingham to do things in Birmingham if any cultural event you want but here again people don't want to live there. They want to live out in a bedroom type community and I think Pell City started out as twenty years ago when the lake first the people wanted vacation homes but now you're seeing more and more of them relocate here. And I think its our life style, attractiveness of that quality of living thats drawing those people here and keeping them here once they get here.)

Do you see retirement communities developing around the lake that sort of thing?

Yes I think so. The affordability of housing that prices have escalated quite a bit for lake property. People may be looking at a real nice mobile home development thats more affordable say in the 40 to 50 to 60,000 dollar range instead of the 120 to 140,000 dollar range. And I think you'll see more people from up north coming down but here again the lake property has quite expensive now which is a deterrent. As I mentioned earlier, Florida, the state of Florida and I haved worked with the FDIC, I worked extensively in Florida the last couple of years I was there and its backing up all the way to the panhandle now. Florida is all filled up, theres too many people there now and you're going to see them filter into Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi more and more I think over the next 10 to 15 years.

You see these people blending and melting into the community weld? Do you think the community is accepting to the so called outsider weld?

I think they are Jerry and I think more so now that when we were younger. Theres a lot we have a more transit society, more mobile society than when we were growing up and I think people particularly here are much more easily accepted than 20 to 25 years ago and they are able to fit in and join civic groups. Dan Roods is a good example whos just got a transfer back to New York. Somebody who came right in and hit the ground running and made a big contribution to the area and was very well accepted as he was voted Citizen of the Year, year before last.

Is there anything you missed that was here when we were kids that isn't here now?

Well of course the old Junior High that we attended is no longer here. I used to ride by and see it thats gone and the Kindergarten that we went to is the first thing that pops into my mind. I can't think of anything else right off.

5-5

Anything you'd like to add?

No, not that I can think of Jerry.

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Pell City 6A

Pell City incorporated in 1980 enters a time of providing for man from conception, birth, childhood, youth, middle-age, old age and death. All the basic needs were being developed, health care then recognized and utilized by self-contained methods originally. The folklore, the Indians, the granny's remedy books, but (a young doctor, R. A. Martin, made a decision to come to Pell City.) Dirt roads, a saddled horse, buggy and a practice field probably in his home and a doctor's bag. Moving him into homes the famous painting, The Doctor, the Pouts and the Sorrum and their child in the throws of death and the family doctor there. ~~This was the~~ role that Dr. Martin brought to our community. (The homes may have been palatial, farmhomes, they may have been a small cottage, but no person was turned away. No hour was too dark. No weather conditions too treacherous for him to meet the needs.) He functioned in this manner until 1920.) The Avondale Mill being very aware of the great developments in their industrial concept, brought in many services. One, was the Gertrude Comer Hospital. (During that introduction to modern hospital facility in Pell City, Miss Elsie Dunn, graduate nurse of the Philadelphia General Hospital was recruited. She had graduated in 1917, or the later part of 1919 or 1920, she had practiced as a private duty nurse and she was encouraged to come to Pell City and she became a faithful and loyal follower of the delivery of health care along with medicine.) ~~Now other disciplines and other doctors~~ were moving in quite fast. Many tremendous scenes are at the Gertrude Colmer (?) Hospital. Today we will probably see the second child that was born there. The first child was given the name of Gertrude. She was Gertrude Richardson. There are a number of records of the births, surgical procedures, and deaths. One that was brought to my attention was a small child, six years of age, that had a desparate illness and received great care but died there in a few days early in the opening of the hospital. Almost every old family that lived in that era had some contacts with that hospital. But Dr. Martin continued to move into the community as a cause. As he added other doctors and professional members to his staff, they too shared in the home visit of care. The hospital closed in 1931 and with determination and great effort on his own and with his own money, he owned the Pell City drugstore, because pharmacy was a part of health care practice and he took the upper story and developed a six bed unit and he functioned there for a number of years and purchased the house directly behind it. It was a W.G. Hardrick home and developed a hospital, added a wing by 1941, and that hospital carried 42 beds, met all the basic needs of medicine, surgery, obstetrics, gynecology. And in the interval, St. Claire Public Health came in 1937 and was able to move out in the area of health prevention, the immunization. As each new

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major problem was evident in the community they were able to help with typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and the venereal diseases, and the prenatal care as a adjunct. They with the city leaders involved, all the residents have March of Dimes, and we have mothers' involved and we have fathers' involved and chairmans of different drives to support the public health concept of health care. High School youngsters, grade school youngsters, the polio epidemic was sweeping the nation. Thousands of young people were dying and young youth were dying. We had many, many of these experiences. Miss Ruth Vackey was a great and strong public health nurse. The newspapers carry article after article of her discipline and her diligence and her concern of soliciting school children. The first ones were the first and second grade, the Salk vaccine, then the Saven Vaccine. So health care has been very evident from the grass roots all the way up. (Dr. Martin continued to practice and the other doctors that came in were Dr. Stit, Dr. Clayton, Dr. Norell, Dr. Reeney, in the field of eye, ear, nose and throat. Dr. Hanes and there are a great roster of these people. Other nurses began to join the staff. In the food service, dietary personnel were employed. The environmental people, the housekeeping, the laundry personnel, because the hospital was self contained. All of this was principally financed as a private hospital enterprises. It was Pell City Infirmary and then Martin Memorial.)

At the 50 Anniversary of the practice of medicine of Dr. Martin in Pell City, the city council rendered a great service and declared Dr. Martin Day. In the course of this morning I would like for the heir of Dr. Martin, Carolyn Kincaid Hall to read us that citation. It was presented as a silver trophy and has a beautiful inscription to a great man. He lives on today in our lives and the lives of the people of our community. It will be an everlasting memorial. (The hospital functioned after his death in 1953 to the year 1970, and became eventually an open staff. The county commissioners issued a bond and funds were provided and in 1970, April 1, the St. Claire Hospital was opened.) 82 Beds, each new innovation in the technology of health care has been inculcated in the services there. If they are not available local, there are arrangements made by consultations to the big medical centers, Birmingham, Anniston, and the related areas that have them. In a short time, they can either be brought in experts or it there is technology beyond this area, the person are carried to this area.)

Health care is moving forward in Pell City. In the course of this time, there have been a great number people recruited from this area to enter in to the different health areas. In denistry, Ramond Cox came here. (Dr. Claude Martin was a earlier in the field. He joined his brother here and delivered health care in 1907, established an office and served 50 years plus. Received a citation from the Alabama

Dental Society for his great contribution. Dr. Edward Hickson, came. As I mentioned, there were many, many. All the specialities in the field of denistry here. We have physical therapy that has been brought in to this area. We have health supply center here. A new recent area is the ABC which is under some of these human resource concepts. This provides means whereby families can keep families together. It is a marvelous kind of thing. They can send out social workers, physical therapists, nurses, and auxiliary nursing personnel. So we are excited about what is available and for whom it is available. The health departments have out grown all their facilities. In 1991 there is a projection of a new health department with a whole aray of added things. The decision has not been made but the monies have been allocated are almost 600,000 dollars. That seems evident that we are recognized because today according to our census, we are serving 17,000 people in Pell City. Health Care is on the move.

(Elaborate on the Gertrude...facility...)

(The Gertrude Comer Hospital was in the Avondale Mill. It was north of the famous fountain area. It was removed and a restarant is there now. It was a two story frame building with in the present day all the facilities that were needed to meet health care of people. Naturally, a number of people with great difficulties may be going to the big medical center which was really Hilman Hospital in Birmingham and eventually became the Medical Center. There were some people that utilized those services, but it functioned unusually well in that area. It was an Avondale Mill project, they not only put great emphasis on the working conditions of their employees but Avondale Mill was really the backbone of Pell City and health care had top priority in meeting the needs of people there.)

Lois Deeson was another outstanding nurse that worked there. I would like to try to recall some of the others. There was great community interest in it because people were still feeling that we must visit and we must help and we must serve. I recall the story being told that this child that I related to that died there. The community took such great interest people brought little lunches to the mother and the father of the child that were in constant vigil of several days that he was there. So it was a great community concept. It was their hospital, it was our hospital and it was open to all the people in the area.

(Community attitude different now with the giant Medical Center....)

Not likely, no. You look at your telephone directory you are

convinced almost immediately you can identify names and you can have referrals made and when you get to a referral center they are able to say this provides medicare for the elderly, I use this kind of person, he's good in the community. During the course of the day, I think we'll see what physicians are saying and how they are referring and the tremendous drives that are being made that the citizens, the bankers, the lawyers, the..all the other disciplines are saying, I'll be chairman of this committee, I'll support this, I'll serve this, I'll make a visit, I'll hold religious service for the people in the nursing homes, I'll visit, I want to do. So I am confident that there is a great one. I personally am one of the persons that entered into the health field. I have one niece thats a medical..born, lived in Pell City, but borned at St. Vincent's, that`s a medical doctor, a rhuematologist. Her husband is a rhuematologist in Charlotte, N.C. I have a niece that is a pharomicist, her husband is a pharmacist, her mother was born in Pell City. I with great numbers of people entered nursing. There have been a number of doctors, other doctors too. I can recall a number of times that I made visits back to the high school and recruited. I would not want to try to call all the persons that I had an influence in recruiting to go into nursing. I served as director of nursing in Annison Memorial and was in charge of the school of nursing service, the University of Alabama, I graduated from there but also I was director of nursing there. Grady Memorial in Atlanta and Indian River Community College in Ft. Pierce, FLorida. In each of those, now the Floridians, the Alabamians did not attend the Floridian setting too much, but I had graduates from Pell City or the surrounding area that entered each of those schools. In my 32 years of director I have presumingly had 8 or 9 thousand that I have had influence with in the practice of nursing and in the related health disciplines. My last position I worked with radiology in a 2 year level program, Radiolical Technology, Medical Lab Technology, Dental Assisting, Dental Lab Technology, and then the Associate Degree Nursing. The nursing auxiliary, the practical nursing and the nursing assistant. So I could probably relate a great number of the other people who have had similiar types of experiences and brought them back here. I spent one year as a nurse here. My constant shadow was Miss Elsie Dunn. Even though I was a 3 to 11 "Supervisor" I hardly ever recall a single 3 to 11 that I was left without her support, whether it was in the delivery room, the emergency care of a patient, or a desparately ill medical or surgical patient, she was there to give me support and understanding. There was no hour that here that I was not on duty that Dr. Martin was not available to give support and then all that other array of nurses that I worked with. Also had three private duty patients. For confidentiality I will not tell them, but I was quite successful. I was in college and on a holiday I took one and then I was between terms in college in another time, then I think one when I was a fresh

graduate I had one. I was solicited for all of these jobs, so opportunities have been very, very good in Pell City. I worked and have had many marvelous experiences. Under the auspices of the Red Cross, I went on a polio epidemic to Richmond, Va. I went to the University of Minnesota on a counselling project. I went to the State of Michigan on a practical nurse project. I went to Walter Reed for a Civil Defense Project. I have been to most of the International Congresses of Nursing during my years of practice. Most of the American Nurses Association Conventions and most of the national League of Nursing. I have attempted to use all of those services back here and all of my relatives that have illnesses in this area, I have been in some attendance of them. In this the physicians in the area and the nurses in the area were able to help to support me. So it is a marvelous town for the direction of health care to the people of our community. Pell City in on the march with health care delivery services. We do not want to forget any of these vital services, for example, Johnny de Garriss, he's the second generation of pharmacy delivery. Jack Hagan, I guess that I mentioned that he has been here for years. Hall Fallenstokes has been here for years. Then there are some commercial firms that do pharmacy. Phamacutical Care is great. When we look at the hospital we will notice some of their great technology that has been developed, radiology, oncoloty, cardiovascular diseases, and the implementations that go with these. Health care is really on the move in Pell City and we are excited about it.

(When was the St. Claire Regional Medical Facility created built, opened up for operation and how did it come about?)

Throught the State Board of Lassinger, it was approved for St. Claire County to have a new hospital and approximately in 1969, the St. Claire Hospital as of today was built and we admitted the first patient in April, 1970.

We opened the facility at 72 beds. It was a three floor, plus a basement structure and then during the early 1980 we added an additional floor on and made a 4th floor.

We have an increase of active staff. Our main staff is the internal medicine, the orthopedic staff, and the family practioners. But we have access to many specilities from Birmingham that come out and do part-time practice.

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We hope to continually change and keep up and meet with medical needs of the county. We are the only hospital in the county and it is our responsibility to make the necessary changes and to improve the services to meet the medical needs

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of the county.

I think improved quality. Each person is entitled to the best quality care available and this is one of our goals, to keep improving, provide any needs that the county may have.

Availability. Now there are many specialty cares that we can not provide. We do not have the facilities, the equipment, it would be cost prohibitive to provide all necessary care. But we are fortunate to be close to the big facilities in Birmingham and we have to make the decision of where to cut off so to speak.

We are proud of our facility. We think that it is a fine facility and we hope that all the people of St. Claire county think the same way.

(New Speaker--lady)

(Who you are) Alice Bain

I started the first day of January, 1934 or 1933 one, I believe it was 1933 and I worked until 1949 or 50. But I stopped and had a baby at that time but went back to work. I did everything from mopping the floor through the operating room.

(what was it like in a small community hospital, you already mentioned that instead of having one specialty you kinda did what needed to be done. What was it like being a nurse in the facility like that?)

I liked it, I believe I like it better than I do now. I'm not suppose to say that though. You just get into everything, you don't just get into one certain thing, that's the reason I like it so well. I came from Birmingham and a bigger hospital. You begin to know the family and the patients and you feel like they are your neighbors and that counts lots.

PELL CITY 6B continued from PELL CITY 6A

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(Tell me a little bit about Dr. Martin, what was he like, what kind of a man was he???)

Well, he was nice and he's calm and stayed busy all the time. He, one good thing, he never got after me. He lived for the people. He worked there 24 hours a day, he didn't get off a day or anything.

(What, Who were some of the doctors who came in while you were practicing or that you had some dealings with over the years?)

Well, Dr. Stit was there when I went and Miss Dunn and Dr. Martin, and Lois Deason. That's the only nurses there when I went. Then Rosalie _____ came next and I think that lots of doctors came, you know, went and came all the time. But Dr. Stit, he's dead now, and Dr. Stit and Dr. Martin all I guess. I don't know how many doctors were there it was lots of them, I don't mean at one time. Four I think was about all I had down in the office at one time. I worked on the hall, I worked in the operating room when they operated and when a doctor came in from Birmingham or any other place, I scrubbed up and acted as a doctor because Dr. Martin was sick. Dr. Martin from Gunnersville, he came in a lot. He didn't work there he came in for certain patients when Dr. Martin was in bed and we had to operate, he'd come in. There was a Dr. Pryor, and Dr. Freeman, and Dr. Johnson, he stayed there a while. I don't know how many more, I can't call them now.

(What do you recall about Ms. Dunn?)

Oh, she was good, I mean she was good to me. She'd treat me just like..and she did all the patients the same way, except she kinda had to be a little bit boss some time, sometime the patient decided to take off if she wanted to. But she was really good, she couldn't be beat. She worked 24 hours a day, she'd go to bed at night and she was always ready to get up in the night to help. She could do everything that was in that hospital, she could do it. She make the x-rays, she did some lab work, and she never did scrubb up for operations. She gave the aneseptic and she did most of anything there and she didn't mind trying. She did.

(What were some of the most common health problems or medical emergencies that occurred while you were a nurse?)

Oh, it take me to lunch to tell me all of that..You mean..

BB-2

(What were some of the common childhood diseases, common ailments, that people could be in the hospital for?)

Some appendix and some of the patients I don't remember what was wrong now. We had some little boys that were kinda, they refused the bath sometime, but I said let Momma do it, I said no, I'll do it. I'm going to tell my daddy on you. You just don't know it was lots of fun a going on. There were some bad things.

(What about Mrs. Zacky....memories of her work with the county health office...)

Well Mrs. Zacky was really good. She'd come up and talk to Dr. Martin about patients a lot. Of course she felt like, toward Dr. Martin just like we did. She got out and she like anybody had tuberculosis, she did not let them get by with it where some of them did, you know. She, as far as I know, she was a good one. Oh I guess I wasn't close to her except when she came in to talk to Dr. Martin she'd talk to me some. She was business.

(What about Dr. Reeney...)

Oh, Dr. Reeney, he was an eye doctor, as I call them. Well he was really good and one time we had a patient and Miss Dunn was sick, and we called him to give the anesthetic and he could give the prettiest anesthetic I ever seen in my life. I was right there helping Dr. Martin operate and he was good. I guess he was a likeable person, I never did hear.. He got burned.

(You were here during the time when polio was such a horrible disease among children and young adults....when the Salk vaccine and the Sable vaccine came in, what do you remember about those times.. There were some mass inoculations..sugar cubes and give them to the children at school and all, do you have any memories of that period...)

No, not there I don't, I don't remember. When I moved back to Birmingham now, of course I wasn't nursing then but that's when they begin. I don't remember any patients who had it when I was there.

(Anything else you'd like to say....)

Not in a book or nothing...

(Could you point out the ones that are still with the hospital.)

LB-3

New Speaker....

Yes, I don't know how effective it would be. Now, alright. Lillian Daffren, Jerry Daffren, Lilly Callahan, Doris Strummonds, Johnny May, Mrs. Watson, Elma Smithson, I believe that's it.

(Let's talk a little, some experience at the Martin hospital and then came over here. What are some of the differences between that hospital and this one?)

Well, I came to that hospital as its first medical director there. They did not have a director. The records are quite different because of federal regulations and just quality. Your medical record is much more in detail and a valuable tool in the hospital. You work with the doctors and where do I go from there.....

(Just compare by size and services available...)

In the medical record realm, at Martin primarily the record was a resource tool for the doctor to refer to and insurance purposes and legal purposes were really the only thing of significance the old record was used for. Here, its just too numerous to numerate, but the medical record department has changed in so many ways because of federal regulations and medicare and all those things. Still basically your basics though, a reference tool for your doctor, insurance purposes, payment purposes and....

(Statistical information....)

One thing that I found real interesting is that we have seen 25,000 different patients. That's not how many admissions we have had by far, but that many different people. We've had them through out the county, through out the United States. I don't know how many states we have touched but being near I-20, and the transit people, but we have had 25,000 different people. We have had 5,000 or nearing the mark of 5,000 newborns born in this hospital.

(What do you see as the future of this hospital, or the role of this hospital in the continued growth of Pell City..in 5 years, in 10 years?)

I think it is going to be the same quality hospital that it is now and a vital institution in the community. We have survived through many things, I continue to refer to federal

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regulations, Medicare, changing of insurance companies, more demands but I see us meeting that need and I see us meeting the challenge of what ever it might be.

(Perhaps one fear that some people have when they give up there little community hospital for a big regional medical facility, somehow it is not going to be as personal, I sense that that is not true here...I sense that people still get personal care. That they are still treated almost like family here, I sense that feeling here. I wonder if you might have some insight on how a big facility, compared to the Martin hospital, how has this facility been able to maintain that personal level of care and concern?)

Of course, we were prejudiced in the beginning. We felt like it was a carry over from Martin Hospital. But you are so right and I am glad to hear you bring that out. We do try to maintain that imagine. I think we have. The newcomers that have come along, it's just part of the inservice, it's just part of what we push and what we strive for is that closeness and the family type thing. I don't know if I'm out of order in mentioning this, but we compete with a very close neighbor, Birmingham and we've had a lot of late people move out. They have their ties in Birmingham. But once they try us, we usually keep them.

(Anything else...)

No, that was very spontaneous and I hope I said it well.... to my administrator's liking.

(These things that you have there, just tell us about them, then we'll come back and shoot some footage...)

When Martin Hospital closed, the equipment and things that were there were made available to the employees to disperse of them and they made them available if you wanted them. I have this tray and coffee server and cream server and the stool that was used in O.R. The chair.. I don't know, I just liked it.....

(Tight shot of tray over there.. just take your hand like you did a moment ago and sit it there... Take your hand out of the picture..that's good. now let's go back in one more time.)

Man' Voice...

Before there was a little booth at a medical meeting where they had a pre-done tape that they would splice in your comments. They had a little tele-prompter and everything.

BB-5

You got to sit there and read it. I need a teleprompter...

(Tell me, you mentioned that you were in the St. Louis area so how did you find out about Pell City...and what attracted you here...)

I am originally from north Alabama. I grew up in Huntsville and went to college in Birmingham, went to medical school in Nashville at Vanderbilt University and moved to St. Louis for a residency in Internal Medicine. Six years ago I was looking for a place to practice and I was very much attracted to Pell City because of the friendly people and the recreational opportunities here, the potential for growth and just the general atmosphere of prosperity here was very attractive. I think we have a very unique community with a wide, it's a growing community with young people, retired people, very ..businesses moving in, it's a very growing area. It's very exciting being here now.

All my hopes over the past 5 years have been fulfilled. And the future looks very good here. I've been especially happy with the medical staff. We have a very cohesive group here. We have good, strong leadership in the administration of the hospital. Our county commission and hospital board of trustees are very supportive of the hospital and help us prepare for the future. In the past 3 years we have attracted more specialists to our medical staff. We have an orthopedic doctor full time. We have a OB-GYN doctor now. While other rural hospitals across the nation are struggling to get by in this day and time our hospital is standing pretty strong and gradually expanding even. So I think we are very fortunante here.

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(What do you see as the future of medical service in Pell City? What do you think will be available to patients and residents here say five years/ten years down the road that they don't have now?)

I think that high technology services are definitely expanding into smaller communities. Technology is making things that we could not afford before more practical. We in the past two years ago, the hospital installed a computer/tomography scanner to do special x-ray tests and that is just one example of the things that are gradually becoming available to smaller hospitals where the medical environment in general is very competitive and there are a lot of specialists in Birmingham who are reaching out here part-time to help us and that trend will certainly continue I think in the next few years where we have a chance to attract further specialists, pediatricians, anesthesiologists(?) are two of the things that we are looking for now. We will probably be a long time until we do open-heart surgery or neuro surgery here, there are certain

BB-6

specialized things that are not appropriate for us to go after but I think there is always room for growth here.

(Let's say that a person did need that kind of specialized surgery or treatment, what .. I guess what I am looking for is some indication that it's not as though that person has a problem, because that kind of treatment is available very quickly...)

We've got working relationships with all the medical care facilities in Birmingham and depending on a patient's needs it's very easy to refer patients in. We have for emergencies we have a helicopter available that can transport patients that are critically ill. There is our hospital is extremely fortunate that we are relatively independent of the hospitals in that we are not tied to one particular hospital to send patients. We can choose the facility which offers them the best services that that patient needs. We are not tied to any particular one. Many smaller hospitals get their association with a larger system and then you are sorta limited in your choices but we are very fortunate to have a all the options available here.

(What makes this a good place for a doctor like you to settle in and develop a practice?)

I think the most important thing is that there are , it is a very warm community that people try to make you feel at home, you get to know your patients and you see them not only in the office you see them when you go to the grocery store, you see them when you go to church, I was amazed with how quickly a busy practice built up here. I think that that will attract other doctors here too.

(One thing I noticed, I sensed, the medical facility across the street is a relatively large facility compared to the old Martin hospital....it does service the entire county still, the impression I got was that it is a very personal place for medical care. Why do you think that there is so much personal care, personal attention that's not quite so impersonal or business like as one might expect. Is that common to the area or what do you think?)

I think we have a very friendly hospital staff that they, it goes back to when you see patients in a professional setting you also know that you will see them tomorrow at the grocery store, Sunday at church. You will, you know them by name, you get much more personal service here than in a 500 bed hospital in a large city where the nurse taking care of you will probably never see you again. It's a very different spirit that that larger hospitals that I trained in in Nashville and St. Louis. But it is a very valuable asset that we have.

Ag 2/5

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(Is there anything else.....)

No, I think that is everything...

Pell City 7

(Personal history..)

I suppose that I was invited to come into the county and my home is really Birmingham. It is an unusual situation in that I have worked in the county low these many years but I have always lived in Birmingham. I suppose that is the reason that I have been able to stay here so long because of that. I did start out as principal of a, my first principalship, as a matter of fact, at Mark School over near Moody there and stayed there for five years and I moved on, I was asked to move from there to the Pell City area. At that time the superintendent, Mr. Roy Gibson, and he stated that they were going to enlarge or increase, or build a new building rather for the blacks of Pell City area. And so I moved into Pell City. (I came to the St. Claire training school September of 1953. And I stayed there for I believe 18 years. During that tenure, we were able to, there was only one school in the county that was accredited and that was the Pell City High School. So we went, looked forward to working towards being accredited. We became the second school in St. Claire county to be accredited by both the state of Alabama and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.)

In 1969, I believe I was asked to come into the central office of the County Board at that time and I moved from Pell City to the central office and eventually my title was Assistant Superintendent of Schools involving special education and accreditation. This type of thing and there. From there I retired in 1982, and stayed home for about 3 or 4 days and got me another job here in St. Claire County with the St. Claire County Headstart Program. By the way I had been with the Headstart Program for 24 years, volunteering my time there with them at the very inception of Headstart other than one year we were involved in Headstart. I do not know if you will want this on there or not but Headstart integrated St. Claire County in 1966. We used the regular school, the Moody School, the Ashville School, the _____ Roberts school, the Ragland School and I believe the Springler School. We did have an integrated staff completely with both white and black teachers and we had an enrollment of 385. We were a summer program and we had approximately half white youngsters and half black youngsters and we rolled up and down the highways and back roads of St. Claire County and nobody bothered us nor did they say anything to us about it. So of course I would not have said that at that time, but we did integrate without any problems of the St. Claire County.

I believe those are the few things that I have done.

7-7
Kendy

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(One thing that has impressed me about the school system, as I have known it in Pell City, I came in in the fourth grade over in what was then South St. Claire Elementary School, Jr High School in the mill village, then graduated from Pell City High School. It seems to me to be a relatively small town, and not an especially wealthy town, that Pell City has had a disporportionately large number of highly dedicated well qualified teachers...seems to have given to its students a very high quality of education. What explanation might there be?)

Well, during my tenure as principal we tried to find people who were interested in children. At that time we were not teaching for the money at all, so it was because of the love of children that we worked in the school system. Those people who are retiring or did retire from this system, were dedicated people and gave their all to the school systems of this county. You are correct in that we do have a high level of dedicated people in this county involved in this school system.

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(Headstart first step toward integrating the school....Hugh Williamson talked about that period from his perspective, I wonder how that period looked from a black educator's perspective?)

Well, to me, it was something that we needed and wanted and it was a period of unrest but not particularly here in St. Claire County. We did not have the riots and things of that sort here in St. Claire County but in so far as your question is concerned, it was as I stated, it was a period where in we suffered. For instance when I came to Ackmar (?) or Pell City either one of the schools, I could sit in the building and look up at the sky and look down at the ground and that was in the building. The situation was bad, totally bad. We had, the buses that we had were raggedy, and would break down half way to school every morning. The books that we had were second hand books that had been used here in the county. But we made it just the same. We made it through all of that. It was a time of many problems, I'll say that but through prayer, through going to church and studying and whatnot, we made it through.

(A time with problems, not quite as an event as it was in some areas....Maybe it was just a matter of scale, just because this was a smaller area it didn't seem as bad. I wonder if there might be some particular people or organizations that come to mind that helped this process be less painful that it might have been?)

Yes, I guess I could name any number of people. At that time we had a very considerate Board of Education. They worked towards integrating if you remember that I made a statement that Headstart integrated this county in 1966. It was all

through the County Board of Education. So we had people at that time who were trying to do just toward both races as such. We had the black as well as the white who worked towards it and more less peace and harmony. I think that possibly the only problem we had was with the cheerleaders. That was the major, that was my first major connection with it with integrating the schools, the cheerleaders at the high school and we did have some marches of course. But we cleared it up and right now I don't think we have a problem as such. We might some few problems but not as many as we have had.

(As you think back on the time you have been active in the county and in the city, who are some of the outstanding people in the Black community that have had either significance in the Black Community itself or in the community at large?)

One that comes to mind is Oscar Green. Oscar Green who worked real hard with, he was not a part of the school system but he did work in helping to improve the school system here. W.J. Hill who was my predecessor at the St. Claire County Training School who worked there. I can remember James Kirtsey and all of these people have passes, but one I'd like to mention would be Tope Williams, he has striven through many years to get people to come out and vote and to register to vote and things of that sort. Those are some that I think of off hand. Of course there are many, many others.

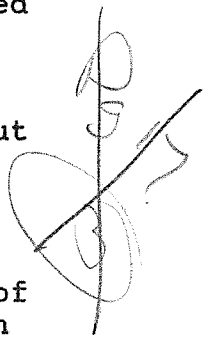
(What.. we have talked to several white people who have grown up in Pell City and they have talked about what it was like to grow up and the kinds of things that they did. During the period during the 50's, what was it like growing up Black in Pell City? What kind of social and recreational opportunities were there, what kind of job opportunities were there? If you were a sharp student what were your chances of continuing your education? What kind of future did you have to look forward to?)

Here in Pell City and especially at the County Training School, we were involved in getting scholarships for our youngsters who completed their education there. At Birmingham Miles College, Payne College there in Birmingham, some went to Birmingham, some went to Alabama A & M, Tuscegee(?), and Alabama State. Those were the areas where we were able to get scholarships for our youngsters. As far as the recreation was concerned, it was we had to make our own recreation. We had to just do the best we could. The Board of Education or the City of Pell City built us what is now the Nutritional Building in GlenCity. They built that building for us as a recreational hall. They also placed a swimming pool there that we used right in front of the school there. The youngsters did have some type of recreation but not the type that they really needed at the time.

7-4

(Not a great deal of strife...because of the economics, a rich and poor class but not necessarily a black and white class..mostly tenant farmers...was there a feeling just good Christian poor folks working together, is that more of the reason that there was less strife, because people understood poverty on a day to day level....they were all working together to get out of the same hole?)

I'm...you are correct there. You will remember that I stated that we integrated Headstart in 1966. We did not have any strife white parents, and black parents worked together meeting together, to keep things going for the school. (We did not think of integration as such. We were integrated but didn't realize it because here in our town/county your next door neighbor was white or black or what not and nobody thought about. We just lived near each other and we didn't go to school together, we went our separate ways but we always felt the need of other people around us. The issue of segregation and integration, we really did not know too much about it at that time because we all lived together and worked together more or less, farmed together and what not.)



(As far as the commercial center of town, I know that Saturday was always trade day. As a child that is when I saw most Black people but during the week there seemed to be communities, Harrisburg, GlenCity, where more of the..It seemed to me that the races came together more on Saturday than any other day of the week and that was commercially motivated, the only shopping district was downtown. Do you recall any feelings of separatism in the commercial district? Was there discrimination there?)

Well, yes, we..for instance we had our own eating places as such and the whites had their own but as far as the businesses were concerned it was a day, Saturdays were a day for us to shop and meet our neighbors, talk and find out what was going on throughout the county and throughout the town. So there was a good feeling, a good relationship there with both white and black and as far as I know in my thinking.

(I recall a picture of my grandfather's funeral. Of course there was all the white relatives clustered all around, but right in the middle of the picture was four Black people who had worked side by side with him on his tenant farm and they were always referred to as just as family members. There seemed to be a closeness among that generation that stemmed from working the land together. Do you see that kind of closeness breaking down now?)

Very much so, very much so. We don't have the closeness. I think that integration was a great thing but it helped in some ways and in some ways it did not help cause the relationship now is not the same as it was in years past. There was a much closer relationship between white and black

at sometime back but now more or less a strained relationship that we have now because we are saying to each other well the law says this, the law says that and we are going by the law as such and there is a lot of resentment on both sides in regards to friendships and relationships.

(Just before I came in here, I passed a table in the outer room and there was a young Black girl in her teens and a tall very handsome Black man sitting there and she was showing him a First Grade Reader. He was the A. Hall type and I noticed she was showing him the reader and I stopped and asked if he was trying to read. I told him about the Literacy programs that we have at night, do you think that our level of literacy in the county, is 48%, I don't know how accurate that is. Do you think that the literacy rate has declined in the last 25 years or has it..more of a problem?)

It is more of a problem. It is a hidden problem. You have people who will not admit to the fact that they can not read or write. So it is more of a problem here now. At one time when the youngsters were in school we made them come to school and when they got to school we made them learn something and we taught them how to read and write and what not and their parents assisted us in doing so but at the present day, even working with four year olds, the parents want them to have their way. That leads and its making trouble for the first grade teachers in the schools and when they get to school they are trouble makers and they can't learn to read and write because they are trouble makers. We find that there is more..the illiterate rate is far greater now, in my thinking I may not be correct.

(By virtue of your number as an observer of life in this area, but also by virtue of your several years work in Headstart working with the children as they begin, I wonder what future do you see for Pell City? What is Pell City going to be like 5 years, 10 years down the road?)

We are going to move! We are going to move real fast here in Pell City. The growth is just going to be great because to me people are moving into the area, moving in this area to live and to have businesses. So I see a tremendous growth for us here. I wish I had about 25 more years so I could be involved in it with the growth here.

(As an educator, the advent of television in rural communities, what kind of effect do you think the introduction of television in the "50's has had on education, the general upbringing of children..)

To be perfectly frank with you, bad!! It is good for parents who will work with their children in getting their lessons and things of that sort. We see all the new things that are happening throughout the world, that's great. But to allow a

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child to come home in the afternoon, to turn on the television and stay there in front of that television for two or three hours not doing anything but looking, it's bad. And that's another reason why we have so much illiteracy. That's why children don't learn in school, and that's why they know so many of the worldly things. They know how to shoot, they know how to murder, they know all those things and they learn them faster than they learn how to read and write and to do. That might not be the correct answer but that's my opinion.

(Anything you would like to say.....)

I don't have anything....

(Tell about you and your family and when you came to Pell City....)

Halid

In response to the question that you just asked me, I had very little to do with my arrival in Pell City. Actually my father was raised in what we now know as Schole Creek Valley, in the northern division of the county and my mother was raised in Slash Ham (?) Valley which is out from Ashville about 4 miles. Back prior to moving to Pell City, my father was, he worked for Adamson Motor Company in Birmingham. When I was 4 years of age, he moved our family to Pell City so I this has been my residence continuously since it must have been about 1928 and we lived at that time when we first moved to Pell City in what we called a little green house right next door to Mr. Cogswell which is almost in the location of the County Health Department office at that time. Of course we lived there for two or three years and then we moved up to the..what we called back in that day and time, is called the old Cannon House, that was a family name that lived there. That was were Sonny Kilgrow lives at this time. Of course you know that Sonny has completely remodeled and rebuilt the home that we lived in at that time.

I've been a residence of St. Claire County and Pell City continuously since we first moved here in 1927 or 1928.

(What was it like growing up in Pell City during those years? What was school like, what were the kinds of things that you and your friends did for recreation?)

Well, when you mention school, you know that there is a lot of difference in the schools back then and what we are accustomed to in this so call modern day and time. I know one of the mayors in ...that was honored last ...two or three weeks ago at the opening of the city park, one of his accomplishments was building one of the school houses. It was a little frame white building on the lot directly behind the city hall at that time. I believe that was the first and

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second grade was taught there. That's where I started to school. On the location where the city hall is today was a high school and I don't know how far that dates, but that was the high school. The recreation ground was on the big vacant lot right behind the jail. That whole area in there was vacant and there was a play ground for schools and also when I lived right across the street from that area, that was where our playground was. Incidentally, that's..that is the center of Pell City. That use to be a concrete marker on that playground that was the center of the marker for the center of Pell City. Pell City was originally when it was incorporated in 1891, section 1 was comprised as the City of Pell City or the town of Pell City, when it was first incorporated I think it was seventeen votes that incorporated Pell City originally.

(After you graduated from Pell City High School, I guess you went off to college....)

I graduated from High School in the late 1941, and after I graduated I ..that was the beginning of the period of time of World War 2, and in order to make some money to go to school, I got a job at Childersburg at the Powder Plant. I worked from June from the time I got out of high school until the following December and I entered college in January 1942 at the University of Alabama. Of course I completed my..nearly two years of undergraduate work before I was called into the service. In the mean time, I had joined the Air Force and while my last semester in school, I was a reserve and in March of 1943 I was called into the United States Air Force and which I eventually went through the pilot training program, got my wings, got my commission and there after went to B-17 transition training in Shonuteville (?) Illinois. As a result of that I was the first pilot, commander of the airplane and that was what I eventually went into combat with was with a B-17. After World War 2, during World War 2 I incidently I was shot down on September 11, 1944 and we had as I have said many times, it was a pretty busy day over Lipzig, Germany the day I was shot down. We had about 60 German fighter planes that jumped our squadron and we lost every one of our planes which included at that time, 12 planes, B-17. I later learned that we got credit for 27 fighters, but now I lost 5 members of my crew in that day. Of course I remained in a prisoner of war camp for about eight, a little better than eight months in Germany. I stayed in the hospital there for about 2 and half or 3 months in an Allied Hospital. It was a German facility, but it was designated as a Allied Hospital because we had Americans, British, French, _____, just generally it was made up of...whatever and a lot of Italians there that were and Russians too. The Americans were treated a lot better than most others. The Italians and Russians they recognize no rank, they got very little food in fact at that time we were sustained by the Red Cross parcels that we got through the

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Red Cross. The Serbs (?) were getting Red Cross parcels also, I never did know but they were getting a full parcel per person per week and we were getting one half parcel per person per week. I never really have understood how the Serbs got ..how they came in on it because we were all American Red Cross parcels and they were designed for one parcel per person per week. Later, I went into the Prison Camp and of course we just about didn't get any parcels then, we got.. most of our diet was potatoes, really, rhudebakers, potatoes..

I finished my undergraduate work after I got out of service and I went straight through 12 months of the years and then I entered Law School at the University of Alabama. I graduated from Law School in January of 1950. At that time I came back to Pell City, went into practice with W. T. Starnes and I've been in Pell City continuously since that time.

(You could have gone after law school any where... why Pell City?)

It was home. I enjoyed living in Pell City and of course you mentioned going to any law school, the University of Alabama had one of the best recognized law schools in the south and they still do but in any event, when I was in undergraduate work, I was grading for one of the professors in commerce school. Actually he is the one that put the seed in my mind to go to law school. I had no idea whatsoever when I entered Law School that I would practice law but when I got out I went immediately in the practice of law and until I was appointed judge, I continued to practice law here in Pell City for 23 years. In 1973, I was appointed by Governor Wallace to the new judgeship that was created at that time. At that time St. Claire County had a little better than 25,000 inhabitants that was the population. Of course that was the,..it had one judge in the circuit and that included St. Claire County and Blunt County. In 1973, there was a bill passed in the legislature which created a new judgeship here, and I was appointed, fortunate enough to be appointed to that position, and I've been serving as circuit judge continuously since October 5, 1973. We are operating on the same personnel that we had been. The population of St. Claire County now is estimated to be somewhat 52,53,000 on the census. So I believe since I have been on the judge, St. Claire County has more than doubled in population and Blunt County has not grown quite as fast as Pell City but they have also pretty near doubled their population since 1973, the last 17 years.

(How is Pell City different today than the Pell City you grew up in? What are some of the changes that have taken place?)

Well, I would like to think that it's all good. Of course,

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Pell City has always been a good place to live and as many people would acknowledge the fact that there have been so many people that have moved to Pell City from other areas and I don't believe I've ever seen anyone that didn't like Pell City. Pell City has always been a place that was appealing as a place to live and raise your family. And of course its the location of Pell City is such that it has got a lot going for it, always has. ~~Of course I use to say at one time that Pell City was going to develop and explode someday inspite of us, the people of Pell City because it is so strategically located that it just has to grow. I think that it is going to continue to grow from all indications.~~ The whole county is going to continue to grow because we are fortunate enough to have two interstate highways that go east and west through St. Claire County and the areas close to Birmingham have already experienced a tremendous growth. Luty, Crossford, is that not, that borders almost on St. Claire County, they are going through the same thing. Springville in my opinion will be the next big influex of growth that we will have in St. Claire County. Of course we have already experienced it here in Pell City due to the development of the lake and due to the recreation and uh...other things that have caused people to move in here. Primarily the lake though, I think.

(When the lake came 20-odd years ago, what changes did it bring with it? Obviously it brought in more people but has it affected the community, has it affected the...

I think the biggest change that has been made there was when the lake was first being developed, there was a lot of people in Birmingham that built week-end homes here in St. Claire County. It appeared for a while there that that was what it would be, a week-end vacation spot for the people who would come out for the week-end. But I think the biggest change that it has had as far as the lake, is that some many people now have built their permanent homes here in our community and on the lake. I took a little trip down to the lake yesterday and I just had not been down in the area well in the River Oaks area, for instance, I have never have been so amazed in my life to see the homes that have been built in that area and that has happened in the last two or three years. Most of them are fine homes, I mean big, mansion-type homes. That has been one of the significant things that has happened in St. Claire County is the fact that the life-style that has developed here has made a tremendous change.

(You grew up here, went away to school, came back, settled in, raised a family and now your son is pretty well settled in here as an attorney and recently elected to the State Legislature or set to go...What kind of a future do you see for your son and for future generations of Holidays in this part of the county?

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I have 4 children and right now he is the only one who is married so I don't know what the future holds for....I am going to have to talk to him and his wife and see if we can't get some more Holiday's on..... I have incidently three of my four children are all law graduates and my youngest daughter is practicing here in Pell City with Herbert, Blair, and Holliday, and Parsons. I have got one son that is practicing with Jim Hill in Leeds and I would hope that they would just bare down and stay with it. It is a honorable profession and a good profession and I think that they will all succeed as well as Hugh..he's my oldest child and I'm real proud that he was able to weather the election and with all the help that he had with the some of the other good people in Pell City and St. Claire County he was fortunate enough to be elected.

I was looking at Jerry.. and saw Jerry riding around with a sign on the back of his car.....

(St. Claire County has had politically less that futuristic leadership over the last twenty years in a lot of peoples eyes. Do you see that breaking now? Are we going to start seeing better more forward thinking people rising to the surface? Are some of these outsiders getting involved? Is there going to be, do you think that we are going to have the leadership to...one of the things that I hear is people saying, the outsiders are coming..businesses are coming, progress is coming is the leadership going to be there? We have an emerging class of young leaders that you can see or are we going to be..?)

I think that the people are going to demand it in the future. I think that the qualifications for instance in serving in the legislature I think that the people are going to demand that we do have qualified people that present, elected to those offices and of course the ...dealing with the fellow legislators and especially the leadership in the legislature is what is so important. It all get down to one thing that if you are qualified, when you get in the ...I'm talking about our legislative members that they can go down to Montgomery and be leaders in the legislative process themselves. I am looking forward that that will be the future in St. Claire County. That we will have qualified leaders that's representing us that can go down there and be on the same level with some of the other leaders and be in a position to get a lot of things for St. Claire County that couldn't be acquired otherwise through the legislative process.

(Politically, St. Claire County I know during the period that you served in the legislature and before then, St. Claire was sort of a the extra piece of pie that was added on to this legislative district or that legislative district and currently seat 42 is the only elected seat where the person holding that seat actually lives in St. Claire County. We

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have the other side of the representatives, we have two representatives, one lives in then we have two state Senators, neither of whom live in the county and we have two congressional districts, neither of whom live in the county and I often hear people say that we are the tail of a lot of dogs but we don't get the trough very often..Do you think that there is a possibility down the road that we are going to see some redistricting where we get a stronger representation, is that possible?)

I think that probably there will be some redistricting in the next..in this next legislature. I'd like certainly, and I think that most of the other people in St. Claire County would like to see that all of our county be brought back in to one district as far as the House is concerned. Maybe we cannot get..well if we get over 50,000 people then we are approaching the population that would entitle us to probably a Senator. Some day we probably will, I don't know if we'll have it in the immediate future, but we will in time to come I think have our own Senator for St. Claire County. I know the first redistricting bill that I can remember, that was well in my lifetime, that had been passed was during my tenure in the legislature. As fas as St. Claire County is concerned, I worked real hard on the and I had a real good relationship with Governor Brewer who was governor at that time. I managed to get a bill passed in the House that was to put St. Claire County in the middle with Blount and Shelby County. Of course I was very pleased in that because of certainly we wouldn't been as you referred to while ago, the tail that wagged the dog, the tail end of the circuit it would be in the middle. But that bill when it got to the Senate was not, as usual, a lot of politics in there and some of the Marshall County delegation and Blount County did not like it because that would put them on the tail end. We finally ended up with a bill that was Marshall, Blount and St. Claire which did put us on the tail-end of it at that time also. But I think that you will see a redistricting of legislature in the next four years and I think that it is real important that we have someone that can have a lot to say about the district that concerns St. Claire County.

(History of Mayors)

Well, it is quite lengthy and that's where I got down when it was so hot..at the park a going and trying to complete.....

(In your lifetime during the time you were growing up or during the time you have been back here as an adult, are there some significant people that stand out in your mind who have been significant leaders in the community whether governmental leaders or educators or religious leaders. Some people that have had some significant influence in the direction of Pell City and this part of St. Claire County?)

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Well, Walter Kennedy, the gentleman that just left here, I would have to say that he has in the field of education, has been one of the most outstanding educators that has been here throughout the years. He first came to St. Claire County I believe over in the Margaret area and he moved from there to Pell City and of course he has real moving influence in this community since he has been here. I'd have to put him up on the top as far as education is concerned. We have had I think through the years, I know I was City Attorney here for 23 years. I served under 6 mayors during that period of time and I would say for the period of time during that period of time and since then I think the city of Pell City has had some good leaders as so far as mayors are concerned. And we still have at this time. I know that our present mayor and some of the _____ have certainly been industry conscious and have been working on it and have been successful. I would say this that I would predict that they would continue the present administration that we got in the city here as far as industry is concerned.

(One thing that seems to me as we have interviewed people and as we look at the history of Pell City that compared to other communities of the same size and the general socio-economic make-up, Pell City seems to have had an exceptionally high quality of leadership. What do you suppose has motivated the men and women of Pell City to give so much of themselves for the good of the community and in their service through government or through civic organizations or in other kinds of leadership positions?)

I think that our leadership has been so conscious of industrial development. We have been sitting on a gold mine so to speak all these years and I think that various administrations down the line have really gone out and devoted their time for industrial development. It is paying off now but it is not, I would not say it is all done by the present administration or the immediately past administration because the ground work has been laid throughout the years. It has been a lot of effort put into industrial development in this area and I think that it is paying off now and I think it will continue to payoff because were Pell City is located in an area that has got something to offer and most of the new industries that's coming here, my experience has been that they are here and they like it. I think that they go back and tell story in other areas in the United States.

(I heard as a child that Pell City would never grow until the 4 or 5 big land owning families finally decided to let it grow..Do you see that beginning to break down? Are the new generations of these families becoming more conscious of the need to expand?)

Well, since you have brought the subject up..I keep

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remembering Ed Blair who was the editor of St. Clair News...for many years. He has,uh, one of his favorite sayings that Pell City was never going to grow until we had a few funerals. Now I can't except that literally as stated by Ed but I know that maybe has through the years been some not as much progress made that could have been made. I laugh about it sometime and say that I hope that as I get older I'll realize that the point where I should step aside and let some of the younger people take over. And uh.. I think that the younger people are coming forward now. But uh..I think maybe what was said there is maybe true in some respects. I know in one of our neighboring communities in St. Clair County, and it made the newspapers, I mean it was a quote for the newspapers, that they did not want any industrial, but they wanted everything just like it was and to remain like that. Of course it's remained that way for years. But there are a lot of people satisfied. They did not want to cope with the problems that arise through increased population and development in your community. You asked something a few minutes ago about, I will go back and make a statement concerning the Pell City's growth. When I was in school, I believe Pell City's nearly all..I mean in grammar school and during the years that I was growing up.. and even after I got out of law school..population of Pell City was 800 and something. But that just included the section 1 that was originally incorporated in Pell City in 1891. We had Eden west of us. We had Oak Ridge northeast of us. We had Avondale Mills that was unincorporated. We had Whitesville directly north of ..that whole community was not incorporated and Glen City. We had a mayor of Oak Ridge, we had a mayor of Eden, we had a mayor of Pell City and then we had all the area in between that that was unincorporated.

During Joe Kilgrows administration, I was City Attorney at that time, and during that period we had to vote Eden, Oak Ridge voted to come into Pell City and then all the immediate areas all were incorporated. Really and truly I think that that was the beginning of the growth of Pell City back at that time. Pell City was even growing even before the lake was built but of course that's been responsible for the explosion of the population in this immediate area.

(Anything else....)

Well, I don't know of any thing else to say. I've about run down so, I'm going to sign off at this time. It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to appear on this program. I will say that.

Pell City 8a

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fields

(Tell us all about when you came to Pell City, what it was like and what you have done since you have been here..)

We moved to Pell City in 1973. At that time I was employed with Liberty National Life Insurance. What really brought us to Pell City was we started camping out on the lake. So we began to look around for a job and I had had an insurance background so I went and applied with Liberty National and I got the job so..In 1973 we moved to Pell City for the first time.

(What was Pell City like in 1973 compared to what it is today?)

Pell City was small and unique. It had began its growth pattern as far as people. I think the lake has been one of the biggest attractions to bringing people and moving people here from Birmingham and surrounding areas. I think the retail end of it has been kinda slow, but at that time, we still had a TG&Y and we did have a small shopping center but we had..the people had just began to move so we had a growth and of course as most people moving out here from Jefferson County, seeking to get away from the bigger cities.

(As Pell City has begun to grow, what have been some of the problems...growth pains with cities when they begin to reach beyond where they once were, I wonder if you might talk about some of those growth pains...not negative way but more positive way.. How Pell City has dealt with this or that or the other..)

Well, most of your corporations and municipalities are a lot like corporations. They do experience growth pains but as ..they are good pains, because anytime you begin to grow you just have to seek out solutions to solve the problems and of course right now we have handled the problems very well and will continue to do so. But I think that everybody is enjoying the strains and growths that we are going through. But in the end, we will come out on top.

(In towns like Pell City, a lot of time there is some tension between the people that were born and raised here and the newcomers. I don't sense that that is quite the problem here that it is in some other places.)

I don't think so. That is one of the things that I think Pell City is unique in the 18 years that I have been here. It is the quality of life. The people here are some of the finest people on God's earth. They are just ..go out of their way to be helpful and they are friendly. They open their arms up to you. It is nothing like they treat you as

8A-25

E. B.

to hey you don't belong here. Because if you become involved in the community the community will soon accept you as a Pell City-ian (?).

(I wonder if some of the growth and development as Jerry and Judge Holliday were speaking a few minutes, it seems that growth and development is coming through the cooperative effort of the old timers those who have the property and have the influence so to speak and maybe some of the newer people that come in with a bigger dream, a bigger vision for the future. Is that an accurate perception? Has growth come from within, has it grown from pressure without or has it been sort of a cooperative effort?)

I think that it has been a cooperative effort. I've never witnessed what Judge Holliday had spoke about earlier, about some of the families having to have some funerals before Pell City would grow because I think that everybody in Pell City you know that they go out of their way to help industries that have located here. They help the new corporations that have come. They understand I think that Pell City is growing and is going to change. It is nothing that any one person can do to stop it. It is just a natural growth.

(It is probably better to have that growth in the hands of people that are here than to have it from outside..)

Most definitely, because they profit from some of the lands that their fathers in early years have handled through the years so I think that they will profit from it.

(This year long centennial that the city is celebrating and you certainly have been involved with that and have provided some leadership with that, what do you think is the value of the city celebrating its past the way this city is doing?)

I think that the celebration is really honoring our forefathers. The ones that were pioneers, the ones that have made sacrificies, the whole community is to be proud. I think that this is the way of honoring not only our former leaders but all of our citizens because they've played a big part in the history of Pell City. I think that it is something to give them an opportunity to go back and relive some of those days and to share with others and to teach our young folks today about I think that it is very important that they know the history of Pell City and what it has meant and where it has come from and where it is going.

(Where do you think Pell City is going? What's it going to be like 5,10 years down the road?)

A lot of times I've often wondered, I've often thought as to what the future may hold but it I think that the quality of life, regardless how large Pell City will get or how fast it

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grows, I don't think the quality will ever change because there are too many people who have been here all these years that have made Pell City what it is today. I think they share that same general concern for anybody that comes here and I think that as Pell City will grow, I think that it will grow in a positive manner it will never be nothing compared to some of your large metropolitan areas. In five to ten years I think that it will just be a steady growth. Some of the services, new retail outlets and some new restaurants and various things that people wouldn't have to drive so far to satisfy their needs.

(I wonder if there might be some down side to that too, let's say that for instance if all of a sudden you get two or three chain restaurants in town what's that going to do the institution like the Steak House or your Wal-Marts or something more in here, what's that going to do to the local variety stores that are already here? Can we have the best of the old and the best of the new too?)

I think so, I think people will continue to patronize our local merchants because that personal service still means a lot and if you go to one of the local retail merchants now they give you that personal service. They know you on a first name basis and people still like that personal service. I don't think that as far as change in the Steak House with something like the Steak House will never be changed because it is a landmark, not only in Pell City but also from other communities and they will be here, it's not going to effect it is just going to be a blend of giving people the new services because even now see they leave town, they have to leave town to go shop, so we are just going to capture or try to capture that whole market.

(We have been kinda been working down the questions, Jerry, do you want to jump in here.. we've talked about the quality of life how it has changed since he came in 1973, what about the future.....AH..Uhm...Quality of life, how it has changed...When are you going to pave my mud hole.....Almost 4 feet off the pavement.....I guess one of the things that you might want to discuss is the expansion of city facilities, new civic center, a new lake front park..what other facilities do we see coming down the road, I know some one said something about a jogging track or something over by the baseball....nature..)

Well, we are going to be building a new fire station in the next year because 10 years ago they had, they didn't mandate but they recommended that we build a new fire station because actually the ladder truck which is Station No. 2 in south Pell City is suppose to be downtown. That will be something that will be coming. Of course we have a new park and we have a civic center which was built back when Mayor Nixon, Bill Nixon was here. I'm sure there were others that played a

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part in that and of course the hospital has been built some where during that period. They have grown too. We have our own little world that we are creating here.

(The fire station, it is going to be a downtown ...Do you see any expansion in the libraries...)

Well, that will be something one day, because as we..the people that are moving in here are culture level is a lot higher. Because they are moving from larger cities and they are use to going to libraries, they are use to plays, and theaters and stuff of this nature, I can see in the future that I feel like they will require that. Us county people we thought a theater was going to see Roy Rogers on Saturday morning...But anyway there is a certain segment of the people that require that type of service.

(What are some of the area wide improvements or developments business or industrial growth that have occurred during your administration that you are pleased to be associated with?)

I think that one of the things, and of course I didn't actually begin this project but we were there to help complete it, was the expansion of the sewer service. I think that means that it's so vital and means so much to the growth of Pell City in the future because it is one of the first things that any industry or any retail outlet will ask you as far as entry structure, what'd you got. I think that that is one of the things that will help Pell City's growth tremendously.

(I read a lot and hear a lot in the news these days about the pressure that is being put on city and county governments by the fact that the federal government is mandating more and more but funding less and less. Do you see that as a long term problem for a place like Pell City?)

I think that if they don't begin to curb some of the requirements that it could be a problem down the road because especially with ADM and all your government agencies because they are constantly running behind you telling you what you need to do but and..they have no way of funding. They send all the ideas or sometimes mandate the changes but they give you no help so far as with the solutions themselves. I think that it could be a problem somewhere down the road but at the present time, we don't have any but I can sympathize with some of the other communities because one of the big issues today is solid waste. It is going to be a tremendous problem down the road, this is kinda like talking about the future, nobody may know what the future may hold, but it is some of these things that are going to become a reality. We are trying to prepare for that type of thing in with our growth because it is something that you can't just ignore because it will be on you before you know it.

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(During the time you have been here in Pell City, I wonder if there are some significant people who stand out in your mind as having made significant contributions to the community either as government leaders, business leaders, or just as civic minded citizens?)

Well there's several..to make..to enjoy the success we have enjoyed here in Pell City has taken a team effort. Until I got into the municipal government, I didn't really appreciate municipal officials, but I have to, and I have to tell people that have been in the position and the council people who have served Pell City, that I appreciate their dedication and I think that they are owed a debt of gratitude that will never be repaid because it takes an unselfish person, a person who really loves the community to step in that position to be willing to serve. I would say that to mention one individual, I couldn't, but a group, that group especially, have paid their dues, they've sacrificed and I'm proud to be in the position that I am during the Centennial year, because there have been some folks ahead of us that's paid their dues and I'll be indebted to them and I appreciate them more now than I ever have and I hope other people will too.

(One of the things that I hear and you hear it all the time too is the teenagers have nothing to do.....I guess as long as they can afford gasoline, they will do what they do, which is ride around in circles and congregate in parking lots. Do you see, I've heard some talk about expanding the civic area to include swimming pools, carpet golf, and that kind of thing...Are there any kind of recreational facilities that would appeal to those kind, that age group on the horizon, is there any study being done as to what we can do for teenagers to make them more happy?)

This is a universal problem that has been going on back even in my time, when I was growing up in Birmingham. We circled for years, I guess kids had rather circle and we had places that we hung out. I think that..I really believe, I've asked my own children, teenagers, what can we do to make Pell City or give the kids something to do and every suggestion that I have had or my children have had they've not given me a clear answer yet because they like to do the things that ..they like to gather to places you are not suppose to gather. Or they become not really a nuisance but they gather on peoples property and of course, or merchants properties and of course they are going to draw complaints. At the present time we don't have any plans to do. We'll begin to do somethings with the civic center. I think that it is an ideal facility to help take some of the pressure off and give our children our young people a different view of life. I think that you will still see the circling in the year 4000, if they are going in spaceships, you'll still see them circling, I really believe that.

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(As far as the elderly in Pell City, I know that we have a number of services for them, do you see any other programming coming down the road? What services are there in Pell City for elderly people?)

This is one of the things that we are trying to do through the Park and Recreation. One of the big things now is that a lot of people get out and walk. We're trying to maybe put some walking paths in some of the neighborhoods because some of the widow ladies and some of the seniors are unable to drive the car so we're trying to build some little neighborhood parks to where they will have their own parks to get out and be able to recreate and do a little thing without them having to get up and leave. We also are in the process of putting in this Are you Okay System that is something that has been talked about for a long time for where that if one of the senior citizens lived by themselves if they are a widow or widower, we can ..this system will actually call them once a day and in some instances it has saved lives and so we are looking at those types of services and I can see that in the future with all our senior citizen groups around the city, of maybe providing some type of transportation, transporting them to the doctors, or grocery store, or whatever. I think that it will come to that also.

(How does Pell City stack up against other towns its size as far as crime rate, and that sort of thing?)

Well, I think as far as our crime rate, we don't really have a major problem with crime. Of course we still have the..there are drugs here in Pell City. But as far as just your hardened criminals, I don't think that we have that many. I think that we still have our little scuffels and just the normal everyday stuff but it's still safe to a certain extent. I think as we do grow that will be something that we will have to train our police department to be better prepared for.

(The Governor's Office and a number of other people around the state are pushing Alabama as a place to retire, as Florida is saturated and Arkansas is built quite a model of retirement communities around lakes and things, do you foresee Pell City following that retirement industry? Do you see us promoting and going in that direction?)

At the present time we have a committee of people that is studying to see where the feasibility of attracting retirees. Of course we..Pell City has done a pretty good job of that because we have a lot of people that are retirees that are living here. I might add that it is a pretty good source of stable income for these people as far as economic development it's been real good and will get better.

(Anything else we did not give you a chance to say...)

85-7

I'd like to say that it has been a tremendous honor for me to have been the mayor during the Centennial year. I feel very honored. I feel very humble because the people that has made the sacrifices before me. I hope that in years to come that it will always be something that we will be proud of. I am just honored and thankful.

NEW SPEAKER:

*Sam
Calk*

I found myself wanting to put my two cents worth in about the city...

(Start off by telling about coming to Pell City and what you have done since you have been here?)

Well, started back in high school, I started courting a young lady over here. Eventually we married, that was Oscar Jackson's daughter, Helen Jackson. He is the Ford Dealer here and I was a student over at Lincoln. Went off to the University and stayed three years there before the army got me and I went into the service. Stayed about four years and when I got out well we were married before I got out and two years after that I graduated from OCS over at Benning. We got married and we were stationed in the army overseas. I was in the Pacific and Europe and when I got back from the service, got back in school one more year, finished up in the University, then got in dental school. I was one of the first members of the first class that started in 1948. I graduated in 1952. So I have been out here in Pell City practicing dentistry for about 38 years.

Other than that that pretty well brings us up to

(How is Pell City different today than it was then?)

When I served on the City Council for twenty-two and one half years, and I think that it was 1960 that I first went on. I started practicing dentistry here in 1952. I was police commissioner at that time. Sam Burt was the mayor. The city was in pretty bad financial condition so we had to have a one cents sales tax which did not go over too good, but the local merchants and everything like that, but we got the sales tax passed and from there we had at that time we had one police car and about 3 policemen. The city was about one mile square block at that time, the whole area. At one time our police car was broken down, we had a pick-up truck at night. We were patrolling with that. We made quite a bit of stride

QA - E

in the police and the city hall had to house the fire department and the city shop and everything. We build a shop down where the shop is now.

The greatest thing that happened around here I guess was when they backed the water up. They said that this may not be for the record too good, but one of the best things that happened to Pell City was when they backed the water up and one of the worse things was when they caught Kyle Vetch(?) you know that Kyle built the airport down here....when Liberty National got after him that hurt us. He built a fine airport at that time. He was a real nice fellow, the whole crowd was all right.

We get lear jets in here and they are fixing to increase that runway about 1000 feet or more I understand. (Like they say you can do a lot of things with other peoples money.) You sure can.....

(One thing that has come up over and over as we have been talking with people is that over the years Pell City seems to have had extraordinary luck with the people like you, Judge Holliday, others who have invested so much of their time and energy in civic and governmental affairs. Perhaps Pell City has been more fortunate than a lot of towns its size. Why do you think that is?)

Well, I guess it is civic pride. I have been in every organization they have had here from the Jaycees to the Lions Club, to the Rotary Club, Quarterback Club, I've been president of every one of those organizations except the Rotary Club and I haven't been in that very long. When it came your time to take the ball you took the ball. You even moved forward with it and we had some good young people here at that time and right after the service ..all this started and most of our growth was right after that. The people were back here and when you went into the service and you came back here a different person. You kinda grew up and you changed you attitude. I know I was down at the University for three years before the service, and I was having a big time. I enjoyed it, I was playing football and all that and had a good time, but then when I got in the service, and I realized that I had to get out and make a living I was married and it changes you, it changed me quite a bit. I had to settle down and I think that that happened with that group when we came back here that the Jaycees were real active because most of us were veterans and you know we had been around a bit and so it fit right in with the city and started the growth of the city.

(As Pell City.....continued on 8B)

Pell City 8B

Barry
BB-1
Y

(As Pell City has grown and there has been an influx in the last few years of a lot of people associated with the various industries or just people coming in living here and working in Birmingham or whatever, but there seems to be a good blending between old timers and new comers, more so than often times happens in a town like this..)

At first I think it was a little friction there. I think the people in Birmingham sometimes you know they come out here and we are old country people, you know, but it didn't take them long to find out that we were probably sharp as some of them were. We blended I think real well, of course you always get exceptions to every rule. I think as a whole, it has blended real well. We have some real nice people that while ago we were talking about retirement and there are some real nice people in our church and Sunday School class that are out here retired and they are nice people and the lake..was tremendous for Pell City and the water situation.

(You mentioned church there.. what has been the role or the influence of churches or religious organizations in Pell City over the years?)

What do you mean..? I don't understand quite what you...Well of course the church is always one of the prominent parts of any city or any town anywhere. (In some towns some church organizations or church leaders exert more influence that they do in other areas..perhaps in the control of things that are allowed or not allowed or just in areas of general moral...)

It has been my experience since I have been here, they pretty much leave the city alone. I mean they don't try to.. the church don't try to rule the state and the state and church is always suppose to be separated and so far I don't think they have..of course they've all got good youth programs. But I don't say that they have..they have contributed, you know, to the welfare to our community and they have good programs going on, all of them.

(You mentioned a few minutes ago you recent surgical experience..Wonder if you might recap for us the development of medical care and health care)

When I first came here, we had..we really had two dentists that were here before I was. That was Dr. Hixson, and he kinda had a denture factory. He moved out of Birmingham out of here and he was making dentures probably about \$35 and something like that. Then we had Dr. Claude Martin, he was probably in his late 70's when I came here. So I was from the day I opened my office I had more than I could do. I

EB-2

mean like that because I was the only young dentist around and Dr. Claude was kinda tapering off and Dr. Hickson was just making dentures so general practice I had no problem there at all. I mean, oh, several years later, Dr. Cover(?) Lee came out and Hickson moved down to Eden and Coverlee came in with him and eventually Cover bought out Dr. Hickson and Joe Sawyer came in and its been a few more in between that which has been real good. But now, at one time I was really the only young dentist in the whole county. Now we have 12 about 12 in Pell City and every little town that didn't use to have one, they have two or three, Ragland is about the only town I think that doesn't have one but Venson and Moody and Asheville and Springfield all of them now they have quite a few. The market you might say is a bit saturated now. Denistry has changed a good bit too. We didn't use to have all this unethical stuff that I don't like advertising for..I think that that is real unethical. I don't like the lawyers advertising either..those men begging malpractice suits and so forth that does not appeal to me at all.

We have a good hospital here and I've had three back operations in Birmingham and over there you are a number. Up here at this hospital it's a family affair. You know them and they know you and it's really good. It's real nice. We have some good doctors and surgeons up there. So I was very pleased up there with the whole situation. It was really nice.

Of course we have a bunch of specialists that come out two or three times a week. So we are...well staffed out here, I think.

(We've had two father-son teams come through here, Judge Holliday and Hugh and you and Ray. You have been active in helping Ray get the new bank started. How do you see the future for as far as economic growth and how do you see it changing....)

Well, when I first came to Pell City, Pat Robinson was the banker here. That was the only bank and I couldn't borrow a \$1,000 to open an office after I had had my 20 years of schooling. I had to go to my county, Tye lake (?) County, to borrow some money. They said, come on boy, we'd like to have you over here, open you office over here. But I had to go to Talidega to borrow money to open an office in Pell City and that situation has changed completely. Mr. Pat was pretty, he was a pretty rough customer when it come to borrowing money and that was the only bank here and of course Peoples' Bank came in and which had opened up quite a bit of banking business for the whole...it was really a god-send situation then. It helped eleviate the problem we had. But it was pretty bad when you had to go out of town to borrow money and come into Pell City to open a business or

OB-3

open a profession.

(That was a conservative period..) Well...(Do you think, were there other things that have changed beyond that...the difficulty of borrowing money. As far as people going off to school, I know that there's that change and people coming back. I guess one of the things that we got into with Ray was a lot of people of our generation got our education and went away for 10-15 years and are now coming back...Why do you think that is happening?)

Well we did not have much to entice people to come here. We weren't growing like we are now...we didn't have the industry here that we have now and people just couldn't get a job here to compliment their education and what they had been exposed to. I think that that is one of the main things that we have people that we can use, people around here.....All the industrial park and all that, that's great. One of the things that on my term of dealings with the city one of the things that I am most proud of is that Civic Center. When we started that we had a group at that Pell City Drug. They call themselves the RoundTable and they tried to crucify us. That was a white elephant and would never be used anything like that...but anytime that you go by that place, it's used. There are plenty of people in it and its...I mean... the park and the ball situation, the fields down there. (Avondale Mills has been one of Pell City's best friends ever. They were great when we did not have anything...Avondale Mills you could go to them and they came through. The water situation..we were getting water from Avondale Lake through the...having to get it at a real bargain rate too at that time. So Avondale was the backbone of Pell City. You all know that during the Depression that Pell City always and Avondale Mills stayed at least three days a week all during the Depression. They were a friend to Pell City.)

(You had to go to Taledega to get a loan..you far did you have to go back in those days to play golf?)

I played Taledgeda, I joined that County Club over there and I when I got back out of school I joined.. yeh I played some at Gest (?) Country Club too. We started our course in about 1961 somewhere along in there. I might say that we haven't changed hands since we have had it and I have been president of that thing since the conception and we are proud of the fact that we have never had to _____ a member or anything of any extra money and you play golf cheaper in Pell City at that club than in any place in the whole world I believe. Unless it is our club owned like Chillsboro(?), a company owes the club. As far as individuals, Pine Harbor has had some rough sledding and so has Alpine Bay. Alpine I think they are fixing to go under again, if I'm not mistaken or changing hands again. What am I trying to say....because

EB-A

Pine Harbor..they have had some difficulties but they..I thought they had that thing worked out now.. I mean its, the local group, when we had some outsiders come in and was running it, they had problems, but I think they are doing real well cause it's local people now, mostly interested in it. It's just going great I think..

(One thing you always hear in the south, and I had a man from California ask me the other day, Is the Alabama-Auburn rivalry as violent as we hear out here? Has that always been a part of the culture of Pell City?)

No.. it didn't start till ..see the legislature made Alabama and Auburn play. They quit in 1906 because they had some deaths in Birmingham. They had some students killed out to the ballgame. They quit. They didn't have to play and back when I was in school we didn't play Auburn see. And that was great. We respected them and they respected us. It is completely out of hand now since the last few years.. It's just getting what I'd like to see them do is if we're going to have to play that ballgame, play it the first ball game of the year. When it gets down to the last ball game of the year, it amounts to too much. Too much at stake and winning now is just all completely out of hand. We got both sides, not only Alabama but Auburn too, we've got some bad, bad, bad sports on both sides. And Pell City is one of the worse places for animosity toward each schools. It is bitter..it is actually bitter.

(Do you really think that it carries over to how people feel...)

I sure do..sure do.. Yes, sir. We had a preacher here one time, a Baptist preacher, big Auburn fan, and Auburn finally beat Alabama he put a big wreath on my door..The preacher, the Baptist preacher over here...wreaths on the doors..things like that...but it wasn't bad for a good while, but '48 when they first started back see, it's been getting..and of course The Bear's tenure you know, we had about 10 years in a row that Auburn didn't win and not Pat Dye's got a dynasty going for him and so...It's a great rivalry but it's almost I think both Auburn and Alabama people would like for it to just play just once every four years like we got rotating schedules. And if they get some more teams in the conference like they are trying to do, like some of the Texas teams, then they might do that. We might have enough to do that...But now everyone's got to beat each others brains out and hurts our national rankings too..

(I wonder 50-60 or 100 years from now some kids going to take this tape off the shelf in the library and wonder what he is talking about....The Alabama-Auburn football rivalry, what ...you wonder if that will still be going on...)

If they still have a conference, they probably will.

(In the time that you have been here, are there any particular individuals that stand out in your mind who have been significant influences or civic or professional, or governmental leaders that have really left their mark on Pell City?)

I think you had one here while ago..Judge Holliday, he'd been here a long time. He and I were came back..he came back a few years before I did, cut out of law school, he got back out of the service and then law school. I think that he has quite a good effect on Pell City. He served on the..as the city attorney for years and all the time I was on the City Council he was City Attorney..except in the latter part, I think Bill Church was the latter part of my tenure there. But...well, you kinda caught me off guard. I just hadn't..Otis Perry, was mayor during that time, and Sam Burt, Sam Burt was the first mayor I served under. Sam kinda turned that situation around. It took him about six months. He was a business man, he was sharp as a tack and he kinda, he wouldn't serve but one term, but he kinda straightened us out and started us in the right direction. I think we've been progressing ever since then.

(How has the role or the responsibility of the City Council changed over the years, say from the first year that you were elected? Has the complexities of government and some of the effects of growth and change, has that altered?)

Yeh, like see..we were small and maybe 8 or 9 hundred or 1000 or something way back there. We had council meetings and very few people attended the council. No media, we didn't get into trouble until the media started coming. Then ...you know.. it gets in the paper what is going on .. we tended to our business and the city was going on pretty good. When..my second year in dental school, I ran the swimming pool.. They opened us a new swimming pool down here and I ran it that summer. The City Hall at that time was up here at where McClendons' office is now. You'd go walking into City hall and the floor in places was completly out and we were in bad shape. I mean financially and everything, at one time. Back when Percy Starnes was mayor, he had quite of bearing I think to on the development of this town. Of course I didn't know Sumter Cogswell or any of them and I know that they did but that was after my time in here. Thinking of the people...Otis Perry was a good mayor. Bill Nixon was a good mayor..All those people were devoted but I think that Sam, of course that was my first mayor and I ...I know what was going on then and so forth and what was going on now. I think we have a good mayor now. I think Archie is doing a good job as far as I know.

We had the last administration, that had quite a few

EB-6

problems, it seemed like every council meeting they had problems....but they worked out some problems and...

(I just realized this, reading this that you served the longest of anyone serving on the city council..)

Yeah, I have a record there...22 and one half years is a pretty good record... a pretty good while.

(During the time that you were mayor, what were some significant things...)

The main thing, we acquired the property where the Civic Center is now. We started that sewage system we have. We didn't have it, we had a little dye branch (?) up here and we got a letter one time from the State Health Department and they would not even let the City Clerk go down and sign for it. In other words you do this or you are going to be put in jail..or you are going to answer to us...So they gave us an alternative or ultimatum so we got busy. At that time though they wanted a lagoon so we got the land and all that available and they they changed to the modern plant we have now. That was quite a problem, the sewage problem at that time.

Let me go back to dentistry...One of the main things that has developed in my tenture in dentistry is the high speed engine. I mean the air driven engine, we don't have that old grinding that we use to have. And the anesthetics are much better than they use to be and the materials we are using are much better. There has been quite a bit of change in the last 38 years in dentistry.. quite a bit..It's more less painless now, I mean its not like it use to be. Of course people are still remembering and dread but kids now they are not near like it was when I first started.

(The emphasis now so much more so that it was 30 years ago on preventive dentistry...you mentioned the business in dentures at one time it was not unusually...if you didn't go to the dentist, your teeth finally gave way and..

You'd still be surprised there are still people like that...people don't realize that there are more teeth lost to diseased gums and things like that than there is cavities. It is probably three to one or more that that. Some people are just not educated to the fact that they should take care of their teeth, they think if one gets bad, take it out...take it out, you know. One time, this is an incidence that happened way back when I was practicing, I was real consciencous, I tried to fix everything that came in the office. This guy came in and he said, "Doc, I want that tooth out", I looked in and said, I believe I can save it, "I want it out, I spent \$3 on that tooth 15 years ago and that filling came out the other day...Take it out..

This is another, not for the record exactly... this fellow came in one day over there and he said his mama brought him and he was about 13 or 14 years old, boy from Ragland. He was built like a bulldog. His neck was real big. He walked in and he said, "You ain't gonna give me no shot" I wish he hadn't said that, you know, his mom said, "Dr. Cox, I've been up 4 nights with him, we're going to get this tooth out." I had a reception room full out there, went back in the room where I was doing surgery back there, and we tried, he and his mother both, She said, "You have a belt?" I said no, but I have a coat hanger. She whipped him with the coat hanger and we worked on the kid for about an hour. She finally said, "Doc, let's get him down in the floor, I believe we can give him a shot if we get him." We got him down in the floor, he screamed...about 13 or 14 years old, a big old kid. He was strong...I put every hold I could think of when I was trying to hold him. I wouldn't do anything like that for nothing in the world now. I mean I was young and ...when we finally got through..I finally gave him a shot and we got that tooth out, but every patient in the office was gone and my shirt was wringing wet. His mother was too, but we were determined. The little devil when he said you're not going to give me a shot...see, I was eager then...and I didn't like that, but...he whipped me, he did, he whipped me good, I mean I was just wringing wet with perspiration. I have a lot of little details like that ...another little antic..this good friend of mine brought a little girl in there and she was not a very good patient. She was about 7, 8, 9, or 10 I forget what and she was throwing a fit and everything like that and all of a sudden she just bit the devil out of my finger. I took..she said..Dr. Cox's she bite you? I said she sure did. Do you have a book? She took her in the bathroom and they both came out crying you know. "I'll bite him again, I'll bite him again and sure enough, I started back and sure enough she did it again. Her mama and dad still come to me and we still talk about that. Of course she is a mother and has grown kids and everything now, but....I've had a lot of funny things like that have happened over the years...Of course it doesn't pertain to the city development or anything like that....But dentistry has changed a great deal. Things like that that you use to do, nobody would do anything like that now. What I use to think, I needed to see every patient that came in and I had to do something then...I realized that you can't do that..

(Anything else you wish to say, we didn't give you a chance to say?)

No, I'm proud of the time I spent with the city. Like I say that Civic Center and our sewage system and our shop and then City Hall, the whole thing I am proud of all that. I'm proud of the time I served on all the civic organizations. But Pell City has been good to me too. I've enjoyed my work here and I don't plan to retire any time soon. I've cut down. I

don't try to see what I use too. I don't work myself as hard as I use to....But other than that, I don't know...While ago, Paul Turner, had a lot, he has contributed the city. He has been on the bank over here and the education too. He was in education for a long time. He's been a good solid citizen for Pell City for a long time. There are quite a few: Blair Jones, Pat Robinson by way back there they were...and Thurston Starnes, this was right at the beginning of my time when they were here though.

(Not much happened in those days, that those three did not agree on...)

They've said that sometime they didn't want industry in here..you know ...they didn't want Pell City to grow too much..but back then.. we had a nice little town back then, we have a nice town now. We have a nice hospital, we've got some good medical personnel here in this town.

(A lot different ...)

That hospital was built during while I was on the council.

Well, gentlemen, I have enjoyed it. I hope I haven't gone on too many tangents...

(What is TCI)

Tennessee Coal and Iron..around here in Pell City? I don't know. TCI use to be in Birmingham, you know that big steel mill was TCI. In fact I worked there about two or three months before I went...waiting for the time for the dental school to open until I ..got through at the University. See we were in the first class. We started that Dental School..I was the first class..and we had a guy, Dr. Vockum, he was a wheel horse, he put that place on the map...That was a great great man...right there. He just recently died. That was the speaker I ever heard. He could get up and speak on anything, anywhere, anytime. He had the command of the English Language,buddy, he could really do it.. In fact, he was starting out as one of the teachers, he came down tough as the Dean, in fact back then we were in the infancy then, he had to teach and do everything.

(That is one thing that Pell City has missed out on is having any kind of higher education. We don't have)

One thing that is hurting us bad too is our intermediate school over here. You know people come in here from Atlanta and places like that and look around . We have a beautiful high school now and our grammar school is not too bad but that hurts us I think...as far as industry and growth coming in here cause people don't want to go there.

EB-9

New Speaker: Lady

(Identify yourself for the record: first name, last name.)

I am Carolyn Hall. I am the granddaughter of R. A. Martin.

(Tell us a little bit about Dr. Martin when he came to Pell City and what he did.)

He came to Pell City, January 8, 1903 and there was no other doctor in this area. He practiced in homes of patients and later worked in the Gertrude Comer Hospital which was connected with Avondale Mills. He opened a six bed clinic up above what is the Pell City Drug. He had his office and beds up there and then in the early '30's he bought and fixed a hospital directly behind the drug store in what is now Pensions and Security. It was there until after his death, and was later known as the Martin Hospital.

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(What were some of the typical ailments of the day or some of the diseases that seem....)

Well, I remember very well the stories about the big influenza epidemics in around 1916 or in this general area where whole families died. And even my grandmother's brother died during that and he would be on the road night and day in a horse and buggy and the horse would bring you home at night. And you slept what little sleep you got you got in the buggy coming home at night. But whole families were wiped out and you just,..it was so frustrating for him back then because there was nothing he could do. This is one of my most vivid memories of tales of the early years here.

(What about ..the dramatic or significant changes that happened in medical care between the time Dr. Martin came and the time he ended his practice here.)

Even something as simple as pencillin was not used till in my life time. And so many of the modern miracle drugs that they didn't have in the early years. And of course in Pell City he had the first automobile because he needed it because he went everywhere. His patients couldn't get to him, he went to them. He had the first automobile here and so many things that he kept up in the early years. He went to all kind of medical schools and schools on surgery and he spent some time in the summer in New York City in school there and anywhere there was a school offered he took it. In his death in 1954, he had one of the most modern operating rooms for a small hospital in the state.

83-10

(How did Dr. Martin come to settle in Pell City?)

I'm really not sure on that one. You've got me there. I really don't know cause he is from south Alabama, Plantersville.

(His constant quest to bring quality care to Pell City, without casting _____ on the medical community as a whole, my perception has been at least that towns the size of Pell City during those days did not usually enjoy the high quality of medical care that was available in Pell City)

Medicine came first to him. It was his life. He was one of these rare people that was completely dedicated to his profession. He..if you needed help, you got help. There are still old books at the drug store of accounts that were never settled, babies that were never paid for and operations, but if you needed it you were never turned away like you can be now days, if you don't have insurance, you are left outside. If you needed help, he helped you first, then he worried about whether or not he would get paid.

(Continued on 9..)

Trans - 9

Carolyn Hall (short part of interview)

Now you were saying and I don't know if you were finished or not before the tape ended something about Dr. Martin's dedication to the practice of medicine and how if people needed treatment they got it.

He had his office in the basement of the hospital where he had regular office hours like any doctor did and people that were too busy or didn't want to have to sit and wait in the office would come upstairs in the lobby of the hospital at night. And he saw patients all night long in the hospital upstairs. They just it was easier that way. They had more time and it was more convenient for them and he saw them whenever they got there. It just didn't matter.

I wonder if we might shift gears just a minute and talk a little about the drugstore. That drugstore on the corner its been interesting as we have interviewed people how much the drugstore seem to have been the center of so much in town. Not only the social but the business community, the political community, ...

~~It still is to a large extent but back then there was no jewelry store. If you wanted jewelry you had to get it from the drugstore. There was no place for the teenagers to gather after school. If you wanted they gathered at the drugstore even my generation you went to the corner drug after school and you got something to drink or eat and visit with your friends like they hang out at the drive-ins now days. And all the politics and football and every other sports is played and discussed in there even through today we have what is known in town as the round table. And the retired men and men on their lunch hour they come by and they discuss and settled the world's problems. I'm sure they must settle them up there... I just was going to say the drugstore, he started the drugstore in 1903. It became a Rexall francise in 1903 and its been in the same location in the same family every since and this is one of the few in the southeast that can say that its always been in the same location and always run by the same family.~~

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I was just wondering is as growth has come to Pell City and as restaurants and fast food and other places have come and gone, how is it that the corner drugstore has maintained its place of prominence as a gathering place?

Well, we try to instead of like so many of the bigger cities where you're a number in what ever store you go in we try to treat people like individuals. We had a couple here a

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good many years ago that he was from a big city and he couldn't understand how he could walk in and say hey, charge this to me and it was done without him showing his identification or anything like this because we knew him. And he ran an account and it was just like your friends instead of just a number in a book. We still have a soda fountain, which is rare now days and still serve ice cream and all the things like they always did. But years ago they did have curb service we have cut that out...laughing...

At the time when Dr. Martin retired there was at some point there was an award given to him and we have it there so I'm going to let you

Well, one thing let me clear up. He never retired. He died. This is the only thing that got him out of his hospital. He never retired. He was working until he was put in the hospital in New Orleans where he did not make it home. But retirement was not something that he would have even been familiar with.

And how old was he?

75 right before he died.

Can you call to mind any significance statistics about his time, any idea patients treated, babies born...

Well, he's supposed to delivered about 10,000 babies and maybe 25,000 people that he saw as patients.

Moving on to the cup there and we'll get the inscription on tape then I'll shoot some close ups of it there..

Do you need anything about when this was and all? The Pell City Chamber of Commerce sponsored a Dr. Martin Day to honor him for 50 years of service to the medical field and to the community. This was in January of 1953. The silver trophy was presented with the inscription: In honor of Dr. R. A. Martin. A distinguished and progressive citizen. An able physician and surgeon. A benefactor of the unfortunate and under privileged. Commemorating 50 years of service.

Anything else while we've got the tape running you'd like to say about Dr. Martin, about Pell City, about anything in the world?

Well, put on the spot I can't think of anything...laughing...

One of the things I remember about Dr. Martin and I was one of those 10,000 babies...and so was I....I don't know if this was his common practice or if he just did it to special children or what, I remember he'd give you a silver dollar

9-3

every once and while. I still have mine silver dollars. Why did he do that often?

I have no idea. I didn't get any.

I think it was every time he gave me a shot he would give me a silver dollar and I have 5 or 6 of them.

Well, he had an expression that I remember from as a child. If you came in he wanted to know if you brought your goat with you. And if you'd cryed or misbehaved he always said that was your goat. And if you were quiet and were behaved youself he would say you left your goat at home. That's always stuck with me as a child, you know from being a child because he delivered me. He was our family doctor also. He asked my mother when I was due, who do you want me to get? I'll get you the best specialist in Birmingham and she looked at him in disbelief and said daddy I thought you would deliver the baby. And once you were in the operating room you weren't family, you were a patient. And it was not like he was treating somebody that was close to him. It was just somebody that needed something.

He always seemed to have more time that other doctors do now. Of course it astounded me when I got older and had to start paying doctor bills that when you went to the doctors you didn't get a dollar, you had to give a dollar. That confused me for years. But he had to be as big, or he seemed to be huge man to me but he was extremely gentle. He didn't seem to have a roughness to him is that ...

He was a very big man. He was over 6 feet tall and he did wear a size 13 shoe. And that bald head shining, I can see it today strolling through that hospital and he would walk into your room. And I've heard so many older people say he didn't have to do anything. You felt better when he came in because he had this about him. He, he exuded confidence. And you knew that he would make you better.

There's a side to his career that's not as well known as his medical side but he was one of the original land developers that built a lot built the first suburbs of Pell City. Do you have any memories of that? Can you tell us what he did build?

Uh, he owned as a subdivision thats now Park Hill and Oakridge, and Harrisburg and Glen City, all that was his. And he speculated in some land in Florida and other places but he could see the future of Pell City and he was well one thing he did in his through most of his career he was not only the Avondale Mill physician and treated everybody that worked through for the Avondale Mill. He was the Southern Railroad physician and treated everyone between a certain point between Birmingham and Anninston. That's the railroad

9-4

did it. You had a physician in a certain area and anyone hurt on the railroad in this area was brought to him.

He also owned the cemetery there.

He owned the Oakridge Cemetery above the church. That was his and developed it and started the cemetery there which is where he is buried in the mausoleum there.

Trans-10

Kate DeGaris

Quite on the set...(laughing)...

Tell me when...OK....I'm the granddaughter-in-law of Sumpter and Lydia Cogswell. I've been a part of the family for 29 years. And this is one of the 3 houses that I've spent a lot of my time in during my life time. I've had good times here and I've heard so many great stories, I've heard so many great stories about this family and about all the families in Pell City. Aunt Litz asked me about a year ago if I got tired of hearing old folks talk? And I told her that No, I loved it. And usually I would drop by here for 30 minutes each day on my way to work, going to work, or coming back from work and I would spend some times as much as 2 hours instead of 30 minutes. We would always have a cup of coffee or tea and after her son died in 1964, I drove Aunt Litz everywhere she went outside the city limits of Pell City. Some of the stories I've heard about Pell City and about this family, one I hear often was when Johnny, my husband was a little boy, he used to sneak over here early every morning because Suzy made such grand bisquits. And Suzy was the maid, Suzy Waits was the maid for 48 years of this family and she lived in a little green house behind the house which is not still standing today. And when Johnny's grandmother died, she left Suzy her home over in Glen City and Suzy's son James Cosper and her daughter Louise Waits live in that house today. PaPa Cogswell, a story about him was how strict he was about manners especially at the table. Johnny and Aunt Litz says he never one time went to the table without having his coat on. He always sat at the head of the table, he carved the meat, he served the plates, and you ate what he put on your plate. The grace most of the time the kids always thought it was too long and in the middle of grace one time he yelled out "Damm you" real loud. And they were all stunned and looked up at him in amazement and what had happened was the cat under the table had just clawed into his legs real deep. They tell this story so many times and laugh about it. Also, he loved to smoke a pipe. He smoked a pipe always out here on the porch where I'm sitting right now he smoked a pipe. He never once smoked a pipe inside the house. It was always on the porch. He loved his yard. He had this whole block was covered with orchard and all types of flowers. He had every type of fruit tree that produced fruits in this area that would grow in this area. Tulips was one of the favorite flowers that he grew and the tulips were just everywhere. And Johnny says when he was in high school he loved the tulips in his grandmothers' yard so that he put the tulip as the flower for the class and said the boys loved it and none of the girls liked it. But he said the boys won over the girls and they had the tulip as their class flower

at the high school. Also behind me was a great big fish pond and it was always full of goldfish. And he said hes gotten many of spankings for trying to catch the goldfish in the pond back there. He said there was especially a great big white one and he always wanted to catch the big white goldfish but never did. And back to PaPa Cog he said he would discipline the kids and he would spank you right in front of your parents if you misbehaved. Have you stopped it now Ty? Let me see where I am not... Back to this house here. This house when Mrs. Cogswell came here in about 1901 the house was smaller than it is now and they had to add some additional rooms on to. So when they moved here they lived a short time in the hotel. I don't know if it was the St. Charles hotel or the Coronet hotel as referred to in some old deeds. But anyway they lived in hotel for a short time while the house was being added on to. This house was the first house in Pell City to have running water. And the water was piped over from the mill. When grandmother Cogswell married her first time she was 18 years old and Mr. DeGaris was 34 years old and by Mr. DeGaris she had 3 children. Her first died, her second was John Ansley DeGaris known as Jack DeGaris, and Julian DeGaris. So when she moved to Pell City she brought her two little boys with her. Mr. Cogswell had a son by his previous marriage Ridder but Ridder stayed in Chattanooga with his mother. Let's see...Now then on this lot here the block of land, there was a big barn that was built. And the big barn was built for the cows and pigeons. When they came here Johnny's daddy was a little bitty boy and he brought a cage of pigeons with him. The pigeons that you see in Pell City today came from Memphis in 1901 and they were brought in a cage on the train. The barn it said just became, oh there were just hundreds of pigeons in the barn and they said it became so that the pigeons there was at least 2 feet of pigeon droppings in that barn. Everybody in Pell City talked about the pigeons and you still see these pigeons around Pell City and they're descendants of those pigeons that came here in 1901 in a cage on a train. Grandmother Lydia besides her 2 sons that she had John Ansley DeGaris, which was known later as Jack DeGaris, he opened a Drug Store up here in 1926 and spent his life time in Pell City as a pharmacist. Her other son Julian DeGaris ran a the first Dry Cleaners in Pell City which was over in the Mill village. And as you know the mill village was kindly the center of all the attraction of Pell City, that's where all, the hub of everything that went on because most of the people lived around the village. They didn't have cars back then so the village was built around the mill so that the people could walk to work. There just weren't no cars in Pell City. Her other, her stepson Ridder, he became a lawyer in Chattanooga and lived all his life in Chattanooga. And then grandmother Lydia and granddaddy Sumpster had 3 little girls, Lydia, Elizabeth who was known as Aunt Litz to us, and Aunt Mary who married a Baylock, and Aunt Isabell who married a Davis. Aunt Isabell became a school teacher and she taught

over in the Mill village in the mill village school for some length of time. And Aunt Mary never she never worked any, as a matter of fact she did not marry until she was about 38 or 40 years old. And so all, she was kindly a second mother to all the grandchildren that came during the summer. A few things about Pell City that I have learned from looking at old deeds is that grandmother and granddaddy Cogswell they gave the land for the courthouse, they gave a 150 acres for the cotton mill, they gave the land for the early churches those being the First Methodist Church, the First Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Bible Methodist Church, the colored Baptist Church over in Glen City and a few more churches some of the churches in the mill village they gave the land for those also. Grandmother Cogswell gave the land out in front of the high school where the parking lot is today and where part of the high school is built on today. She gave about 5 acres more or less for a ball park I understand. She also gave the Mason Lodge in honor of her late husband Sumpter Cogswell and she gave the land where the Pell City recreational park is today the one right in the old Pell City. She gave that block of land, not block, but it started right below Dr. Clayton's office where it is today and went all the way down to the road that goes into Glen City, she gave that to the city of Pell City in the remembrance of her late husband Sumpter. (To have a town you have to have first something for the people to do, so PaPa Cogswell family had been involved in cotton mills in the Carolinas so he knew quite a bit about cotton mills even though he himself was an insurance salesman. He was over the southeastern states with insurance, selling them insurance. As a matter of fact, thats how he got to Pell City. He missed his train connection to Talledga and so he had to spend the night in Pell City. This was in 1890. He discovered Pell City was for sale and he thought he would place a bid and it ended up being the only bid and he found himself with a town he didn't expect to buy. But he immediately he went to Chattanooga and he went to friends and drummed up the money, he bought it, then he turned around and sold it. He came back 10 years later after he married Miss DeGaris and her family when she moved to Atlanta her family begged her, I have the letter where her mother begged her not to let Sumpter talk her into going into that back woodsy country of Alabama, that it was very dangerous and they feared for her life. But being the type of person she was, she let Sumpter talk her into buying Pell City. She bought a large portion of Pell City herself. I have two deeds showing that she bought the heart of Pell City and from the Hercules Pipe Company and another large section of Pell City from Lewis D. Brandize who later on became the Justice of the United State Supreme Court. This was in 1901 that she bought both of these large pieces of land which is really the heart of Pell City. (Of course, PaPa Cogswell also had money and he bought a large portion of Pell City and thats the portion that cost \$3,000.) In her two deeds it does not state what

Kate

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she paid, it only says \$1.00 which we know could be far from true. Anyway, she came back to the back woods country of Alabama and during this time they set out to develop Pell City. They had to persuade their friends to come to Pell City, the early families like the Pratts, the Rennys, the Thompsons, the Drapers, and the Tildons, these were people of their friends who had money and they had to persuade their friends to come here and really risk their lives in fortunes is what they actually did to build Pell City. And frankly I think its done real well. I think they'd be very happy if they could come today and see old Pell City. (One thing I want to say about the cotton mill. (I've always loved the cotton mill, I've always been so impressed with the people that I've been associated with the cotton mill. These families because these families were families that had rich backgrounds. They came from Easonville, they came from the farms in Cropwell, they came from Eden, they came from the coal mines in Coal City, and Riverside, and they came here and worked in the cotton mills and most of them can trace their ancestry back to the Revolutionary War. In other words, their eligible for the DAR if they so desired. So this is the kind of people that are the backbone of Pell City and that have made Pell City. Today I think grandmother and granddaddy Cogswell would be so happy if they could see the lakes. I think the lake is beautiful. They would be happy if they could see the highways. They'd be happy if they could see the churches, the banks, the new Contel building. I think that they would be very happy if they could see the fruits of what they sowed.) They sowed these fruits. Also I think that you have to put another note in there and this is the things that would make them sad. I think they would be sad if they could see what a hard time the mill has had in struggling with the imports today, I think thats kindly sad. They'd be sad if they could see all the old buildings that have been torn down, the history that has been destroyed by this generation most of it since I've been in Pell City. I think they'd be sad if they could see how the family has shrunk from the big family of 6 children, this only grandson left and that's Johnny DeGaris and his 3 children Ansley, Sumpter, and Lydia are the 3 great-grandchildren. That's all the family thats left today in Pell City. Recently we had Juluis Cogswell from New York City he visited with us. He is he said that after I gave him a tour of Pell City also including the new lakeside park he summed up Pell City in this way...can you erase this out and let me start all over Ty?...Recently we had Juluis Cogswell to visit us from New York City and Juluis is the grandson of Lydia and Sumpter Cogswell. And after I gave him the grand tour of Pell City which included the new lakeside park which he was so impressed with and the new civic center, he summed it up this way. He said granddaddy Sumpter had the dream and grandmother Lydia had the money. And it took both to develop Pell City. That they spent their entire lives developing this town. So you might sum it all up by saying a socialite

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Kate

from Memphis, Tennessee and an insurance salesman from a prominent Charlestonian family in South Carolina that was the beginning of Pell City.

Let's go back after the train finishes blowing his whistle and say that again...

You might sum up Pell City ...you want me to say the whole thing over.....

So you might say that in the beginning a socialite from Memphis, Tennessee, Lydia DeGaris and an insurance salesman from a prominent Charlestonian family that came to Pell City and they planted their roots and they built a cotton mill. And its the folks that came in and worked in the cotton mill and this socialite and insurance salesman that is your roots of Pell City.

Let me asked you one question. Going back and remembering what her mother wrote about not going into this wild country and fearing for her what do you think, I don't know if you have any documentation or anything or maybe just your own gut feelings, but what must it have been like for a woman with her background to come into a place that quite frankly was not a kind of civilized place where she had grown up?

Well I'm sure that she missed I know she must have missed all of her life that she was in the spotlight. She had beautiful clothes, she went to the opera in Memphis, she went to plays in Memphis, she entertained, and she was hobnobbing, we use that term today, but she was with classy people of Memphis, Tennessee because Memphis was on the Mississippi and you must remember in those days that St. Louis, Memphis, Natchez, and New Orleans those were the thriving towns back then. The steamboats those were where all your wealth was and those were where your rich and famous you might say, I'm not saying she was rich and no means famous, but anyway she was from well to do. She had been used to the finer things, the nicer things in life. And in the letter her mother wrote to her she said you know you're going to miss all those things you grew up with and all those things you've been used too. Have you ever thought about the things that you're not going to have? You're going to be someone that's been a has been when you come to Pell City because you're not going to have the things that you've been accustomed to. I'm sure when she got off the train and she walked through the mud or the dust and the weeds, it was really a backwoods. There was no law here and there was no order. There was very little law. You know everybody was out for his own life. She came into the opposite of what she had been grown up in and accustomed too. In other words, you know, it's just like you take a little rich girl that's been used to everything and put out in the middle of no where with nothing. I'm sure she had a hard adjustment. But she must

have loved Sumpter Cogswell alot to have let him talk her into coming here that's all I've got to say.

And she must have been a strong woman in her own right.

Oh yes, she was, I'm sure she had to be a strong woman. She loved to sew. She found ways of entertaining herself. She had to entertain all the people that came to Pell City when her husband was promoting Pell City. I have the big four poster bedroom suit and they told me that to take of this when Johnny became the heir to it. That only the children in the family were born in this bed and only the well to do people that came to Pell City slept in this bed and it was very special. And that I should take real good care of it. Of course, Lydia my daughter now, that's her bed so we use all of our antiques. But she had to entertain these people. This is where they ate and this is where they slept at this house. These people that they entertain when they were trying to promote Pell City. I have gorgeous quilts and beautiful lace, beautiful pieces of needlework so she spent alot of her time sewing and entertaining when she, plus raising a family. When she came to Pell City they said she was a wonderful cook and I have at least 6 or 8 of her cookbooks where she, she must have been quite a cook. She had to a been to entertain like she did. And like I said you know I can not imagine myself going back into a real woodsy area where there no running water, no electricity, theres no type of entertainment. You had to provide your own entertainment. And I guess hers was raising the family and entertaining the people that her husband Sumpter you know invited to Pell City. He was trying to promote it and he was trying to sell them Pell City. That's what he spent his life selling Pell City. And she spent her time entertaining and being a gracious hostess to these people. I have the big punch bowl, and I have the sterling silver ladel. I have alot of the things that she used in entertaining these people that, plus the bedroom suit of course that they slept in. So I still feel, I feel real fortunate that I have some of this history.

You know ...your comment of still holding onto history makes me wonder what would you say is the real value of this year of centennial celebration? Here we have a very modern, very forward looking area, why do we need to pause and look back a hundred years and see what this town was like then?

Well, I've always been of the idea that history, an experience is the best teacher in life. Thats your best teacher. You can look back and this is where you learn. You learn from looking back. You can not see what is in front, but you can always see whats behind. Some people are of the idea of never look back, oh yes, we have to look back. That is where we learn. Thats where we learn about life. And I think I'm real fortunate that Johnny's grandmother had 3

trunks. She saved everything and I'm able to go back and unfold the history. I have just put on a piece of poster the earliest map known available to Pell City. It shows when Pell City was surveyed out for the Pell City Iron Company, probably it was done in 1880's. No later than 1890 I'm sure. It's the earliest known map of Pell City. It's probably the oldest map I'm sure of Pell City that's in existence today and it's on sheep skin and it was done by an engineer from Massachusetts. Well you know today we can look back and we've got all this history. And we can be proud that's where look back and see where we've come from and where we are today.

Anything else that we didn't give you a chance to say?

Uh, I'd just like to say that I hope some day that we can have a museum. I hope some day that this house can be a museum because Johnny's grandmother, grandmother Lydia DeGaris Cogswell, she saved everything. I have newspaper, I have the old deeds, I have the old pictures, I have everything. She saved everything, fortunately. You know we're real fortunate and I have been through one trunk and I have 2 more trunks to go through. And another thing. When I talked with the people of Pell City for instance Miss Hesterly and Miss Welldone, Hesterly I told her that you know I was interested in perserving and saving and immediately she went home and brought me a picture of the Avondale Mill band and there is Mr. Hesterly's dad she pointed out to me who played in this band. And they're the finest looking bunch of guys you've ever seen. And I just hope that we can have a museum and perserve all of this so that we can look back, and our children can look back and see where we have come from and what we are today. But you've got to perserve and save. That's how you appreciate what you've got today when you can compare where you've came from and where you've gotten to.

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Nioma Lee

Now we're just going to talk, we're not going to do any interviewing. We're just going to have a lot of fun and check the audio level....Now, you've been pretty much a life long resident of this area, and I wonder if we could maybe start at the beginning and tell what this area was like as far back as you can remember and talk about some of the changes that have happened over the years.

It so happens that this is the 100th anniversary centennial and I was born in 1906. And so you see I have lived in this area, it was down in Mt. Pigsal and that area. And at that time Mr. Pigsal really the church there was community center for people in this area too. So my mother

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had lived up in Seden when she was a little girl and would walk the fields to get the cows they had that would go loose in the Pell City area where I now live across the railway. So, and we have known this family all of our lives. I mean the Sailors were friends of my mother all of their lives. And so you see Litz's best friend was Gertrude Sailors and so they were quite they were companions let's say. But I remember coming to Pell City with my father and going to what is now Union State Building where they have the bookkeeping department. And they had there they had tables that was my first time ever to have scoops of ice cream and sitting in a coca-cola chair and coca-cola table that kind of thing. They would advertise like that. And then on the corner here Rexal Drug, I remember that too. But the landmark that I remember so well was Union State Bank that they had and when that was demolished it broke my heart because I felt that could have stayed in our town. So that next thing I'll go off on a tangent about something...

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No that's fine...What was it like growing up in the country so to speak? We've heard several people that lived right here in town talking about what it was like but what was country life like as you were growing up?

Country life then is different now I'm sure in that you grew everything that you had. In other words we had all kinds of fruit trees and we had all kinds of vegetables. My grandpa Tucker, he had early peaches and late peaches, early pears and late pears, and apples galore, so they would dry things. They would dry apples and they would dry peaches. And of course they had plenty of grapes and of course you could go out not far from the house and you could get the crab apples you know. Everything, you had the you had your own cows, your own turkeys, geese, you had your own geese, and my grandmother used to love to try to find the eggs where the geese would hide them. So I don't know now you have to go to the store for everything. Then we didn't have to go to the store because everything was taken care of at home. When my grandmothers house burned a big two story house out Mr. Pigscaw it was in March in the afternoon there were at least 600 jars, canned jars that were still bursting with food. So that meant that they took care of everything they had. And who came to see them? The Starnes and the Sailors came down that afternoon to see them, I remember that. So that's the reason I say this family has been connected with ours all the many years.

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What about the schools in Pell City? Now where did you go to school and what was education like when you were growing up?

Well my first school was at Mr. Pigscaw. And I was a problem child in that I didn't learn as quickly as others. And then my next school was at Easonville. And thats where I had 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade. From there we moved to a

New London and then when I came to Cropwell I was in the 7th grade. That's where my father bought a place in Cropwell. So it was so different, so different from now. And then of course I taught in this county. The first place that I taught was Coal City, and then I was principal of Chandler Mountain School and then I went into the Army and then I came back to Pell City High School as teacher. And we had study halls. Litz and I in the afternoon we had free time for the students and it seemed to me like everybody in the whole schools suddenly left the study halls and were with us out on the school grounds. So we were together in school right to begin with when I came back here in 48.

What a...it seems to me for a relative small town, in many respects not an especially affluent town, that Pell City has always had a very high quality of education. A very good teachers, and seems like has produced some very good people through its school system. I wonder how you feel about that and what explanation could there be for the excellent quality of education thats offered here.

You know I really think it goes back to the people that settled in this area, this part of the county. Down to Mr. Pigscaw and either the school the one room school and then two room school that they had there. It was they were anxious to get good teachers in that area and then certainly at Easonville where they had the Academy. And the Maddox's and the Elliot's that was in that area they were scouting for people that really could bring to the community that was a lovely community there. And then in Cropwell you had the Robertson's as a child were interested in betterment of the community and having good teachers. Roy Gibson was my principal at Cropwell. It was under him that I finished high school. And he was considered king of schools by the people of the University of Alabama at that time so and Pell City you see was right in with with that kind of thinking because of the Cogswell and because of the people that has settled in this area. They wanted to have the best and they reached out and did get people to come in that did a beautiful job.

As you think back on the time of the 40's and the 50's and 60's, are there some significant events that stand out in your mind or some significant happenings that had some change in the community or ...

Your beginning to get in to World War II...(laughing)... Yes, it made quite a difference, quite a difference. I ended up in going in the service and I know that at that time I had been principal of Chandler Mountain and I was interested and had gone down to University of Alabama . And I thought I'm not interested in war. I'm just not interested in war at all and I thought I'll just join the service that's what I'll do and find out whats it all about. And thats what I did and so I went into the bank and Mr. Pat Robertson was there, and Mr.

Gibson was there, and Mr. Gibson looked so broken down. And now I know why. He was having a hard time getting teachers because they had gone into work on the projects for the civil defense you know that kind of thing. Anyway government projects could make so much more and thats what they were doing. And Mr. Pat said something like now we'll sent you in to Birmingham area to teach and he said theres lot of men down there and you might meet you a nice feller if you go down there. And I said Mr. Pat I've already decided where I'm going to go where there'll be men. I'm going I've joined the army. And I will never forget Mr. Gibson's face. He said you can get out of it. But I said I'm going into the army. It just so happened that when I went home and the way I was having to spend money and so on I thought I didn't want to go back to the school where I was at Chandler Mountain. And so I knew that I was going to do something different. Never been sorry that I did it.

What did you do in the army?

I was a T-5. I in other words a medical technician and I had some unusual experiences and I went go into those today. But anyway I really feel that I wouldn't be here with you today if I had not gone in to the Army. Because my health was such that I didn't know, in fact of the business is Col. Barney told me that I wouldn't never had gone into the service if I hadn't of needed an operation which was done while I was in service. So I have had some unusual experiences in that respect.

And yet after the war, after your service with the Army you could have gone anywhere but you came back home.

I went to California. I came out of the service and went immediately to Monrovia, California and I worked as a taking care of spastic of a millionaire at that time and lived as a member of the family, not as a I was companion to the daughter. And it was really an experience because I drove the first Lincoln Continental that was delivered in Passadena. That was for me to drive Catherine around. So I've, I've had a few experiences (laughing)... So let's not get into all that....

Let's go back and talk about Mr. Pigscaw and Easonville and that area down there. In the early 60's, something happened that has changed that area down there. Talking about the beginning of the lake.

Well, that the beginning of the lake I remember telling Mr. Klinedoms in Passadena, you know my uncle says that he will be sitting on his front porch and fishing you know from the lake. Now that's where Kent Tucker now lives down at Cropwell area. And it seemed to me about 50 years they had talked about that as a child because I'd heard something

about it all along. And, yes, that made quite a difference. Even now I'm not acquainted with some of the area. Where I was born is under water now. I was born in that area you see and its under water. And I think its meant an awful lot to our area. Its made it hard for some families to give up their homestead. I remember going before that happened one Sunday my mother and father and Mr. Pat and Berta Lee we rolled down to the Childersburg and what is it? Well anyway, rolled in across the river and he was talking about how the changes were going to be made and looking at the lovely old homes and how they had this farm land. And he said all this was going to be under water. And so it has been too.

Seems like I recall back during that period that there were some folks that lived down in that area that weren't to happy about this development.

Alot of them were not happy. They were not happy, and to this day it has hurt because they have passed on their feelings down to others you see.

What kinds of places that are now under water would have some significance. Are there some church sites, school sites, community sites, homesteads?

Right now I really can't ... oh, course Easonville you know that. That just that was just a lovely little place. It was beautifully done. The Maddox's had well they had artists out to do their home and everything and I remember when their big house was moved across the street and they had big oaks and so that area you see is under water. It made such a difference with the people.

What about in your years as a teacher in this part of the county? Are there some students that stand out in your mind either famous or infamous, either who distinguished themselves with their school work who perhaps who have gone on?

Well you know some how or another I kind of thought Wayne Spradley would be here. And Wayne Spradley at one time and since his paintings have been recognized he was at the Union State branch there bank down at Cropwell. Incidentally they had me to cut the ribbon there and I didn't know I was supposed to do that. But anyway I did it. And he was giving away his prints and he told me that I was the cause of him getting in to art work. What happened was we had a Library uh book fair in the auditorium at Pell City high school and it was filled books from different companies. And we had I was assigned Biography. That was the section I was supposed to do something about. And so Wayne was in my class and he wasn't interested in school work, so I asked him and he was studying art under Mary Mays and so I asked him to do sketches of the presidents of the United States. And he did

10-12

and from that of course I gave him a grade. I gave him a good grade. And from that he said that caused him to start seriously about art. And that fair was written up in Pasadena as an outstanding fair in the United States. So we have had in our area see you have to have people that are interested in reaching out in order to get as far as that. And then well we have peridontists here in Birmingham, Dr. Pessnicks, he's an outstanding..... Every now I think of someone and take you. Well really its its amazing what you're doing and take Jerry. I mean as far as finance and so on from where you came to where you are now you had to have a dream. Somebody had to instill that. I don't believe you just get it all together by yourself. I think someone along you've touched somebody or somebody's touched you. And every now and then I see things in the paper about people right now you've got me on that.

Why do you think its a value for a town like Pell City to stop as we are this year and look back at our history? Why do we need to look backwards when we're going forwards?

I don't think you're looking backwards at all. I hadn't thought it oh you know I haven't thought about what I'm saying...but I don't think we're going backwards. I think we're going forwards in that we are remembering these things they just don't happen. Somebody had to do an awful lot of work. Somebody's putting an awful lot of effort in this very project we're doing now. And some where along the line its going to cause someone to think well my family could do something if they would just think about it seriously. So that's to me a very wonderful effort.

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What kind of Pell City do you think we'll have 5, 10, 15 years down to the future?

If we continue in the vein that we've gone since I've been here and I came in 48. If we continue in the vein we're going now its going to be amazing. I believe that people will begin to straighten up and fly right so to speak. By that I mean that the city could be landscaped in such a way and beautified in such a way that people will really want to be here. And we're away from Birmingham, we're near Atlanta, we're near Chattanooga, we're near so many places. The temperature is fine and we have the water that so many people dote on, that's where they want to be. So we have the facilities here to invite people but we're going to have to work on it just as we've been doing.

Anything you'd like to say we didn't give you a chance to say?

Why in the world did you have me come?

Your name was on the list...(laughing)...for some strange

10-13

reason.

Well there are people that I miss so much in the teaching profession and Litz was one of them. I feel like that she sort of helping us out along the way. I last time I saw her here in this house I came and she wasn't feeling well. Then I went to the hospital to see her, and she told me how sick she was, and so I didn't cry. Neither did she because we felt it was near. The time was very close. But I remember when her son died where I was and so I had gone to Montavalia with a group of fellers from the Library. And so we came back home and momma told me that Litz had called and wanted me to come to the hospital. I went up and found that he had just passed. She asked me to stay with him and never before had I done a thing like that. And then afterwards she asked me to come and when they came and got when she came to the house bring his things that we had. I never had had come to a dark house like this with all the vines and everything but I came just the same to see that and then help from then on as best I could. So thanks for asking me.

(11)

11-1

We can start off just for the record to tell us who you are and where we are...

My name is Bill Hallman, I'm President of Contel's Gulf Division here in Pell City, Alabama.

And how long has Contel been here?

We moved in here on the 26th of February, 19 ..uh 1990.

And what was it that attracted you to Pell City?

Well, uh, Contel, our lease in Atlanta was expiring. We'd been located in Atlanta some 18 years and uh, as our lease went toward the expiration date, we decided we'd look around on our own operating area and see if there were some concessions that some of the folks might be willing to give to get us to relocate there. We looked at Simsonville, South Carolina, uh, Thomaston, Georgia, and Pell City, Alabama. And although the other communities were very anxious to get us to relocate there the uh Pell City folks uh really out did themselves and were the primary reason we relocated here.

Seems kind of strange uh, you're a big regional operational major communications company go from a metropolitan area like Atlanta to Pell City, Alabama. What was some of the thinking that was revised?

Well, for one thing we don't have any customers in the large metropolitan areas. We primarily serve rural America uh with our telephone service. And uh there is an opportunity here for us to do some of our own economical development. Uh, this office has a five and a half million payroll and there is a multiplier effect to that I'm sure is will in the long run benefit both uh Pell City and Contel.

What about the Pell City area, uh, What would you say about the quality of life here, uh, receptivity, I know uh I know there may be ...is there a tension between old timers and new comers? Is there an outsiders verses new folks?

Well if that's there it's not evident, that uh, the welcome we received and the comments we got on our relocation here and our new building uh have been very, very favorable. Uh, it's a beautiful area uh, I mean with Logan Martin lake and uh, the hustle and bustle of Atlanta if you will is behind us. We don't have the traffic problems. Uh, our employees now have a golf league on a Tuesday night, they can relax and get out there and play golf with their fellow employees. It's just something you couldn't do in Atlanta.)

What do you say is the future of uh this area? Do you see more people like Contel coming in?

11-2

Oh, yes. I think uh Pell City has a lot going for it. The attitude of the people number one, also the proximity to Interstate highway system, and uh, and airport, and uh rail, I mean its really got everything.

What about the future of Contel here?

Well Contel interestingly enough is going to be expanding its operation in Pell City. We are going through a reorganization that a, from twelve divisions in three regions down to six operating groups. And Pell City will become one of those six operating groups and therefore, will expand its operation.

What about the labor force here? Obviously, you brought some of your key people with you but I'm sure you've picked up a number of local people in your operation too...uh, I guess I'm looking for something about the quality of employees that are available here, the level of education, uh the work attitude...

Well we have been very pleased with the uh the employees we have been able to hire in Pell City. We struck a deal with the Alabama Development Organization, and they uh did the training and our programs. We told them what we wanted the employees trained in and there was no promise of employment. And they trained several and we were able to interview those who were in the top of the class so to speak and were very pleased with quality of employee we got here.

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What would you say to somebody perhaps not a communications competitor but somebody with the size of operation you have thats looking for a either a place to establish or a place to relocate? What would you tell them about Pell City?

Well a I would tell them number one the people here, the city fathers are very anxious to have new industry come to the area. They will do whatever they can to accomdate you and your company to get you to relocate here. The labor market is here, the uh location as far as quality of life is very good, as far as business its very good with the as I mentioned earlier the proximity of airports and Interstate highway system and rail. Its just a very, very to me a very very adventageous to business and to the life of the people.

Let me go back again and ask you about Contel and what Contel is in to and what kinds of things you want here.

Well Contel the company the total corporation is made up of three sectors right now uh that uh Federal Systems sector, and the Contel cellular phone which is a very fast growing business and the telephone operating group. And of course Pell City is apart of the telephone operating group. And we provide support services for telephone operations in

11-3

Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama. And we basically provide uh telephone service. We are a state of the art telephone equipment. We are approaching one hundred percent one party service and one hundred percent digital service with miles and miles of fiber optic joining all this together. So Contel is a progressive company, very high-tec, and providing excellent service to its customers in these areas.

Anything else you'd like to say that I didn't give you a chance to say?

Ty, I guess we pretty much covered it all, just to say I'm very happy that I'm here in Pell City and I think it was a wise move on the part of Contel and I thank all the people in Pell City for all they did to make this move as easy as it was.

Just for the record I'll let you tell who you are and what you do.

OK

See how easy this is? (laughing)

I'm Betty Turner. We own a grocery store in Pell City, Pell City Grocery. We've owned it 25 years, 26 this coming October. Uh, two years ago I was elected to the City Council and have thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm, uh, the Parks and Recreation Board is my department and uh, I have found it quite challenging, and different, and new to me. Uh, one of the biggest things I tell about the park ... One of the biggest things that's happen since I've been on the City Council is the dedication of the new Pell City Lakeside Park. This park was started 15 years ago and uh, was dedicated this year. It was built in phases, three phases, and we were fortunate enough to get to finish the last phase of it which was is finished and has open to the public now. Now cut it.

(Laughing) A couple follow up questions. Talking about the park perhaps you can go back and talk a little about what recreational facilities have been like in the city for the last 5, 10, 15 years uh...

Well in the , always we've had a swimming pool, we've had tennis courts that are out of date, uh, but, one of the big improvements in Pell City was our new Civic Center. Now its to full compacity used every day. We have a walking track in the Civic Center. We're in the process of building a new walking track, an outside track at Avondale Park over by the ball field. We have an excellent ball program, a softball program, a , we have in the process of getting a grant for new tennis courts. We have tennis enough tennis

enthusiastics that would like to have a league here. We're really excited about that. A, so much we need to do and it seems so slow but we're getting there. That...

What other kind of changes have happened in Pell City in the last few years besides the recreational changes? Well lets talk since the lake went in, uh, the lake I guess is in terms of recreation and activity is kind of a mile stone. Uh...

When this lake was, well we were living here, we owned land on the water when the lake was backed up. We uh, it was such a change and it put people in brick homes that had nothing you know. The land became so expensive and it , the big change its made its brought so many nice families to Pell City. This is our lake has develope and its not like some around some lakes. We have fine homes down here, fine families. Its brought Doctors, professional people into our town. Its so close to Birmingham, 30 minutes away, right on the Interstate til its so easy for them to go to work and live out here. So this is one of big changes. We recently did a, uh, count, uh, cencus count so that we could know when they got through with our cencus count how many people we would have. We would, we were always 8 thousand and now we are around 17 thousand which is a big jump for us. We feel we are sitting on a hot spot we need to develop. Where we're short is with retail development. Uh, we're working on that, we hope to get a shopping center in here real soon. We, we've got people looking at us.

Well let me ask you from the stand point of a long term merchant what do you think bringing in some of these outside businesses, how is that going to affect the local business and merchants that are already here?

I think it'll just help. Uh, we need it, we're growing, and theres a need for it. We're a small business and everything is big business now, great big business. But that's all right, there's room for it with the increase of people and uh, the way we're growing you know this is the trend of time and we certainly want it in Pell City. We welcome it.

What about the role of city government in the development of the Civic Center and the park and a lot of the other amenities that have come in the last few years? How important is it to have the forward thinking leadership of the city seems to have? I guess what I'm looking for is how does the city government insure that growth and development is done in a way thats best for the city?

At one of the first meetings we went to, uh, in Washington, we had a round table discussion I love at city league. One of the first things we learned that if you had sewage and water available, that your city would grow. Just

recently we got a, floated bonds just the last council meeting for 3 million dollars. Part of it is for water expansion and sewage. We plan to rework our water meters which is your cash register for your city. We hope to bring in more money . We hope by doing this that our businesses will come. This is just most important that we have this.

What do you see as the future of Pell City? What do you think Pell City will be like 5, 10, 15 years down the road?

Couldn't be anything but good. We just have so many people here, so close to Birmingham, so close to Atlanta, and so near Nashville, Tennessee we couldn't do anything but better.

Uh, You've raised your family here and been involve in the town a long time do you see, I know for a very long time uh, children who were raised here tended to leave here when they went off to school and not come back and now I see a trend at least to some extent where kids are getting out of high school and staying, and some of us who left are coming back, have you noticed that? Is that happening or am I imagining that because I know the people here?

I think thats happening because there was a time when we didn't have good jobs for our young people when they finished school. And now we're growing, and with all of the new industry we have, Contel, and such as that, and the way our towns growing I think they like living in this smaller town. They like the atmosphere of it.

Do you remember any funny events or anything of human nature of being around of raising your kids? Anything , just colorful interest?

I'll never forget going to Eastwood Mall and caring the girls to get their pictures made. Uh, Sarah Beth was like 10 and Becky was 7, maybe a little younger, but anyhow Sarah Beth thought she was entirely too big to have her picture made with Santa Claus at Christmas time. So we went down and got in line to have their picture made and she kind of pulled back but Becky was eager because she was younger. And Santa Claus was sitting over there and he told, asked, he talked to the little Turner girls and told them all about what was going on and their eyes were all over their face. Sarah Beth came back and told me that Santa Claus told her that is her daddy didn't keep his thumb off that scales he wasn't going to see the Turners. She was convinced that Santa Claus was Jerry Gallops. He made such an impression on that child til when she went to college we had to assure her there was no Santa Claus. (laughing) I hope I told it like it should have been told but anyhow we'll never forget that it was so cute. We had no idea who Santa Claus was and Jerry was it and there was no problem.

11-6

I wonder with all the changes that have happened in town and looking forward to a growing future, what do you think is the value, why is it important to do something like this Centennial celebration? Why do we need to spend time looking backwards as we move forward?

When we had, When we dedicated the park, we went back and looked up the history of our mayors. Nobody has the influence on the town like the mayor does. We found that in a hundred years we had twenty. And we honored the families that are still here that are living. It was so much fun to go back and we wanted to do more of it and remember, try to find out when the first paving was done, when the first sewage was put in, when the first street lights were put in, we've come such a long way and our little town has such a good history and there are so many fine people here and I think its so good. Thats what lifes all about is memories. And I think to go back and remember and you learn from their mistakes and from their good doings and you just grow from it. I think its wonderful, I love it.

Your store is in one of oldest buildings in town. And there has been a lot of talk about what has been torn down, whats still here, and all that , and I've heard if we build a shopping center what's going to happen to downtown...What do you think the future of Cogswell Avenue main business district is? Are we going to see a historic renovation or ...

Well, we restored downtown Pell City in 10 years ago. Uh, maybe it was 15 years ago that it was restored. I think it could be a unique little town. The traffic is not downtown like it used to be because of the big stores on in the other part of town but we still could have a unique little town. I think its pretty, I think our business district downtown, I think we have a pretty little town. I just think we need to do something to promote it and keep it going. Its really pretty.

Is there anything else you'd like to say we didn't give you a chance to say?

I don't know. I really don't know what I'm saying.
(laughing)

You'll think of all these things after you've been gone about 15 minutes (laughing)

Is that enough? OK very good.

How long will this take?

About 20 minutes.

OK good.

Unless you get wound up. Kate talked about an hour and a half this morning.

Oh really? I don't know. You don't have any water here so I don't know if I could last that long. (laughing)

The Robertson family has been important part of Pell City development and they originally came to Cropwell. Will you tell us a little about how they came to Cropwell and how they...

Well I actually had this article I never heard of before that had a Cropwell Enterprise Newspaper that was printed in 1895 that Mrs. Crow sent to me but the Robertsons have always been there I suppose. ~~I don't know, I don't know where they, always.~~ It was the Mr. Fall, Mr. Pat, and Miss Ada's mother that came there from Willsonville way back I guess around about the time of the Civil War. Mr. Fall's grandfather started the business and then his father went into the business with his father in law, Mr. James Russell Robertson. And then when Mr. Fall, he was born in 1976, and by the 1900, when they built the brick store that's there now where the antiques shop is, Mr. Fall senior was real involved in the business. And thats when in 1903 they started the first bank in the county and it was located here. And Mr. Fall, Sr. was director until he died in 1966. He was only 27 and not even married when it was first started. But Mr. Cogswell served on the board of the bank until he died in 1946.

The bank began as its original name wasn't Community State, it was something else...

Bank of St. Clair County, because it was the first bank in the county. And then in later after Mr. McLain Tiltron came here from Virginia, it was changed to the First National Bank. And then in 1919, I think, it was made a state bank, and its been Union State Bank since then. They just had the name of the bank changed to charter.

Its now the largest bank in the county and has operations...

Well, I don't know that its the largest bank. We're going to have a footing of about 90 million on our June 30th statement. But of we have a branch at Ashville, and one at Cedar Bluff in Center and Hoover, Alabama in addition to the two here in Pell City.

Robertson family was also active in general mercantile busines and cotton ginning business and my impression that tenant farmers...they had a lot of tenant land and when the lake came in I know it eventually the Will Robertson home

went part of the Civic Center property ...Did the lake take part of their property?

Oh, yes. Well my husband had two farms and it took one completely and the other it contured the lake the fields where the lake is now. But then Mr. Fall, Mr. Pat, and Miss Ada, they took hundreds of acres of their land but they still had quite a bit left.

The lake made a major change in Pell City's growth pattern. How do you view the lake as a economic asset, a social asset, is it something you ...a good influence for us?

Oh, I think so definitely, because without the lake and the fact that Mrs. Jean Bradley put that telephone system all over the lake front on St. Clair side of the lake without a doubt we wouldn't have the development we've had now because at Cederable Rock and Center (hard to understand) where we have those branches they are on Lake Rice and they haven't had anything like the development there that we have and their near on Georgia. But there was something about the easy access with the Interstate that caused people from Birmingham and a lot of them came out for those summer cottages that were nice homes and decided they would just move their families rather than come for a vacation place and made it their home. And those that work commute but its definitely, the city I don't think would ever grown like it has without the lake.

You had a career prior coming back to Pell City and today there seems to be a trend, a lot of us in my age group who went away a number of years are now come back for various reasons, you were a pioneer, you went off a number of years to Washington and then came back to Pell City. When you came back can you compare what Pell City was like then to what it like now when you first got back?

Well, uh, I would judge it by what I was doing I suppose I always worked. And while I was working most of the 10 years I was away, I worked for a Congressman and I would come home and work in the fall of the year and I guess extreme changes that happened are not apparent to me as someone that left and was gone. I would come back and stay from like September to the first of the year. But, uh, when I came back permanently in 1959, but just a comparison of what the economy was like, when I became a member of the board of directors of the bank it was a three and a half million dollar bank. And it was the only bank in town other than St. Clair Federal was in operation at that time. But the growth the growth of the bank is now 90 million so you can see how much everything grew. There was no shopping centers, there was no very few resturants, of course theres quite a difference when we moved here in `32 til then but since then I was surprised at the cencus being 17 thousand people in the

city limits, because when they put in the gas system and all that Pell City grew by taking in additional territory. But

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Well building on that a little bit as one of the major financial people of the community, what do you see coming down the road as far as development...are we going to see major shopping centers, huge condos development on the lake...

Well, there's not enough property left on the lake for much more development to any extent I don't think. Because the prices of the property have increased I think because of the scarcity as much as anything else. But, uh, Pell City itself the town, if we have the proper housing and not mansions on the lake for people who would work in industry and things we might get here with our industrial park at the stage its in Pell City could have a tremendous growth. And the more people you have then it demands the shopping areas, shopping centers, and support things everybody has to have.

Over the years you've had the opportunity to work with and around a lot of people, are there any characters that stand out in your mind or any people who've built Pell City that we should be aware of?

Well there were a lot of very interesting people and at the time I guess they were doing great things. I happened to work in the court house when I first started to work. Judge Curtis Adkins was probate judge, Republican, then I worked for my grandfather, but then I worked for, he later became a judge, Mr. Frank Embry, and I worked at the corner drugstore and kept their books at night and I knew Dr. R.A. Martin there. And I worked for him. And later I was a draft board clerk and worked in the court house where everything was going on in the court house and around. Then I went to Washington and then since I came back I've been at the bank since '64 so Mr. Cogswell was an outstanding individual. He was a real special kind of a person and everybody probably knew Judge Embry because he was in politics and was elected circuit solicitor which is DA and later was circuit judge. And everybody knew Dr. Martin. But having worked for him I guess I knew them better, maybe I didn't, not socially but I worked for them and I didn't go to college. I just went to a county school in Washington but I learned a lot from having been associated with them. And I knew Mr. Blair Jones real well. He was a prominent citizen and of course Mr. Pat Robertson until he found out I was going to be a member of the family everything was fine. But, Pell City used to be so small that if you were in the court house or in the drugstore or in an attorney office' you could see just about everything going on in town.

We just recently lost Mrs. Starnes and she was a favorite of

11-10

mine and I know she was close to the Community State Bank ...

Her father was director...

Do you have any memory of her?

Actually, she and I never were associated together a lot but I always admired her and I never will forget my uncle telling me that he grew up with her, Vestor Garrett. They would play ball, he and Mr. Marcus Smith and several young fellows and they'd let Mrs. Starnes play with them. They called her Litz. And the girls would say, "We want to play too" and they'd say "you can't! Girls can't play with us" and they'd say "Litz plays with you". But "oh she's different". And when she grew up she became a physical education teacher at the high school. I never went to school to her. She was never my teacher. But I knew her and admired her. And her sister Mary was a real sweet person. When I was working for Mr. Embry when they would get a street or apply for a grant for a street or the gas system or sewage system, he'd send me up to the Cogswell's for Mr. Cogswell to sign all these papers. Their mother was a real sweet aristocratic lady. I've known a lot of them not too intimately but was exposed to enough to appreciate them for what they did.

Of the I guess Pell City being a mill town to start with had a lot of different sections Oakridge, Eden, Mill Village, and old part of Pell City, in the years you were first here and come back, have you seen any changes socially? I know there were originally there were social divisions in the town. Do you think that has all changed now or is it more of an intergration of people?

I don't think that division is as much as it was, not anything like it was. The schools have integrated, combined, and people own their homes over there now, and theres definitely not the distinction. They don't have the separation on medical and things of that nature. But years ago when I worked for Dr. Martin, he and Oz Scott that worked at the drugstore, they would go down down and stand in front of the bank when it was a payday at Avondale Mills, and as people came out of the bank they would pay on their accounts for Dr. Martin, for him and the hospital and on their drugstore bill. Oz Scott would give them a receipt for that. The reason I know I processed the receipts for the drugstore.

In other words, they would go to the source of the money.

Yes, they were right there, real convenient. But, its just more intergrated now. You don't think about people working at the Avondale Mills and separate them like you did then.

11-11

I know one of the things I admired you for, you've taken the old buildings on Cogswell and restored them, rennovated them to the point that they'll be in service for another 30 to 50 years, do you think somewhere down the road some more of that thing on Cogswell Avenue? In my mind, someday I'd like to see all those old buildings brought to better use...

I don't see why they couldn't be. I read an article just recently about what would happen in the next 20 years, I don't recall where it was, but they said I think within the next 21st century, they were going to get away more from the big malls and have individual stores and I was real surprised at that thinking about what was in affect today. But, I don't see why, they said they'd be more specialized and in smaller operations and I don't see why that downtown Pell City couldn't be there are a lot of two-story buildings in the next block up from where we are on Cogswell Avenue that I wondered why they weren't used to full potential. Because we have a nice operation in the building we have rennovated. Well we fixed it for the purpose we're using it rather than the furniture store. But, we painted the building next to us the facade, but, it has a lot of potential if somebody would take it because its just a hull sitting there. You could co anything you wanted to but its two story. And thats where the first bank was in that building. There was no building on the corner where Mr. Hollis has his business. But the first bank was in the building next to us. They say the vaults are safest in there. I've never seen I don't suppose. But Pell City could be real pretty downtown and be active. I think that people have gotten where they don't want to park a block away from what they have to go to and the parking right now on main street is a little difficult but they don't use that on the back street by the railway thats good parking but they just don't want to walk a block.

I always think that's interesting the reason I injecting a personal feeling but people will say that about a shopping area like downtown yet they'll go to the mall and walk a lot further...

Yes sure...Yes ... that's true.

And the thing I enjoy is watching people circle that area saying they don't want to use the gas but they will circle the block downtown but they will circle the mall looking for the closest parking space to the door and waste an hour doing so.

But I think Pell City planned progress is what we need at this point. It's getting a little crowded in the space and if you don't plan it properly it'll become more of a hogpog. And planned cities are uh you don't want it too pat but you wouldn't have as much individual and it wouldn't be as traditional and what not but Pell City could have alot.

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And I think that the City government maybe thats there now plan to do a lot that we that everybody can benefit from and appreciate it.

Well there's a as you were talking I was thinking there is a new generation of leadership coming along, your nephew Reed and Rex coming in the bank that their generation and Hugh Holiday is one of their comtemporaries going into the legislature. We're getting that that generation is becoming of age uh I uh I guess what I was getting around to is use beyond those three people I mentioned do you see a generation that we may count on coming in to do those sort of things, the planning and that sort of things?

Well the children of these you are talking about even those that have children their going to be better educated. And if they would become active and involved I think that uh theres a lot of home town people from families who've been here a long time. And of course those new comers that have their contributions to make I think we should utilize everybodies talents and abilities, that Pell City could advance in many ways. But you have to do a lot of work to get it done and a lot of planning. The right kind of planning. And not get fragmented into every direction. You can't do everything and you should decide how it should go and then dwell on that and work your plan. Have a good plan to begin with and then work it.

I was wondering as we look at Pell City today as its growing and looking forward to the future what value do you see in taking time like the city is doing this year to celebrate the centennial to look back on its history? What's the value of looking back at a time we're moving forward so rapidly?

I really never thought about it. You know people we're traditional in the South and you just don't forget about your roots I guess. But somany of those we're talking about today are not here any more. And I suppose it's well enough to not forget how we got to this point. But I really I always had an attitude of looking forward rather than backwards. You can't change anything, you can cherish the memory of all this. And there lot's of interesting people, and lot of interesting things that have happened. And people have financed it, they use their resources for it. But I still think with the right leadership and the right type planning we should do better in the future about education, and certainly our churches have their place. And I think Pell City is blessed with that aspect of it. Their churches the Methodist church has grown and it has a better facility than it had five years ago, and the Baptist church will too, and there other churches just developing as fast as they are. And uh it takes it all together. I always said that a little bit of knowledge and a little bit of religion would help out a lot.

That's one of the things we kept quite often in these interviews is the old saw is that Pell City has never grown is that five or six families control the great majority of the land. Do you see that beginning to move now?

Well definitely because their not around anymore and if we aren't going to do something now what will we ever do? Thats why we always said we couldn't do anything. And now if their not around anymore we certainly theres going to be a time we can't blame them anymore. But it takes a you have to vent your capital, you have to adventure your assets. And a lot of people might be rather satisfied with status quo and not do that. But to grow and progress we're going to have to venture. But you don't have to be rational about it.

Anything we haven't covered that you think would be important for us to include in ...

I think we pretty well covered it. OK

If we could just start for the record with you telling us who you are and what you do and how long you've been in Pell City.

PARKS

Are you ready for me to start now? I'm Bob Parks, I'm with Benjamin Moore Paint Company. Uh, I hold two jobs with the company. I'm assistant divisional manager, our central division being uh headquartered in Chicago with plants in Cleveland, Ohio, St. Louis, Mo., Houston, Texas, and this new plant in Pell City. And we've been here we started servicing customers out of this plant November the 1st, 1986 and that was about the day I came here to Pell City.

What was it that attracted Benjamin Moore to Pell City?

Well if I could state this that Benjamin Moore has a presence in this section of the country for some long time. We had a number of years a go big distributors in Birmingham, and Tuscaloosa, and other areas in this section of the country. And this area was generally serviced out of our St. Louis plant. In order to offer better service, we had established a warehouse, a shipping warehouse, in Birmingham. So I guess it was natural for us to look in the Birmingham area. Our customers in this section of the country for the last several years were used to getting their paint from Birmingham. Now our company when we decided to put a plant down here because our volume had grown so much we looked at a number of places. And we decided on Pell City. I think there were a number of reasons there. It was natural for us to look here having had the shipping warehouse in Birmingham. I'm sure that the assistance of the Industrial Development Board, and the industrial parks available here at Pell City, were a great influence. (Everything we receive and ship comes by truck and so the Interstate highway system and the

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proximity of the highway system had to be a great factor in determining that. We service out of this Pell City plant the entire state of Mississippi, the entire state of Alabama, middle and east Tennessee, the northern half of Georgia, and the panhandle of Florida. And we're properly located to service that particular area. And also we get a lot of backhauls. There's a lot of paint raw materials made in this section of the country. The pigments, the oils, and other things that we...all of our one gallon and quart containers are manufactured in Atlanta and backhauled from Atlanta. We deliver the paint over there and haul the material back here. So it's a very, very fine area in which to do business to manufacture paint.

What a...often times in small towns in this part of the country there's kind of a two sided attitude toward companies like Benjamin Moore we'd like to have your money, your jobs, but yet the folks that have grown up and lived in the town for several generations tend to have an us against them attitude sometimes toward new businesses and so called outsiders. I sensed that's not too much a problem in Pell City and I wondered if you have any insides on new businesses and new comers seem to blend in so well with the folks that have been here several generations...

Well I'm not sure that I have an inside about that but I can tell you it's true. I had a feeling we've been accepted here. For example, we enjoy the business after hours at the Chamber of Commerce where we meet any number of business and political leaders in this community. When we opened this plant we transferred a cadre of experienced foremen and our superintendent from St. Louis plant, one man from our Chicago, one man from our Houston plant, and one from our Jacksonville, Florida in our eastern division. Their families live here, they bought homes here, their intergrated into the community and I guess Pell City wants us. They have certainly have made us welcome and we've found the people here to be very, very helpful in what ever project we had underway at our plant.

What about the I hope I'm not putting you on the spot too much but I wonder about the quality of workers that are available here.

We have found them to be very good. As a matter of fact, at the outset the industrial development training facility in the state of Alabama were very helpful in securing applicants, screening applicants, and then helping us train the local people. As I said, we transferred in an experienced cadre. We had people here who knew what to do and how to do it, obviously we had to train the local people. We set very high standards, we pay a very good wage, and we expect the people to be there and work. We expect a good attendance record, we provide a good health benefits, health

maintenance organization, and if they're sick we expect them to go to the doctor and get well because when our plants opened we expect them to work. We make that very plain to them and we've had no problems at all. As a matter of fact, we are very pleased with our gallons per man hour, our cost per gallon in this plant. Benjamin Moore is a company that's very well run and we know what we're doing and this plant at Pell City compares very, very favorably with any plant we have in the United States.

What about the quality of life here in Pell City both for those who came from outside how they might compare it from where they came, as well as the quality of life that continues to grow here?

Well we find the quality of life in Pell City to be very good. The lake is obvious. Most of our people enjoy the lake in one form or another, fishing, ski boats, one form or another they enjoy the lake. And I think they enjoy the entire area and the proximity to Birmingham. We find Birmingham to be very interesting city. It offers a great deal and it 50 minutes down the road. So the whole area is a very, very attractive area.

What do you see as Pell City's economic future? Do you see more industrial development, do you see more ...

I absolutely do if the city chooses to pursue that avenue. As I've indicated before in the interview its extremely well located and I think the future is limited only by the desires of the citizens of this community. If they want to get industry in here its obvious they have. They've gotten Benjamin Moore, they've gotten Contel since we've came here, Shelby Steel, many other industries that are moving into the area and I think the city can get more and more if thats what they want.

If I were the representative of a company like Benjamin Moore, and I were looking for a place to locate a facility, and you were a booster of Pell City, what would you tell me by way of encouragment that I should give serious consideration to locating here?

Well I would tell you that the climate for doing business is good here. You'll find an intelligent, and at times demanding Alabama Department of Environmental Management for example. They know what they are doing and they expect us to conform to there requirements and we expect to do that. But its presented in a intelligent and helpful way. That's just one example...The Alabama Department of Environmental Management. The local people we have found political leaders and others to be very helpful. And if you can come into an environment of that nature then you can if you have a good proposition and as honest company you can

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prosper.

On a personal level how have you found the town? Do you miss some things from the big city or are most of your normal needs and wants taken of?

Most of our normal needs and wants are taken care of in Pell City. We occasionally secure some supplies from Birmingham, some services from Birmingham, but most of the things we require to run a full scale paint manufacturing operation are available to us with in a reasonable radius in Pell City or the immediate area. Welding firms, other suppliers, people who perform services for us are generally available in this immediate area. I would like just to say about Benjamin Moore also that we do have a something to compare this area and plant to. Benjamin Moore has 12 factories in the United States and 3 in Canada. So generally our factories are located in Boston, Newark, and Richmond, and Jacksonville, and Las Angeles, and Denver, but we're doing business in Pell City without any great difficulties and very nice environment.

Do you ... Is there anything in your notes we haven't covered that you'd like to?

We've covered everything in my notes, we certainly have. I would say that just for the record so we'll kind of know what we're talking about we employ about 65 people in this plant. We deliver 95-96% of our total product on our trucks. We have 10 big 18-wheelers that move into the area I described a minute ago of Mississippi, Alabama, parts of Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. And we operate the paint plant two shifts a day, year round. We also have a ressin manufacturing operation. These are like gigantic pressure cookers and we make liquid vehicle from which solvent thinned and latex paint are manufactured and we operate that facility 24 hours a day, 5 days a week. At the present moment, we happen to be operating 6 days a week 24 hours a day. But we'll ship approximately 4 million gallons of that material this year and that moves in tank wagons. Whereas, our finished paint product moves out in semi-trailers. But that's what we're essentially talking is a manufacturing facility that employs some 65 people in this community.

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Stan Bateman

Let's start off with who you are and what you do?

All right, I'm Stan Bateman and I'm the president of the greater Pell City area Chamber of Commerce. I've lived in the Pell City area for about 18 years now. My full time job is conservation enforcement officer supervisor. I think my having been here 18 years does not mean that I'm a native of Pell City but I'm probably indicative of the growth of Pell City. Pell City has a strong traditional family base but in the last 15 years or so the area has grown so fast that much of the growth has come from outside the area, and I'm one of those people that have moved in here and settled down and been welcome by the traditional family base that's already here.

How has Pell City changed over the last 18 years?

It's changed a great amount. When I first moved here of course Pell City was just a small country town, rural town, of course Logan Martin lake made it a little different character as far as the quality of life even 18 years ago. But the lake had a great impact on the growth of the area and not just wild fire growth as such, but organized growth. The Pell City fathers, city fathers over the years have been really astute in choosing industrial park sites, and this sort of thing, so we don't have just a hodgepodge of growth here, it's some pretty organized growth. And the change is evident in the subdivisions, but it's evident in the industrial park areas. The downtown has been maintained almost as it was when I moved here 18 years ago. But the growth around the downtown area has been fulnominal.

What about the role of the Chamber of Commerce in all of this? What has the Chamber done in the past? What does the Chamber do today to enhance the quality of life?

The Chamber of Commerce of course is taken on the traditional role that Chambers of Commerce takes on cross the nation and that is that they're probably one of the first contacts that an industry makes when they call into an area when they're interested in relocating. They also contact for existing industries to find out who to contact to help them expand their industries. The Chamber of Commerce in the Pell City area has grown with the Pell City area. Ten years ago there was roughly 80 members and today there's almost 300 members of the Pell City Chamber of Commerce. So, the Chamber has grown right along with the Pell City area and it tries to stay in the background as much as possible as far as the Chamber does not try to reach out and gain credit for the growth. It's a service organization completely and as the

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Chamber has grown here then the goal to become more, and more service organization is evident. And, we've got a full time executive director and a full time secretary in the Chamber of Commerce office now, plus all 300 members are potential volunteers for what ever committees we have that come up that we need some help in.

What are some of the challenges I guess is the word that growth has brought to Pell City both industrial as well as residential as well as recreational?

Of course the biggest challenge is to keep up with the services to offer to the people when they get here. We've got the lake, we've got the quality of life here that alot of places wished they had, the per capital income here is greater than any of the areas surrounding us probably with the exception of North Shelby county. And this causes the people here to have some money to spend and one of the greatest challenges we have is to have some where in Pell City to spend it. Retail growth is one of the biggest challenges I think that the area faces at this time, shopping centers, and that sort of thing. Our industrial growth has really kept up with the growth we needed in the Pell City area. We are furnishing places, jobs for the people to work, but we really need some places for them to spend their money locally. And I think thats the biggest challenge for the city and the Chamber of Commerce and area at this time is to help stimulate this retail growth.

Several people have talked about the hopes of attracting some national merchants in, Wal-Mart has been mentioned, and some of the others. I wondered though what might that do to the established local businesses.

I think that its going to cause local businesses to grow even more because if a person wants to do a major shopping trip then he packs up to Birmingham or maybe Gasden or Anninston. If we had a large national recognized anchor store here or maybe a couple of them I think we've almost grown to the point where we could handle a couple of them, those people would stay here in Pell City and they would be more likely to purchase their other items here that the stores already established have to offer.

Let me move on to a little wider circle, you serve as a county commissioner, I wonder how you see Pell City's role and influence in the over all economic development of the county?

Well the Pell City area produces almost 50 percent of the tax base for the county as a whole. We have 14 municipalities in St. Clair county and of course Pell City is by far the largest. The city of Moody down the highway towards Birmingham feels like they are catching up to Pell

City and they are growing in the Moody area. But Pell City is at least 3 times the size of Moody right now and its probably growing about the same rate that Moody is. So Pell City is definitely the most important economic factor that St. Clair county has. When a large industry moves in seldom can you attract them to a small town of 12 or 14,000 people. Pell City now hovering around 15-18,000 population mark is the size town that can attract the major industries in that will be the economic base for the entire county.

I wonder as you look back on the 18 or so years you have lived here, are there some significant events or significant developments that you think stand out as being major factors in Pell City's continued growth and development?

Yes, I think several of them in the past 18 years, I don't know if I can put them in chronological order. But the development of the Civic Center complex for instance was a great boon to the quality of life for the Pell City area. I mean that's a first class facility out there and the recent expansion into the lake side park are the things that lead to the quality of life improvements. The building of the high school, the Pell City High School, of course Pell City has its own school system and its a first class high school and the branching off into their own school system from the county school system was a significant factor that caused the Pell City area school system to grow the Pell City area. Then of course as I mentioned a few minutes ago about the industrial park, the planned industrial parks are significant factors that have contributed to the over all growth. And then the first major move in the industrial area is probably the moving in here of the Contel corporation as a it's not a manufacturing plant but it's our first hi-tec facility here which is basically a computer center for Contel and is now the Southern headquarters for that corporation. So to me those are major influences in the area and prior to my moving here the interstate, when the interstate 20 was put through, I'm sure that had a significant impact on this area.

What about leadership? Does anyone stand out in your mind as a business leader or a political leader, educator, or maybe 3 or 4 that have significant influence in the city?

Well, Miss Iola Roberts was very important educational leader in the area and you can see the influence from her all around. A lot of people had a lot of respect and remember the leadership that she had. And then of course the traditional families in this area. There's not a lot of jealousies in between these families as far as who had the leadership and they all share those leadership, historical leadership roles. And what seems to make Pell City unique in my opinion compared to other areas I've lived before is that those traditional families welcome the new families in and share these leadership responsibilities - even though our

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political races here for mayor and council for example sometimes are like any where else there's some pretty good fights that go on to get the job. Everytime we have a new mayor in council there are some great improvements made in the Pell City area. So the political atmosphere in this area has always been coperative and worked together atmosphere that has caused the city to grow.

That pretty much runs down my list. Is there anything else you'd like to say that you didn't get a chance to say?

Other than we that we hope the Pell City Chamber of Commerce can continue to grow as the city grows and offer the services that the Chamber of Commerce is supposed to offer to the city and I'm sure that we will. The Chamber works off of a committee basis and its so easy to get people to work for the Chamber of Commerce. You just set up another committee and ask for volunteers and they do volunteer and we just keep moving right along. So thats important to me as a Chamber of Commerce president that we continue to be a service organization and that we offer what ever services we can to help Pell City grow.

Johnny DeGaris

We'll start off like we did with Stan. I'll let you tell me who you are, and how long you've lived here but you'd say all your life.....laughing....

I always say 50 years plus and thats close enough...(laughing)...My name is Johnny DeGaris and I'm a member of the City Council of Pell City.

Now how long have you been on the council?

About 2 and a half years.

And what have been some of the significant things that have happened in those 2 and a half years that....

Well, the city and the city council and the mayor all seem to work together in harmony trying to help Pell City together. We were very successful in getting Contel into Pell City. The mayor and the city worked hard to get Contel in to town. We also got a sewerage system down highway 231 which has been helpful and there's talk of widening the highway down 231. And we've also got two very good industrial parks in Pell City which have been very helpful in attracting new industry like Shelby Steel for example. And the population has really increased. I think we had 17,685

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people inside the city limits of Pell City as of last census.

I wonder as a businessman, your family has been in business I guess as long as there's been a business section in Pell City but during your life time and your involvement in the business, how have you seen Pell City's economic climate change?

I've seen it changed by the influx of new people moving into town and bringing a high quality of life to Pell City and we had seen...we are going to see growth in the retail outlets. Several people are actively pursuing the development of the shopping center, K-Mart or Wal-Mart, in this area. We are working very hard to get a nice shopping center to attract more people to stay home and shop and increase our tax base. And shopping centers attract industry and industry attracts shopping centers and they just work hand in hand. Seems like we have the industry, and the people to support a shopping center, we just haven't been able to locate one here yet.

Well, let me ask you the same question I asked Stan, just from your perspective as a local businessman, is there any concern that say a Wal-Mart or K-Mart coming in here will make it real personal with a discount type pharmacy, what will that do to your business?

Well they say competition is good and I guess up to a certain point it is, it just makes a better business man out of you. It makes you stand on your toes, more alert, try harder to please people, and quality products and good prices. It just makes a better businessman out of you.

What do you see as the future of Pell City? I wonder that not only as a businessman looking at the future economically but as a father of children who are at the age where you hope that as they finish school they will come back to Pell City to raise a family ... what kind of town do you want your children and grandchildren to have?

I think the town is growing and me being on the City Council I can say that we have a upgrading our fire station constantly and our police department constantly upgrade to accumulate the influx of people and the growth that we plan to taking in in numerous areas to increase the city limits of Pell City and the airport fixing to enlarge the airstrip that attracts large cooperations who have airplanes that they can land on to see the cooperations and large industrial parks, and the waterways we have, and the highways we have, I think we see a great growth potential for St. Clair county and the Pell City area in the near future.

Let me ask you a question that I asked Stan...How do you see Pell City and its influence in the county? I know if we

looked back at the time when the branch court house was put in Pell City I think there was a lot resistance in the rest of the county to that kind of a move. But I sense that Pell City has become an important factor in the county now...

Like Stan Bateman said, that 50 percent of the tax base comes from the Pell City area and I'm sure he's in the position to know what percent that is. No disrespect to the other side of the mountain its called but I can see where this side will continue to grow due to the natural resources we have, the airport, waterways, and highways, any you can tell by the cencus how fast we're growing compared to any other town in the county or in the state as far as that goes.

One of the things that came out in an interview we did earlier today, someone mentioned that they thought as Pell City continues to grow that there was going to be an increasing need for more careful planning. How do you feel about that?

I interpret careful planning as meaning to having covenances and restrictions about your building, having building codes and restriction codes about not having someone build a nice home in and someone put in something that will take away from the quality of life from that person. Having standards and covenances, and code restrictions and housing restrictions, have an up to date on your code. There'll be quality housing built, quality inspections, everything to insure a person that their investments will be protected in a home or in a business.

Having grown up in Pell City bearing the DeGaris name is not quite as easy for you to be annonomous teenager maybe as it would have been for someone else named Jones or Smith...What was it like growing up here knowing who you were? Was it ...

Well, I didn't think I was different from anybody else. We went to school with everybody and played with everybody and had a lot of friends all over town because back then the town wasn't very large...(laughing)...I couldn't never tell any difference. My father just had a business and I just couldn't never tell a difference. I had friends everywhere it seems like in high school.

I guess thats one thing that has struck me about Pell City even now. There does seem to be social relationships that either cross parts of town you know or economic levels...Is there something unique about Pell City whether its the school system, whatever it might be that allows people to feel comfortable with other people regardless who they are or where they're from?

I think Pell City compared to other areas has a real good school system and has some good teachers and nice

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school, very nice and well kept and everything, and I think it contributed people getting along better. I think that everybody seems to work together toward a final goal.)

I wonder what you think with this year long centennial celebration thats going on as forward moving and forward looking as Pell City is now on the threshold of some great economic growth...What is the value? What might we accomplish with this centennial of looking back at the city's founding and some of those who have been instrumental in its founding? What do we learn from our past that we can carry in to our future?

Sometimes we can learn from the past in areas, sometimes in areas to learn to help us predict the future more by looking at our past and to learn from other peoples experience and other peoples trials and tribulations. I think it just makes us more aware and be proud of our community and our area of the heritage we have, and how small we started off with and how much we've grown, and progress we have made over the past years) it makes us feel proud of everything and makes us try harder to carry on the heritage then maybe the next generation achieve more than the previous generation did. It continues progress throughout generations, each generations.

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Is there anything that you'd like to say that we didn't give you a chance to say?

No, I'd just like to say that I think Pell City all working together to try toward a common goal to improve the quality of life in Pell City, and to improve the community life.

Betty Scott

I'll start just for the record by asking you to tell us who you are and how long you've been in Pell City and what do you do today?

I am Betty Scott and I have spent most of my life in Pell City. I was born in the big metropolitan area of Cropwell, Alabama which is now part of Pell City. I've spent several years off at college and working and then I returned to Pell City and I've been here ever since. It was about 1952 when I came back and I left in 1941.

And for a great part of that time you've been back you've had a pivotal role in city government haven't you?

I have been city clerk for 34-35 years.

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I wonder what are some of the changes in city government and city services that you've seen over the years?

I reviewed a little of that this morning. (When I was first became city clerk Pell City had almost 3 sections in the city limits of Pell City. At the present time there are some 19 sections in the city limits. We, the city hall was the little building where Dr. McClennans office now is. A little one room office with an office for the city ... I don't know what to call him...he was an engineer. He was over the water systems, the streets, almost everything other than the city hall itself. And we had 3 policeman, one police car with no radio communications - if you wanted a policeman you tried a number that was listed, it was listed on a pole or tree that was near the Mason-Jones building on southwest corner of the intersection of Cogswell Avenue and 19th Street. In the city hall for office equipment we had a hand operated adding machine, old standard upright typewriter, and that was it. That was the office equipment. We made out utility bills on the typewriter, shortly before that we had made them out in long hand. Let's see, the fire department was completely volunteer. But that's about what we started with. At the present time we have 5 assistants in the city clerk's office, we have computerized equipment, we have electronic typewriters, we haven't gotten to the word processor yet but I'm sure that will come shortly, we have a full time fire department with 2 fire stations - one at the basement at city hall and #2 station which is back of the civic center, we have 17 full time employees in that department, we have a ladder truck and 3 pumper trucks, a rescue vehicle, we have state equipted fire training academy, we have 6 state approved instructors that teach in that school, and we went from a class 10 fire rating to a class 4 which other than 3 large cities in the state we're in the highest group in the state for which we are very proud of which means your insurance rates are much lower. We, the police department has 3 - did I tell you that? - we have 3 policeman, now we have radio equipment, we have 4 full time radio operators, we have 19 full time policeman, we have 9 vehicles, we've grown tremendously.)

What does the growth that has come to Pell City both the business and the residential growth, I'm sure at times has put real burdens on the city government to provide services because to provide services for growing population of course takes money and although everyone likes services not many people like the taxes that provide those services. How has Pell City dealt with the problem of financing the growth of these government services

The most drastic change was in the putting a city sales tax on sales made in the city limits. Thats been added too of course and the most recent addition was a 1 percent increase to that goes directly to the school system. Of

course that's another change that has occurred over time. We've had since I've lived here all my life I've been to many of the schools that existed in the city. I started in what we called - I'm getting off the question you asked - that's fine.... - When I started to school there was a little 2 room building, a little white framed 2 room building, back of the present city hall. I went to the first grade and to the second and third grade which were in the same room in that little school building. We had a pot belly stoves and we built our own fires and took care of that kind of thing. Then by the time I got through the third the high school had moved out to the where the present building is located. There were just...and we went to the formally high school building which stood where the city hall now stands. It was a two story building. I went to the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades there but by the time I got to the 7th grade, we were put back in the little white building I went 4 years to that one little white building and then I went out to the high school. Since then that high school building that was where the present one is now burned and a new one was built to replace it. And that building has been completely replaced by the present high school building. The sales tax increase that went to that for education purposes got me off the question....The ad valorem tax has not changed other than increasing through the extension of the city limits and the homes that were annexed into the city and the land that was annexed into the city. However that was a small part of the revenue that takes to operate a city. As I said the sales taxes, the largest tax we have we have the taxes most other cities have. We have tobacco tax, we have alcohol tax, we have gasoline tax, we've gotten grants, revenue sharing was wonderful, the standard taxes that most cities have. We've fortunate enough to get a large number grants extended water lines, extended sewer lines, just done lots of things. When you get a grant however it also takes a mess of funds from the city and that matching portion is increased - grants are being decreased. You have to watch your money. You have to watch your pennies. Every city does but we've been fortunate and we've gotten by.

Well you mentioning that grants are getting more scarce, harder to come by, makes me wonder here Pell City seems to be poised on great opportunity for continued growth and expansion. This is going to demand more in terms of city services, and yet we see on the national scale it appears more and more requirements from the federal government on what local government must or should be providing, yet at the same time there's less and less money from the federal government to do some of these things. How do you think that's going to change Pell City and the government operations in the future? Is that going to have an effect?

It definitely will have an affect. It means the city has to have some way of providing those services that are

required and not only the national government but the state government requires more and more things of cities. We are, well we take one day at a time. We do the best we can. We try to find new sources of revenue. We , but we're going to keep on growing because we just this week did a \$3,000,000 bond issue, and those bonds have to be paid off, and the interest has to be paid. But we have great hopes for the future of Pell City and we think we can make it.

As you think over the years that you have been in the city government I wonder if there are people who stand out in your mind who have provided some significant leadership or perhaps some events that stands out as having made a long lasting impact on Pell City?

There have been a lot of people that have meant a lot to Pell City and I've been fortunate to work with lots of them. When I first became city clerk Joe Kilgore was mayor, we had on the council Mr. Jim Bass Embry, Dr. Stokes, Ed Blair, Buddy Love, and I've got one I can't remember. But we've had well educated people, we've been very fortunate. We've had well educated people to serve on the council. We've had doctors, we've had pharmacists, we've had all people that were very interested in Pell City and they've worked hard. Joe Kilgrove stands out, Mr. Joe Lewis who came here I'm not sure when the water system was put in or when the sewer system was put in but one of those things and he became a citizen of Pell City. He stayed here, he married a local girl who was a teacher, an outstanding teacher in our school system for years, and he meant a lot to Pell City. We've had lawyers to serve on the council and served as mayor that have stood out, outstanding industrial people, Mr. Sam Burt, Mr. W. T. Starnes, and I served under 9 different mayors in that time I was working in city government and all of them have been very good, very outstanding, very much concerned about Pell City and it's development, and it takes all of them. It takes a citizens working with them too.

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I guess one thing that strikes me as unusual for a town the size of Pell City there seems to be a high degree of civic mindedness, the willingness of not only the leading citizens if you will to be involved in the process of civic betterment and government services but the average citizen that will seems to be very supported. Why do you think theres such a spirit of civic mindedness here?

I'm not sure what it is but as you say the people do work well together. We think Pell City's a good place to live and we want to keep it that way and I think the general population feels that way.

One thing that I was wondering if you might have some insights on is the influence of churches in the community. How have you seen that evolve over the years?

12-11

We have an unusual number I think of churches in Pell City. Almost all denominations, we don't have a Presbyterian church, but we do have many others. And most people, lots of the members of those churches have taken an active part in city government. I think the churches have an influence and the members do and I think they do want to keep it a good place to live and thats their way of doing it.

Pell City seems also in a time when we see nationally sort of fragmentation of family, Pell City still impresses me as a family kind of place. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Well, the family unity is a problem or the lack of unity is the problem throughout. We have our share of it. We're all concerned about the large number of divorces and separations and I have family members who are involved in the school system and they say it's so sad the number of one parent families with the effect that it has on the children and that kind of thing. As I say we have our share but we hope we're an example for others too.

What do you think Pell City going to look like 5 years down the road?

Pell City will continue to grow, the city limits will expand, we think eventually the city limits will go from where it is now certainly eastward to the lake probably the whole area thats not incorporated now will be a part of Pell City. We will have more industry, we certainly hope we're going to have more retail outlets. We're counting on those kinds of things, it'll still be a pretty town. We realized how important trees were to our city when the tornado went through several years ago and destroyed so many of our trees. Thankfully lots of them have come back, more trees have taken their places. Pell City will still be a good family place to live.

What do you think city government will look like in 10-15 years?

I've been doing some studying on that. When you reach a certain population level, there are changes in your city government. If the figures from the cencus that's being taken now come up to the city of Pell City has found, members of the fire department and other employees have worked on the population figures and they have a very high estimate of our growth since the last cencus in 1980. All thats going to make a difference. As you said earlier more services are required. Pell City will look bigger but it'll still have that small town atmosphere I think.

Bill told me a story me a story one time about as a boy watching a hanging at the courthouse. Do you remember that?

12-13-12

It wasn't a lynching or a hanging. It's really a county story rather than a city. It just happens that it happened in the jail located in Pell City. As he told me, I was away at the time I was not in Pell City, there was a rape, a black man and a white woman, down around Easonville lake area which was out of the county at that time. And the man was arrested and put in the jail and there was kind of a mob scene around the jail that night. And the man was moved from one cell to another and walked by a window and someone in the mob shot the man. He was, Bill Scott was in high school at that time and I believe he'd been over to where the Thomas' live now back on 3rd Avenue and he started to our home which was on 16th Street and 1st Avenue South, no 1st Avenue North, and Bill went by the jail. He saw the crowd and he went by there on the way home and the jail had just been built not too long before and there were mounds of dirt around the jail where it had been pushed up by equipment and it had not been smoothed out or leveled out. And he was standing on the mound of dirt out there and was not too far from where the shot came from. He was scared and he went home in a hurry after that. But as I say I was not here at the time and I knew about the incident vaguely, but not a whole lot.

Finally To Kill A Mockingbird story here...(laughing)...One thing we haven't touched on much you may have some background news all of the little towns that were absorbed in to Pell City. There was Easonville, Cropwell, Oakridge, Eden ... Do you remember any characters or any people?...I remember Joe Dolby and Rufus Glass from Oakridge, there was people like that...

Joe Dolby and Miss Dolby, Chloey, were very active in the activities in Oakridge. Oakridge and Eden came into Pell City in the same year. A year later they took in the Avondale Mills section of Pell City, no not a year, one came in the spring and one came in the fall.

What year was that, do you remember?

I'm not sure. Let me see from my notes if I have it. No I looked it up this morning. It was in 56 I believe, somewhere in there. One of our auditors at that time went to both cities and incorporated towns and he told a story. It was rather enjoyable to us. When he went to Eden Mr. Heneridge was the city clerk down there and Mr. Gunther the auditor assured us that the city records were kept on strips of wrapping paper on the walls. He just wrote notes on those and that was a large part of the records. It was in the summertime when he was down there and of course the building was not air conditioned and the windows were opened wide with no screens on them at the little city hall down at Eden. And he kept noticing that the bees kept buzzing around the waste basket. And he couldn't imagine what they were after in the waste basket but he discovered that Mr. Heneridge kept his

12-13

bottle in the waste basket and the bees were after it...(laughing)...I didn't know Mr. Dolby as well as I did some of the other people, I didn't know them quite well. I remember his children but they grew up during the time I was away from Pell City. And I really don't know much of the story about Mr. and Mrs. Dolby. I know they had a store, a community grocery store, and that the records were kept there. That's where the city council met, and I guess you'll have to get someone else to tell you about those things.

You bring up the hidden bottle thing, that's something we haven't touched on. Pell City and the surrounding area has a rich bootlegging history...

One thing that stands out in my mind is I will never forget. One night we were having council meeting. This was when we were still in the white building then down by the courthouse on 18th street, Cogswell Avenue, and the it was when Pell City was dry. And the police came in with a pickup truck they had stopped and it was loaded with whiskey. Well needless to say to get to the storage room where they put the confiscated liquor, they had to go through where the city hall building where the meeting was being held. And it broke up city council meeting. They just brought it in in boxes, after box, after box. And of course the driver of the truck had gotten out and run and they couldn't find him. But we had the truck and we had the load of whiskey. And I believe that went back to the state ABC board. And I can remember too from time to time when confiscated liquor was destroyed. They would take it out to the city dump and bottles and cans were bursted open and covered up. But ...

I remember they used to pour it out the drain out beside the courthouse...

The county always poured theirs down the drain out there and there were people so I've been told down at the parks and thats been in several phases. Part of its been from grant money or the civic center was built revenue sharing funds completely. And we're certainly proud of that area down there now with the facilities we have.

Yesterday the mayor was in and they just borrowed \$3,000,000, is that the largest loan?

As far as I know that's the largest one we've ever had. We have had a revenue bond issues which were based on the income from the gas and water system, sewer system, but a general obligation bond I'm sure this is the largest one we've ever had.

Well I hope some of its going in town and not down at the lake...

12-14

A very small part will go to the park and recreation board, a very small part. There will be a new fire station, there will be additional fire truck, there will be resurfacing on practically all the streets in Pell City, there will be capital equipment budget for the next several years will have to come out of that, police cars, equipment to work on streets, and all that type of thing. A big portion is going to water, water lines.

Did you touch on housing, subdivisions? No. Thats one thing I've heard a lot since I've been back is the people wont develop subdivisions here because the zoning board regulations were too strict, too expensive to develop. Is that really a problem?

I really don't feel like that. There are several subdivisions in the works right now. And when you're getting 3 and 4 subdivisions developed in the city the size of ours I don't feel its being hampered by it. I certainly feel like the zoning requirements are needed, they're being updated, they need to be updated and they're working on it at the present time. Our subdivision regulations are no stricter than most other places. They are probably more lenient than lots and lots of places so I don't think its kept Pell City from growing by any means.

So you think we'll see more affordable housing being built?

I would think so. (Laughing)

I guess that's all I can come up with. Anything you'd like to say that we haven't given you a chance to?

1A

My name is Sumter Cogswell De Garriss. I am here to talk about my grandfather, Sumter Cogswell. Sumter Cogswell was born September 1, 1861 in Charleston, S.C. There he was named after Ft. Sumter for which I am his namesake. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Cogswell. He was given only one name which was Sumter. Sumter Cogswell

(Start over)

My name is Sumter de Garriss. I am here to talk about my grandfather, Sumter Cogswell. He was the founder of Pell City and for whom I am named after. He was born September 1, 1861 in Charleston, S.C. the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harvery Cogswell. He was given only one name, Sumter, after Ft. Sumter. Grandfather Cogswell never went into business for himself instead he spent the majority of his life promoting and developing the city of Pell City. He first became interested in Pell City in 1890 when he missed his train connection from Taladega. He had to spend the night in the Cornett Hotel in Pell City. During his time here he learned that Pell City was for sell and he bought it in and sold it. Ten years later he married the wealthy Miss Lydia Elizabeth de Garriss of Memphis, Tennessee. My sister will talk about her later. He built the first bank in St. Claire County in Pell City. This roll-top desk was the desk that he used in this bank until his death in 1946. Some of his accomplishments and along side his wife's accomplishments, which is my grandmother, is that he bought the town during the period of time through 1900 to 1901. They denoted or gave land to Pell City. Some of this land is the Pell City Manufacturing company which is now Avondale Mills. This consists of 150 acres. They gave land for early schools, and churches, gave land for the present site of the Courthouse. Gave land, here's the deed for which he gave land for the Pell City Park, my grandmother in memory of her grandfather. This other deed that I have here is for the property which is the heart of Pell City. It shows where in 1901, my grandmother, Lydia, bought the land from Louis D. ...

(This deed is the deed for the property which is the heart of Pell City. It shows where in 1901, my great-grandmother, Lydia, bought the land from Louis D. Brandice, later became the Justice of the United States Supreme Court.) Today I think my grandfather Cogswell would be extremely proud of his creation and if he could walk the streets of Pell City where once dirt roads and paths chocked with weeds....

Today I think if my Grandfather Cogswell could walk the streets of Pell City where once dirt roads and paths and weed chocked sidewalks were, he'd be extremely proud of his creation and what has become of Pell City. My sister Lillia will show the portraits of him and his wife in the living

room.

(What was it like growing up in a town that was essentially a family town?)

Well, for one thing my father is very well know in Pell City because of his father. And during the time that I have been here I realize that people usually know me by my father so I could walk up to any one on the street and they would even know myself or my father or someone in this family. It is kinda of a..I see pieces of my family around in Pell City, such as houses and streets that have been named after them. I have got lots of questions asked about that. Since my middle name is Cogswell and main street in Pell City is Cogswell Avenue, I've been asked about that. I have told them a brief history of my family and they were really kinda impressed by that. Though I know relatively few people in Pell City, still everybody knows me or at least my name or my father or my grandfather. So it is quite a place where everyone tends to know you but you don't know them.

(Do you have personal recollections of maybe of your early childhood of some of your relatives, some of the founding fathers of the city?)

Well, of course there is my father's aunt, Lydia Elizabeth Starnes. I remember her very vividly. Of course I never got to meet my grandfather and I really wish I would have. As far as surviving relatives of Sumter Cogswell, I've met relatively few.

(Your mother expects you to live up to... remember who you are....)

No, I have never heard anybody,..my parents have never told me, Sumter do this, or Sumter do that...I kinda learned at an early age that the eye of Pell City is on my family, not to mention my father, so my brother and my sister we both kinda learned at an early age that we'd better watch what we do because everyone tends to be watching us.

(Future of City...)

Future of Pell City...Since I have been in Pell City, I've been in Pell City all my life, since then I have seen numerous chain stores come in Pell City such as many chain restuarants and supermarkets. Pell City has two industrial parks now which have now been connected and which are still expanding. Pell City is still has lots of undeveloped land and I see Pell City as much more room to grow and I see Pell City growing larger in the future and possibly swallowing up some of the neighboring towns. I see realistically sometime the possibility in my lifetime that Pell City may swallow up

Riverside and such neighboring small towns as that. So I think that Pell City has a real bright future and I'm glad that I am at the age now where I can see it happening and really appreciate and hope to take advantage of it.

New Voice.....young girl.

..maiden name was Lydia McBain and she was born and

My name is Lydia de Garriss and I was named after my great grandmother Lydia de Garriss Cogswell. Her maiden name was Lydia McBain and she was born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1867. Since her husband, Sumter Cogswell, is known as the founding father of Pell City, it is only fitting that Lydia should be known as the founding mother of Pell City. (In 1885, Lydia McBain met Charles F. deGarriss in Memphis, Tennessee. He was a tall handsome successful business man. He was a civil engineer and built many of the Mississippi levies and many of the railroads in the area. He was also president of the deGarriss Printing company in Memphis, Tennessee. During their courtship, Lydia McBain's mother, Ms. Belle McBain, who was a widow thought that Mr. Charles F. deGarriss was courting her when actually he was courting Lydia. So much to her suprise the older Charles F. de Garriss who was 34 and Lydia who was only 18 married in 1886. They had two sons, John Ansley deGarriss, who was my grandfather, known as Jack in Pell City and Julian deGarriss. In 1898, my greatgrandmother Lydia deGarriss suffered from a tragic loss in her life, the death of Mr. Charles F. deGarriss. In 1899, while still in mourning, Lydia met Sumter Cogswell from Charleston, S.C. In 1900 they were married and moved to Atlanta, GA. In 1901, while Sumter Cogswell was passing through Pell City, he looked through a train window and saw a small town site...saw the ruins of a small town that he once knew, a town that he and others had bought 10 years earlier.

(In 1901, Sumter Cogswell, while passing through a small town site in Alabama by train, saw the ruins of a town that he once knew. A town that he and others had bought 10 years earlier and sold. This town was Pell City. (My great grandfather, Sumter Cogswell and great-grandmother Lydia McBain deGarriss Cogswell bought Pell City from the Pell City Land Company for \$3,000 in the early 1901. September 7, 1901 Lydia Cogswell, Sumter Cogswell and her two sons, Jack deGarriss and Julian deGarriss stepped on to the land of Pell City, a town of which they would live the remainder of their live. They had three daughters, Isabell Cogswell Davis, Mary Cogswell Ballof, and Elizabeth Cogswell Starnes, my great aunt Liz.)

(Tell us about these pictures...)

This is my great grandmother while she.. when this portrait was made she was still married to Mr. deGarriss and living in Memphis. The portrait over here of the family is the Cogswell family after they moved to Pell City and the three daughters had been born. Sitted from the left is Isabell Cogswell, Mary Cogswell, and Elizabeth Cogswell, that's my greatgrandfather Sumter Cogswell, and that's Lydia Cogswell and then seated is Julian de Garriss and standing is Jack de Garris, my grandfather and standing to his left is Ryder Cogswell, Mr. Cogswell son by his first, former marriage.

In the red dress that is my great aunt Liz who of the family is the one that I knew and was the closest to. Aunt Lydia was the last surviving member of the founding family of Pell City. She just died just recently on May 6, 1990.

(Are there special things that stand out in your mind about her?)

Well, I just grew up. She was ... I grew up on the front porch of her home and I'm twenty years old now and I'm old enough to remember a lot of the stuff she just gave me a lot of good advice. She was not narrow minded. She was very, very open and she would just flat out tell me stuff..about anything.

(What do you say is her influence on Pell City during the time she lived here, taught school, that she was active in civic affairs...?)

Well, everyone knew Aunt Liz and loved her. That was very obvious ever since I can remember. She was always you know having company and people were calling. At Christmas, she just got tons of cards, I mean she lived here her whole life and so everyone knew her. You know everyone would say, Aunt Liz, people would call her Aunt Liz. The people that she taught at Pell City High School would call her Aunt Liz. Everyone did just about. I think it was rewarding for our town to have such a member living here and supporting the town as her family did and as she did up until her death.

(What was it like for you growing up in town here where everyone knew you and knew who you were?)

Well, I really did not understand when I was younger the family background I had. Now I do. But it was not difficult, I mean, you know it wasn't hard at all. I just knew that, you know, I knew where Aunt Liz and her family, I knew about them and I knew about my family. It was good that people would know who I was. Of course they did not know me for me, they knew me for my Aunt Liz, my grandfather, and

possibly now my father living that sorta stuff.

(Did you find it easier or more difficult maybe to establish your own personality or where you always Johnny and Kate's daughter or...)

Well I guess I still am Johnny and Kate's daughter, I don't think that I will ever not be. But it doesn't make any difference to me as far as that goes. I am in college now and I am establishing my own person right now, but it is very comforting to come home and to go to work for my father in th store, I work in the store at Christmas and in the summer, and it is nice to see people that know who you are and remember you when you were little and that kind of stuff, and remember your family. That is comforting for me. I mean I feel as much a part of Pell City as anyone ever could.

(Future..growth,expansion, development,do you think that will have an effect on this feeling of comfort, this feeling of family town, this feeling of closeness that you have right now?)

Yes, I think that for any town to expand means to..a lot to the town and with the way times are going now you have to have expansion. You have to have things moving along, you just can't have a stagnant town just sitting there. I think that my great grandparents know if they saw Pell City now they would be proud of it and they would be proud of the work of many of the citizens in this town have done. I think a lot of people have contributed to what Pell City is now and they are still contributing. People are coming in all the time. Of course our population has grown enormously in .the past ten years and that is a wonderful thing. I want this town to grow. Everybody does that lives here I think.

(What do you think that Pell City will be like 10 years/20 years down the road?)

Well, maybe it can be as well known as Birmingham or Atlanta. I don't know that would be nice. I think it will still have the family atmosphere. I think it will always have that. It is a pretty area, we have the lake and the people are very kind in this town. I've been to many other towns and been home with friends and I've been in big cities and Pell City has that home atmosphere and it also has kinda of a city atmosphere too. We have we have the fast food restaurants and the new stuff is being built everyday. It still has the familiarity of a small town.

(Cultural aspects of Pell City)

I guess the only thing that I would like to see done some day as well as my brother, both by brothers, when my Aunt Liz

died, she left the three of us her house, the Cogswell home place. One day we want to turn that into a museum when the three of us can do this someday is the only thing that out of a lot of things that I want to see done, but this is the main thing. I think that Aunt Liz would be very proud of us if we accomplish that someday. And so we are working for that right now and we are getting old pictures, restoring them. My mother is getting all the old documents, the old letters, everything old lace that you will probably see later and everything and we are going to do that someday. Pell City will have that museum. We hope

NEW SPEAKER...

(Meg, we are celebrating Pell City's 100th Birthday) and today we are thinking about Pell City, past, present and future. And do you know that your family has had something to do with the past, the present and the future of Pell City. For example, William Alfred Starnes, who was my grandfather, Gaston's great-grandfather, and your great great grandfather, was among the men who wrote the charter for Pell City. He came to Pell City in 1901 and as they drove up this very street here, my grandmother was in the car with her son, Thurston and Orr, and they drove up and granddaddy had told her that they were building a house on Main Street. As they drove down this street and looked on the Courthouse Square, she saw a huge foundation and she replied to him, "Alfred, this is too large." Of course this was not their house, this was the first courthouse. But Pappa went on to work for Pell City. He became the fifth mayor. He was the Pell City attorney for many years.

Start over.....

Meg, we are celebrating Pell City's 100th birthday. The past, present, and future of Pell City. I want to tell you a few stories that I know about the beginning of Pell City which means Pell City's past. In 1902, when Pappa Starnes moved his law office from Asheville to Pell City, he came as a young lawyer with his wife and two children, Thurston and Orr Starnes. They came to Pell City and built a home up the end of this street, on Cogswell Avenue. Mamma Starnes had mistaken the foundation for the Courthouse thinking it was her house and she had told Pappa Starnes this is too large. So they went on up three blocks to their house. This became their home. (Pappa Starnes was the fifth mayor of Pell City. He was the city attorney for many years and he worked hard to see Pell City grow.

Then on the other hand, Hugh's daddy, (Pappa's daddy, was the first village blacksmith and for many years he was a friend to all.) As the years went by, Hugh and I married, came back to Pell City to make it our home. We have worked in the present for many years hoping that our town would become the city that it is. All of our friends are here. They have contributed so much to the growth of Pell City. (When Mimi was a little girl the courthouse square was the main place that we played. One of the things that I remember most is that Pappa Starnes planted these trees and I think that these trees are a symbol of growth.) It is a joy today to have my son here, Gaston, Cynthia and Meg here as part of the future. We know that they are going to work hard to see our city grow. So I think it is time for us to say Happy Birthday, Pell City. "Happy 100th Birthday" Let's say it together, now, Happy Birthday, Pell City.