

BUCKHEAD HERITAGE SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Cecil A. Alexander

January 23, 2010

Q: Interviewer

CA: Cecil Alexander

HA: Helen Alexander

Q: No, you are perfect. You look good. This is an interview with Cecil A. Alexander of Atlanta, Georgia, an accomplished architect and civil activist. This interview is being conducted on January 23, 2010 at his residence on River Road. The interviewers are, Mera Cardenas, Chad Wright and Wright Mitchell representing the Buckhead Heritage Society of Atlanta, Georgia. That is the formality. I think from there, you know, Wright mentioned the topics that he wanted to kind of touch base on and you mentioned that you were born in Virginia Highlands and moved.

CA: No I was born on Forrest Avenue in my grandmother's house, which is now Ralph McGill Boulevard. Forrest Avenue was named for the general who said if you want to win you have got to get there firstest with the mostest. But he was a fine general but he was one of the organizers of the Klan.

Q: Right. Nathan Bedford Forrest.

CA: Yes. And my father didn't like living on a street named for Nathan Bedford Forrest and he always spelled it with one R and said it was named for the great trees that used to line the street there. But when I was I guess about 3 or 4 we moved to St. Charles Place, which is part of Atkins Park. There are three streets there, St. Louis, St. Augustine and St. Charles, a very saintly place to grow up. Actually it was a great place to grow up because there were so many kids my age there and we had sidewalks.

Q: Trolley. The trolley line came through there too.

CA: Oh yeah. Yeah. A Highland car went on Highland Avenue downtown and if you went to the corner of Highland and Ponce de Leon you could wait and pickup the Ponce de Leon car or the Highland car. Aside my partner Bill Finch was with the Marines in Korea and when he went out to look for a trolley in Seoul, here comes a streetcar with every University on it. Seoul had bought all of our street cars and they left the roller signs up there so he would go somewhere on Seoul and getting onboard at Ponce de Leon ballpark is a Seoul place.

Q: That's interesting. And then you moved up to around Phipps Plaza you mentioned.

CA: I'm sorry.

Q: You moved up to around Phipps Plaza at some point before you moved to the Roundhouse, before you built the Roundhouse.

CA: Well I moved. . .my uncle had about 80 acres at the corner of Wieuca and Peachtree Street and he had a little wooden house in front, two stories and I rented from him for I don't know maybe six years. After my father died I had some inheritance and then we planned a house, a new house for ourselves, my first wife, Hermione, we called her Hermi, she was from New Orleans, we got married in 1943 at the Ambassador Hotel in LA where Bobby Kennedy was later shot and she went back to New Orleans during the war and worked for Higgins Aircraft while I was overseas but the house was very small. We renovated it, put in a big window, took out some partitions and all of that and the architectural magazines were so hard up for contemporary design at that time that they featured the interior of this house. I'm sure later they withdrew everything that they had published about it but that was the first recognition I got as an architect was remodeling that house.

Q: And who were you working with at the time? What firm were you working with at the time?

CA: Well when I came back to Atlanta one of Atlanta's leading citizens was Frank Neely who was the President of Rich's at the time and he was also in the Atomic Energy Commission and a very big supporter of Georgia Tech. The reactor that has been dismantled that was out there was called the Neely Reactor and he married a cousin of mine so when he heard I was in Atlanta he called me up and he said I hear you are looking for a job. Rich's has an architect that I want you to interview named Henry Toombs. I also had an introduction to a New York firm who had an office here and I went and talked to both of them. The New York firm, the guy says to me, the head of it, I want you to manage our drafting room and I said to whatever his name was, the parent firm was Ketchum, Gina, & Sharp; I said I'm not ready for that. I just got my Master's Degree from Harvard and the only practical experience I have had is working in the summers and he said well okay but I would like you then to be a senior designer. Well all

they were doing was they were remodeling the old Davidson Paxon building which is across from the 191 Building and it is in the news right now as to who is moving in and who isn't and they were designing smaller stores all over the state.

Toombs on the other hand had a very broad agenda in his office and I thought it wouldn't be a very good thing to turn down Atlanta's leading citizen, Frank Neely's offer so I went to work for Tombs and that was . . . I liked Toombs himself very much. He was one of a kind. He had been Roosevelt's architect to the little White House and in his files there, they had the drawings for the little White House and it was signed by Franklin Roosevelt, architect. The architects raised hell about that because of course he wasn't licensed but he just had them stuffed in a drawer somewhere.

Q: Did the firm design any buildings in Buckhead as Buckhead grew?

CA: What?

Q: Did the firm design any of the Buckhead buildings?

CA: Are you talking about Toombs?

Q: Toombs, right.

CA: Well it did Rich's and they also remodeled the Federal Reserve Bank; that was the first job I was put on was that. But, he was a great draftsman himself but he made a big point of I don't want beautiful drawings, I want accurate drawings. There are contracts, they're not works of art and he would come around and he would put a wet Coke bottle on your drawing or knock out live ashes from his pipe and I got a call one day from Bernard Rocky Rothschild who had come to Atlanta in the Navy during the War and married Barbara Haas one of the early Jewish families here and he said I want to have lunch with you. So we went to Herron's, which was the restaurant then downtown.

Q: Great lemon icebox pie. Remember the lemon icebox pie at Herron's?

CA: Well they were also famous for their cinnamon rolls; that was their number one appeal. But anyway Rocky said listen, let's form a partnership and I said well let's talk about it later. I have been given the first decent assignment at Toombs. I'm the job captain on the Federal Reserve Building in Jacksonville and Rocky said yeah I understand that's a good thing. Go ahead and we'll talk later. Well it wasn't long after that I had a drawing full of details that I had done on the Federal Reserve, Tombs comes in and pushes me aside and reaches into the middle of the drawing which was thumb tacked down, pulls it up, he said put this in the file we are suspending work on it now. I said what's the matter and he said oh the client won't let me set the building as far back as I want to landscape in front of it and put this in the drawer. And, I did two things; I took . . . it was linen, I took it home and ironed it and then I put it in the drawer to get all the wrinkles out and then I called Rocky and I said lets go man. Well Henry Tombs tried to hire Rocky and he says you

know you stay with us and you will have major jobs; you guys won't have anything but minor work for years and we said we understand that but we are willing to take a chance.

And, I have one story about Tombs. He had a plaster model of the store for homes in the conference room and one day coming back from lunch I heard a thud, thud, thud coming from this room and Tombs was in there destroying this plaster model and when he saw me he lost his concentration for a minute and he let the hammer that he was using fly out of his hand and it went through the window and out onto Lucky Street. So without no emotion at all he says Cecil would you mind going and getting that hammer for me. So that was typical of him and then one day I was walking out with him and he said to the receptionist I won't be back after lunch I am getting married this afternoon.

Q: Speaking of getting married, you married Hermi in 1943 you said at the Ambassador.

CA: What was that?

Q: You and Hermi married in 1943.

CA: Right.

Q: At the Ambassador Hotel in LA.

CA: Right.

Q: How did the two of you meet?

CA: Well there was something they called the Falcon, which was a gathering place for the mainly German, Jews' children every year. The Atlanta version of it later was the Ballyhoo and you know there was this. . .Uhry wrote the first night or last night of Ballyhoo or whatever it was.

Q: Last night.

CA: Yeah. And, there was one in Birmingham too; well I was there and the girl . . .could I call her girl. . . that was supposed to be my date changed her mind or something and Hermi didn't have a date and we met and I was playing poker at her cousin's house and she walked in and the story I have told is I lost that day at poker but I won in life.

Q: What were you doing in Birmingham?

CA: This was Montgomery.

Q: Montgomery, I'm sorry. What were you doing in Montgomery?

CA: I was attending this Falcon picnic or whatever you want to call it, marrying spa or ..

Q: So where were you living at the time? In Atlanta?

CA: I was here in Atlanta. I was at my father's house on St. Charles.

Q: What year would this have been?

CA: This must have been around. . .lets see, we got married in '43; I guess it was before the war, just before the war.

Q: So you had graduated from Tech at this point.

CA: I didn't graduate from Tech; I only went to Tech one year and then my father said you need to go to a more prestigious school and pointed toward New Haven.

Q: And you went to Yale?

CA: Yeah.

Q: And Hermi went to Yale also too didn't she?

CA: No she went to Smith. She was raised in New Orleans. She majored in social work at Smith and she came out of that as I did questioning all of the racial attitudes in the south. There were a number of reasons my attitude changed and this is out of sequence but I guess that is all right. Number one when I was in the Marines and I was discharged it hit me hard that I was going to back to a country all full of opportunities for me and that so many of these blacks who may have been in worst situations than I had were going back to an entirely different environment and there was something wrong with that. Then when I went to Harvard there was a black guy in my class named Conrad Johnson who had been a Tuskegee Airman and the fact we had both been combat pilots meant that you know . . . so race didn't mean a thing. We became very close friends and here was a guy that was as smart as he could be who was a gentleman who we had for dinner over and over again; we became close friends and he had a major effect on me. This business of white superiority was a bunch of you know what and I think also being Jewish and I didn't feel any anti-Semitism directly in Atlanta but the Leo Frank case was very much a part of my early upbringing. My uncle, Henry Alexander was one of his attorneys who tried to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court and they refused to hear it but that was a shadow that lynching of him by 25 of the best citizens of Marietta you know.

Q: Henry actually represented him at the trial; he defended him at the trial and then changed his mind and decided that. . .

CA: Who?

Q: Your uncle.

CA: You read that somewhere?

Q: You said your uncle was Leo Frank's attorney.

CA: Well he came in late but he took the case I think. It was based on the handwriting on the note that was left with the body that handwriting experts said this couldn't have been written by Frank an educated man and he took . . . tried to get the case heard by the U.S. Supreme Court and they wouldn't hear it. It was Georgia you know. One of the dramatic stories he told me and I have heard different versions of it; my mother told me she was living in my grandmother's house about a block from Peachtree and this mob was watching out Peachtree toward the Governor's house which was where Slaton Drive is; his house was right here in Buckhead and they were screaming for Slaton and Alexander and my mother was just married to my father and the two of them had a resemblance and she certainly didn't want anything happening to her brother-in-law but at the same time she was afraid for my father. My uncle went out there to be with him and the story he told me is at odds with some other things I have read that the Governor had called out the guard and surrounded the house and when the mob which had been depleted some by police, had stopped them on the way out; there were a couple of hundred people still there, this tough Scotch-Irishman who was in command of the guard had his men with their rifles said to the leader said I know all you guys and that doesn't make a damn. You take one more step toward this house and my men have orders to shoot and to shoot to kill. That broke up the mob but it was a very. . . you know I got raised on all of this and it happened I think around 1914 and I was born in 1918 so I really . . . you know until as a teenager it really didn't impact me. It did then.

I got a call one day in my architectural office and the voice said is this Cecil Alexander and I said yes and it said well this is Mary Fagan. That was the name of the little girl. I said what, she said well I'm the original Mary Fagan's great niece and I make it my business to correct things I read or hear and you were quoted in the paper as saying that the mob that went out Peachtree was the same one that went to Milledgeville and got Frank and lynched him in Marietta. I said yeah they misquoted me though, I never said anything like that. I said it was possible certainly that there were people in both groups so she said well I would like to have lunch with you I am writing a book and I said anytime. Well, I guess about a year ago an author named Oney I think it is who wrote *The Dead Shall Rise* I think, a very fine study of the old Frank case, he was speaking at the Bremen Museum. I was there and this very pleasant middle-aged lady came up to me and said she was Mary Fagan, the one that called me. We had a chat. But, we can leave that now. So where do we go?

Q: So those are your impressions as far. . . your impression of your civil activism, kind of starting your civil activism. We would also like to know a little bit more about Hermi and the bridge on Paces Ferry and how that came around and your participation in that.

CA: Well, when she was killed in this wreck, Hermi had been the first female member of the Fulton County Jury Commission that selected the jurors and she and. . . I have forgotten her name, a black lady made it their business to break it down, the good ole boy white Bubba monopoly on there and there is a portrait of her by (I can't think of his name), the

same one that painted Helen in the jury room at the County but Michael Lomax who was then Chairman of the County Commission who I knew and supported came to see me in the hospital and asked if there was anything the County or he could do for me and I said yeah, Hermi and I saved that bridge. They were going to tear it down when they put the concrete in.

Q: What year was that? And that is the bridge that goes from outside Lovett's front gate, Paces Ferry up to Vinings.

CA: Yeah. Well let's see, when would that have been.

Q: I think it was roughly 1972.

CA: That sounds right, yeah.

Q: That is the year they were going to tear it down.

CA: And we convinced the county that it would be cheaper to leave it and paint it and so on.

Q: This was Fulton or Cobb County?

CA: Well I think it was Fulton. It was Fulton. And so he said fine, anytime. And the resolution that the county came up with is in the pamphlet I had printed up about why they were naming the bridge for her and until they built the concrete bridge it was the only way to get across the river at that point and that meant you waited while somebody came this way and you went and so on. It was sort of you know, nobody minded. It was sort of like a little old town situation. But one thing, I got word ten years ago about the condition of the bridge. It had never as far as I know been inspected for structural problems and it was painted with lead based paint and Fulton County through the Atlanta Regional Commission got over, something over \$300,000.00 from the federal government. Originally I was told that the bridge could be redone for I don't know, \$500,000.00; the Path Foundation got involved in it and they pledged, I have forgotten how much but the Path Foundation, City of Atlanta and Cobb County all participated and the driving force in this was Sam Owens who was Chairman of the County Commission who is now running for Attorney General. Vote for him. Before they got through with inspecting and so on they sent divers down to see what was going on under the river and they were terribly agitated as was I when the flooding came. It came within about that much of the bridge and you know bridges aren't stressed for that sort of . . .

Q: Lateral.

CA: But it survived. They told me at the county there were even some automobiles under water coming down that river. Anyway so it ended up \$1,500,000.00 and originally the bridge cost \$10,000.00 in 1903, which was the year the Wright Brothers flew. But they are now well advanced in refurbishing it. They have got all the lead based paint off

except maybe 25-30 feet and they are painting it bright blue which sort of surprised me but it is fine with me.

Q: It's a good color for Lovett.

CA: Oh yeah and also it stands out more than when it was green against all the trees. But they have got to put dams, coffer dams as they call them around the piers so they can have workmen go down and fix whatever is wrong structurally below.

Q: What prompted you and Hermi to save the bridge in 1972?

CA: Well I am not sure. You know it had been a part of our lives going back and forth across it and I just hated to see all of Atlanta's old landmarks go and when I was a young boy my father took me out there and on the banks on the Atlanta side were remains of the Pontoon Bridge that the feds used to invade Atlanta. And I guess that was it. I just hated to see it go.

Q: Do you remember who you talked to in 1972 to convince?

CA: It will come to me. He was with the Gulf Oil Company, starts with an F. It will come back. I can't think of it right now. His son stayed in politics after he left. It will be back.

Q: And you and Hermi were living in a round house at this point?

CA: Oh yeah, yeah.

Q: You built that house what year?

CA: It was '57 when we moved in.

Q: And Hermi, she lost her life in a car accident. Was it a drunk driving accident?

CA: Yeah. A 16-year old kid with a .27 blood alcohol, he lived right behind us. He was. . .he had already been picked up for drunk driving at the airport and put in his father's custody and his father against orders, court order had him and a couple of his friends parking cars for a party he was having and at one point he sent him out to get beer for the party and then he let the three boys take his car to. . .I have forgotten what they said they were going to do but they went first to Dante's Down the Hatch and for years I thought they had been fed Long Island Tea there and gotten drunk but Dante said that wasn't the case that they had been carded and when they saw the years Dante said we're not serving you anything and they went to some other nightclub in Buckhead which according to Dante is long gone. And, that is where they filled up on Long Island Tea and driving home and these other two boys kept telling. . .this guy's name was Means, said slow down, slow down and he wouldn't and it was on Mt. Paran and we were coming back. I just agreed to be a fundraiser for Yale in the Southeast and we had dinner with this woman and her husband who were down here from Yale and with another couple, Bob Ferst and his wife,

Yalie and we were within about 200 feet of my driveway when Means came over the hill and didn't make the curve and hit us head-on and the car crumbled. We didn't have belts. They weren't around at that time. . .no we did have belts, we didn't have airbags. Hermi's injuries, internal injuries followed the belt and within minutes we were surrounded by people and I was caught between the seat and the steering wheel and they got me out by covering me with a blanket and breaking the front window and pulling me out which I'm sure didn't do me any good. But, I kept telling them to get Hermi out; she was calling for oxygen. I don't know whether they got that to her or not but we were right up against a bank. That's why I couldn't get out of this guy's way. There were enough people around they could have slid that car over and gotten her out of it. And they took her to . . .it is gone now. What did they call it? Paces Ferry Hospital and the guy was a long time getting there, the doctor. While I was in the hospital I kept saying I want to talk to him and I guess he was reluctant that I was going to you know tell him off for being so long getting there but that wasn't it. I just wanted to know what had happened. I had two of the finest orthopedic doctors in the country just by chance. They were there taking care of the Means boy and they inherited me and one of them was named David Apple and the other was Ed McLaughlin. When they said I needed a hip replacement a year later I went to New York to get a second opinion and I told this orthopedist who was the top surgeon at . . .I can't think of the name of the hospital but anyway I told him if I have an operation I would have David Apple do it in Atlanta. He said well why did you come see me you have got the best? I said well I like your second opinion about my doctor but how about my ass. He says yeah but it's not going to help your gait. Well he was wrong about that. Anyway that was a bad year boy. One thing there was a dedication of the bridge and Michael Lomax was there and Donald Stewart and his wife, he was the President of Spellman and I asked her if she would read the Song of the Chattahoochee and she is a Wellesley graduate I think and she had never heard of it and I told her Sidney Lanier had been in the Confederate Army but regretted it and she read it and she got into this thing, reading of it not only the story of the river but the story of a life you know. "Split at the rock and together again with the lover's pain to attain the plain far from the lover's hills of Habersham; far from the valleys of Hall." It was a very emotional thing. Well we had lunch before that and it wasn't called the Canoe then, that restaurant on the . .

Q: Tropical Gardens?

CA: What is it?

Q: The Tropical Garden, what was it? Robinson's Tropical Garden.

Q: It was something else.

CA: Yeah. Anyway, we had lunch there and there was a man and a woman, kind of rough looking, they were talking loud and so forth at their table and then when we gathered out along the banks of the river this guy comes up to me and says ain't nobody going to change the name of that bridge. He says it's named for my grandfather. His name was Pace. And I said well I'm not here to debate history with you. Franklin Garrett over there, do you know that name?

Q: Oh yeah, sure.

CA: You want to talk about history you go to him. Well about that time Lomax came up and he said to this man and his wife, he said we're going to have a ceremony here do you mean to disturb it? Hell yes. What are you going to do arrest me? Lomax had some, I guess the county sheriff there, I don't know who, they arrested him and I was afraid that they would come back later. I asked Garrett about this guy and he says yeah he is a Paces right but he is the black sheep of the family and they don't have any title to this land anymore at all. They sold it years ago. But they never did come back.

Q: Interesting.

CA: We had . . . I love pipers and we had pipers there that played and marched across the bridge and so forth.

Q: At that time you mentioned the renovations that have happened this year with the bridge and the lead paint as it had gone into disrepair and they kept people from walking across it. At that time back in 1972 was there much that had to be done to preserve it?

CA: Well nothing. . .it had just been repainted I guess with lead base again and they had refloored it. The floor, which is in bad shape now. We are aiming for our ceremony in April.

Q: Wonderful.

CA: And I got Lovett involved.

Q: Great.

CA: And the idea right now is there will be a ribbon cutting on the bridge and then the pipers leading us into Lovett and a man named Steve Moore who has worked with me on my memoirs which I have been fooling with for three years; he is at Fed Ex and knows everything there is to know. Wright knows him. Did you know him or just knew his name?

Q: Just knew his name. No, I don't know him personally.

CA: Well those photographs in there, the early stages of the remodeling, he has taken pictures right along as it has gone ahead. But he is going to do a video on the bridge and my daughter Judith is going to do one about her mother and we are going to show that at Lovett and I am going to give Canoe the opportunity to supply h'orderves and wine for the Lovett. Lovett gave us \$5,000.00 toward the bridge. I don't think I mentioned the Path Foundation did I?

Q: You did and their involvement. You did.

CA: They asked me to raise money against their pledge and of course they are nonprofit; fine it will pass and I raised about \$40,000.00 at the time and all those people that gave to that will be invited to this thing.

Q: Fulton County Cecil got \$300,000.00?

CA: No that was really the federal government. The county got it through ARC.

Q: Atlanta Regional Commission? \$300,000.00.

CA: Something like that. I think it was a little more than \$300,000.00; \$350,000.00 or something.

Q: Cobb County gave a good bit too didn't they?

CA: Oh yeah. Well they gave a hell of a lot and they also are supplying workmen. One of the things I'm frustrated about; the wooden signs that lead into the bridge.

Q: That had the dogwood flower and said Hermi's Bridge.

CA: Hermi's Bridge, they were carved by Sam Williams who is the Chairman of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce as a friend and I saw some of his work on pond across here, on the other side of Peachtree and anyway he carved those things and I saw him not long ago and I said Sam they need some refurbishing, can you give me the name of somebody to do that and he said I'll call you. Well, I haven't heard from him but I got to get those things fixed up before April.

Q: Before April, yeah. Do you remember Cecil what the breakdown was on how the money was raised? I know you said Fulton County gave roughly \$300,000.00; Cobb County got some money; you raised some money.

CA: I really don't really know who did what, I think Sam Owens' office has got all that.

Q: The Means boy lived on Cloudland Drive? Does that sound right?

CA: Yeah. What?

Q: The Means boy that hit ya'll.

CA: Yeah.

Q: Did he live on Cloudland?

CA: Yeah, they are right in back of us.

Q: That is where the party was.

CA: Yeah.

Q: Because I grew up on Cloudland for a while and we knew the Means family so I remember when the accident happened. And, there are several Means boys running around town. What was this boy's first name?

CA: I'm having trouble with it.

Q: It was Alfie and Ryan and ...one of the Harmon boys was in the car as well. Does that name ring a bell?

CA: What?

Q: Harmon? Chad Harmon or . . .

CA: One of the things that came out of that, Channel 11 was there before they got us out of the car and they covered the thing and they got pictures of my wife on a stretcher being taken to the ambulance and so forth and Gannett, the parent company I guess, they did a documentary on the effect of DUI on perpetrators and victims and one of the sequences was about what happened to us. And, it is being used all over the country when judges sentence people to school; that film is shown. I took it around to the various schools and when I would talk they were restless and so forth but the minute I showed the video, it shows what . . . brings to people's attention. Over and over again there would be maybe four or five of the students that would come up and thank me and then they would ask if I would come back to the PTAs and so forth. The City of Atlanta wouldn't do it and they said we're too busy, the students are there to study and more recently I have gotten to think the man who was superintendant and whose name I can't remember had himself been arrested for DUI and I surmise that what motivated him is he didn't want it brought up again and back in the schools.

Q: But you organized a committee to combat drunk driving didn't you?

CA: Yeah while I was still in the hospital I got a committee to combat drunk and drug driving and it was setup by the . . .oh I think it's the overall committee for Atlanta. I can't think of it right now but that meant I didn't have to go through all the business of getting qualified as a nonprofit organization.

Q: Metropolitan Atlanta Community.

CA: Yeah, that's right. And, I think we did some good. We got some legislation passed. One of the most interesting things was a man named Denmark Groover who incidentally played a major role in getting the flag passed, later, much later, he lived in Macon. I went down to see him about getting his backing for some legislation about youth and DUI and he was pretty cold so we met over the fact we had both been Marine pilots. He started

listening and then he said well I can't support you in this and I can't vote for you but I'll tell you how to get it passed and he told me who the key people were and what they needed to hear and so forth and we did get some tougher legislation.

Q: What kind of sentence did the Means boy get?

CA: You know he was a juvenile so I never heard. He went out . . . I think he was in an institution for a couple of months and then he went out to live with his mother in Texas, parents were either divorced or separated and he was back in Atlanta with a Texas license. They hadn't checked him out and he was driving in front of the Governor's mansion at 2:00 a.m. one Sunday morning and got stopped by cops and they charged him with 11 traffic counts and he was back with a .27 blood alcohol again. Well there was . . . he was up before the Atlanta police courts and I and my family went down there and I told the judge beforehand about the history with this guy and he sentenced them to a year. I don't know how much of it he served but I'll never forget walking out of the room there, his family and friends were all in the back and boy they just glared at me like. . . I never had any word of regret from the father or the boy or any member of his family. The sentencing was done by a man named Ed Johnson, Judge Ed Johnson who I had gotten to know him because of the Jury Commission and he is still around by the way and before he went into the sentencing I asked my attorney and the prosecutor, I said what should I say if the Judge asks me what this man's sentence should be. Oh he won't do that. It is his prerogative. I said but suppose he does. Well you just tell him to throw the book at him. Well, when the judge started speaking he just extolled Hermi and said what a terrible loss it was to the community and so on and so forth and I'm sitting there thinking good God isn't that going to cause his attorney to . . . I was told later that the man had already pleaded guilty to one count; he plea bargained which was giving his keys knowingly to his son who shouldn't have had them and that the judge can say anything he wants. Sure enough he called me up and my attorney and Means the father and his attorney in front of him and sure enough he says I want you to recount what happened that night as it was pretty painful. I went over it and then he said what do you think the sentence of this man ought to be and I said well judge I have compassion for the boy because he was raised in an atmosphere where duties of being a good citizen must never have been discussed. I also have compassion for parents who do all they can to raise their children as good citizens but this climate we are in now is very difficult. But then I turned and looked at this guy, I had never met him, Means; and I said but I have no compassion for him. He might as well have been out there on that road with a machine gun and he aided and abetted his son's criminal activities. And, Judge Johnson says to my attorney have you got something you want to say and he said no. Mr. Alexander said it all. He gave him a year and called me into his chambers afterwards and said I would have given him more but that is all the law allows and he was out. . . he went to Fulton County Jail and he was out in two months because of overcrowding. But this guy I'm sure it really . . . one night in jail would have disturbed him because he considered himself a respected stockbroker in Atlanta. I don't know what happened.. the one thing I heard some years later that the Means guy had died when he was 28-29; I never found out from what cause but it wasn't a wreck. I asked if it could have been from the alcohol and the doctor said

he was too young to have liver failure because of alcohol. But he was an alcoholic, his father was an alcoholic and his grandfather was an alcoholic. He never had a chance.

Now I have forgiven him in my mind but I've never forgiven his father, never will. At the sentencing a man came up and introduced himself as Dr. So and So and he says I want to urge you to forgive. He said I was a surgeon and I was out hunting with a friend and he was tracking a bird and fired and hit my hand and I couldn't operate anymore after that and I was really bitter and angry with this man for that but I finally decided I was getting nowhere with that and I have forgiven him and it lifted a heavy burden off of me and I urge you to do that with Mr. Means. I said well doctor that was a friend of yours and it was totally an accident and he was as you say, he was terribly upset and told you how much he regretted it and so forth. I said I have heard nothing from these men and they certainly aren't friends of mine and I don't have it in me to forgive them. But as I said, I have forgiven the boy but not his father because his father was responsible. If his father had done what he was supposed to have done the kid would never have been out at that night.

Q: The father knew he had a suspended license. Right? He was driving on a suspended license.

CA: Yeah. That was the sentence, he was put in the custody of his father.

Q: His father gave him the keys to go buy beer for the party.

CA: Yeah and then gave him keys to go into Buckhead. I have forgotten what the son said to his father, what they were going to do in Buckhead or even if he said he was going to Buckhead but the father gave him the keys to the car.

Q: Where had ya'll been to dinner?

CA: What's that?

Q: Where had you been at dinner with the Yale folks?

CA: There was a restaurant in Buckhead that is no longer there. I'm trying to think. It is across the street from where that stockbroker killed somebody.

Q: Oh yeah, right, Mark Barton.

CA: Beautifully landscaped collection of buildings there. Across the street.

Q: I can't think what restaurant that would be.

CA: Well the restaurant is not there anymore. It was on a lower level.

Q: It's now Roy's.

CA: What?

Q: It is now Roy's.

CA: I don't know. I had urged my wife to let the first drive her home instead of going downtown with me and you know you think if a red light had been green or a green light red or if I had gone 5 mph faster, all this stuff that is not worth a damn but it still..

Q: Drive you crazy.

Q: You mentioned Lovett a little while ago too and I know you were pretty instrumental at the time. You were a parent of Lovett children right, at one point and there was an incident where Lovett with Martin Luther King and his son . . . can you describe that just briefly?

CA: Yeah, it's in my book and I've run it by the headmaster who approved it but The King's were looking for a place to put Marty they called him in school and Coretta just happened to sit next to Reverend Morris who was sort of a maverick Episcopal priest. He picketed Lovett and he said well you know the Episcopal hierarchy declared that all their institutions have to be integrated forthwith so why don't you try to put Marty in Lovett. Well they sent a telegram and I was on the Admissions Committee and the man who was the Chairman called me and said we've got a crisis, we've got to have a meeting, will you come to – I guess it was Lovett, it might have been his home. I can't remember this afternoon at 4:00. It was a Sunday. Well the crisis was the integration problem and he said we have to do something about it and he says Lovett can only seal as an Episcopal day school, they have the cross and they have required Book of Common Prayer every morning and not only Episcopalians but all the students have to go and the headmaster was a Lovett priest and he will have to quit if we don't. So the decision was made, this was mid-year that we would not recommend that [phone ringing]. . .okay Judy I'll call you back. What was I saying?

Q: You were saying that the headmaster would have to step down and it was the middle of the year, middle of the school year.

CA: Well what we decided then was that we would not admit Marty in midterm with only a week before the list closed anyway but by the next fall we would have in place integration of the school and that Marty then could be eligible. When this proposal got known to the parents, they had a mass meeting and it was really a terrible atmosphere about it and . . .

Q: What year would this have been roughly?

CA: I have to think about it. It is in my book.

Q: Because Martin, Sr. was still alive.

CA: What's that?

Q: Martin, Sr., MLK, III was still alive.

CA: Yeah. Junior. And anyway there was a very raucous meeting and Dr. Bunnon, Robert Bunnon who was a friend of mine, married a descendant of Rosenwald, the Sears guy, Lucinda, got up and said I represent the Norman Fund which had been when Phoebe Wile married and came to Atlanta she brought the Norman Fund with her and so did this Lucinda and said any loss in income because of the integrating of this school will be made up by the Norman Fund and people there that really were worried about money, you know they kept quiet but that was just an excuse for a lot of them. And, they really kept on keeping on. When the thing came to a vote before the whole board the Chairman of the Admissions Committee wasn't there and I moved to have it tabled so they were rejecting what the Committee had proposed and I asked that the table. . .so he could be there. I knew he wasn't there on purpose but mine was the only vote and I resigned from the Board and Ivan Allen who I worked with and knew well chastised me saying you should have stayed there and fought it. I said Ivan, I am a Jew, I couldn't tell a bunch of Episcopalians whether they were Episcopalians or not and he said oh well, I understand. But two interesting things, this man who chaired that meeting, I'm deliberately leaving his name out, we ended up, Helen and I on a cruise with him in June and one day at happy hour he said you know I was wrong, we should have passed that thing and I thanked him and then this picture up here that is on my 90th birthday with family and that's a family, that pictures everybody in the family, the two families and he sent me a letter saying how I had been ahead of everybody by three years and so forth and that I was dead right about integrating Lovett at the time and of course it happened three years later. Helen really got fired up and he sent a letter to all the parents saying that they would be . . .no way was the school going to be integrated and she fired back a letter and said here is one parent at least that wants to see it integrated and she took her children out. I left my older daughter in who was a senior and she was . . .she had some problems. I have never found out exactly that year. I put the other daughter in Westminster and I caught it for that, they said Westminster isn't integrated either and I said yeah but I'm not on the board.

Q: Do you remember what the board vote was?

CA: What?

Q: Do you remember what the board vote was, the for and against admitting MLK?

CA: It was one against

Q: All of them.

CA: Including the dean at the Episcopal Church who was there, who pounded on the table and said talk all you want about brotherhood and friendship and morality, that's not what the

problem is. It's a dough, it's a dough, it's a dough and that's when I decided this is no job for a Jewish boy.

Q: The letter, the rejection letter that King received from Lovett is in the King family collection.

CA: It is?

Q: It is. It was on display at the History Center.

CA: I didn't see that.

Q: It is kind of interesting because Chad and I both went to Lovett and it was interesting to see that letter.

CA: Well Lovett has changed entirely. As I said it is my memoir what I have just said and I put it in front of people; I said I don't want to hurt the school. You tell me if you feel there is anything that is going to be a problem. He says it is fine.

Q: He seemed..

CA: You know all the private schools were having that same problem, not just Lovett.

Q: Oh sure. Sure. Who was the first to integrate of the private schools in Buckhead; Pace, Westminster, Lovett, which one?

CA: I really don't know. I don't think it would have been Pace because Pace came along later.

Q: Did it? Now it has been pretty well documented that you were involved with changing the flag with Roy Barnes but you also designed the flag for Buckhead as well. Tell us a little bit about that.

CA: Well I guess I had gotten on as the Betsey Ross of Buckhead or something, I don't know. But, Sam Masell who was head of the Buckhead Coalition asked me if I would design one. I said yeah but it's not going to have a buck head on it. I fooled around and I came up with a design with a buck head and it's on a green background and I have forgotten all the flag terms for all this stuff and then taken from a soccer ball and I have forgotten the geometric description of the shape is in the middle with a buck's head on it and half of it is green and half of it is dark green I guess and that's to show the diversity and there are a couple of dogwood sprays in the corner. The one thing I can say for that flag is it sure isn't as controversial as Georgia's flags.

Q: How did you choose the color green?

CA: What?

Q: How did you choose the color green?

CA: Well because Buckhead is green and I think it was before, at least green buildings and so forth. I think it was before they got publicized and really I think of Buckhead as a very green area.

Q: How did you choose the geometric background?

CA: From the soccer ball.

Q: You just saw a soccer ball and thought that would look good on a flag.

CA: Yeah.

Q: What do they call people who are flag ...

CA: Flaggers. That opposed this thing?

Q: No, there is a term for people who are into flags.

CA: Oh yeah. I can't think of it now. They gave us hell for this flag and I said I wasn't designing a flag, I was designing a political statement and they criticized it among things for all the stars that were on it and the fact that it said "In God We Trust" on it. I objected to them putting that on there because cluttering a flag and the guy, one of the legislators said well it got us five votes if we need it and I said that's fine then. I like it. No it was a real. . .my original design, I think I had seven flags that had flown over Georgia from the pre-colonial days and I did it when the Olympics were coming here because it was all this objection to the Confederate cross and it was an effort to come up with a compromise. There were those that wanted to go back to the '54 flag which was still a Confederate flag and it's what we are flying now pretty much which I think is . . . I don't get it. I know it was supported by people like Andy Young and so forth because they thought they put the issue to rest and the Klan and the right-wingers hadn't used it as their symbol, the one we have now. But, that was . . . I had some legislators then who were interested in it but nothing happened and of course it didn't become an issue during the Olympics but it was still an issue with the blacks and a man named Joe Beck, an attorney here, a very fine attorney was at a meeting where I presented this thing originally and he joined with me and we tried to get nonprofits to use it to convince the legislators that it is okay, people are flying it but we never got anywhere with that. But he and I finally had this date with Roy Barnes and we went in there and I had the original flag, put it on the floor and Joe really sold the hell out of it. He said this is the alternative you have been looking for and the last thing. . .Barnes didn't have anybody in the room with him, he said well this maybe the alternative and I guess toward the end of the year I got a call from a guy at the Capitol. I can't think of his name right now, I am having trouble with names today, he was the deputy chief of staff and he said I want to come over and talk to you about your flag and I said I'll come to the city hall. Oh no, no, no, I want to come to you. So that started the process of making these political changes in the flags that [unintelligible]

which include incidentally the one with the cross on it and In God We Trust and I think it also says history on it and anyway it went through all of that and then Barnes pushed it through in a week.

Q: He did.

CA: Then Denmark Groover the guy I was telling you about with the drunken driving, he got up and he said he is no longer with the legislature and he said but I feel I am entitled to speak to you because without me that '56 flag wouldn't have passed. I represented the governor in the house and he says the time has come to forget it, to change, it has been an object of dissension, splitting the state up for years and we need to move on. And I'm very sure that when he said that to the House that really hit home with them and anyway I give him a lot of credit for that. Perdue of course. . .

Q: That is how he won the election.

CA: What's that?

Q: That is how he won the election. Wasn't it a lot of support from the..

CA: No, no. At least my analysis is, there were three things that won the election. One was teachers were mad at him and the second might have been the flag and the third was he ran a lousy campaign. It's like this woman up in Massachusetts and I wrote him during the campaign complaining that it was all this TV of him sitting around grandfatherly with a bunch of kids, I said "governor you should use the same drive and enthusiasm that you used in selling the flag about your view of the future of this state, you should look into the camera." Well I didn't get answered.

Q: You will have another chance to do that now.

CA: I'm going to stay away from him now because I don't want a flag in the picture at all and if I show up I'm going to help him but . . . I tried to get on his committee and they never took me. I was co-chairman of Ivan Allen's campaign when he won and I was co-chairman of John Lewis when he won so I thought my credentials were pretty good.

Q: Yeah you had a pretty good track record.

CA: Anyway.

Q: As Buckhead's certainly one of the most respected and known architects lives in Buckhead, with your career what buildings would you identify if you had to pick three buildings in Buckhead that you felt were architecturally significant, which three would you identify?

CA: Well I would identify the library that ..

Q: Merrill Elam?

CA: Yeah and in all modesty I would identify my house.

Q: Right. And can you give the address on that? That's the round house on Mt. Paran.

CA: I think maybe the Goodrum house where the senator...

Q: International, yeah.

CA: That has been bought by a very interesting man named Tom Watson Brown and they call him Tad. His grandfather, great grandfather was a rabble rouser at the Frank trial. There is a statue of him out front you know with his sister Passie. Well somebody at the Atlanta History Center said I ought to get in touch with Tad because he had contacts with the Mercer Press with my book and I told Tad that I had several pages in there about the Frank case and I would like his comment on them and he made. . .well I called the 25 Marietta people that lynched Frank, I called them a mob and he said well they weren't a mob, they were Marietta's best citizens and they were lawyers in there and I said well all the more reason they should have known better. Anyway, at one point he said lets have lunch together and I was like. . .but we did and I found out he is a preservationist. He said I couldn't get to you sooner because I was working on saving a Shutze and a Neil Reed house but he has bought the Goodrum house for his foundation.

Q: It used to be called the Peacock House because he used to have peacocks at the corner of Habersham and Paces Ferry.

CA: Yeah. The early story of that is funny. I don't know if I can quite put it together but the Goodrum's built that house and Mrs. Goodrum, me and an architect named Abreu who was a good friend of her husband and she said to Abreu I am not going to use you, I'm going to use Phil Shutze to do this house and later she married a Abreu and I think Goodrum died, I'm not sure what happened. Well they just moved in there, have you been in there?

Q: Never been inside.

CA: Well there is a large room maybe 10 feet wider than this and twice as long as the living room and it had this very decorative ceiling, heavy plaster and the Butler was in there brushing up and he hears this noise overhead and the ceiling is coming down. He dived. . .he was by an open window and he dived out of the window into a hedge and crashed and Mrs. Abreu was to put it mildly, hysterical about what had happened to all of her fine antiques and a grand piano and so forth and she called up her husband who was an architect and said you have got to get out here right away and then she told him what happened. He said now Francie I think you better call your architect.

Q: Tell us how the round house.

CA: What?

Q: Tell us about the round house.

CA: Well let me finish this. So she calls Shutze and again hysterical, you have got to get over here right now. Well Francie from what you say, you don't need an architect, you need a plasterer. About the round house, there was a guy, he died recently, Alvin Ferst who had a lot to do with my career. He recommended to Mayor Hartsfield that I be made Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Urban Renewal and I think Hartsfield went along because he thought I wouldn't get anywhere with it because I didn't have connections. I was young and unknown so I fooled him. Anyway, he wanted a house and we were looking at land and I showed this lot on Mt. Paran up on the hill, it was six acres, \$10,000.00 and for some reason he didn't like it. He did finally a house in the Golf View Terrace. My partner, Bill Fence designed all those houses before we went together but I said to Hermi, you know it's a beautiful lot. I think we ought to build there. And she said being from New Orleans you know, oh this is much too far out she said. I said well I don't think it will be in the future. She finally agreed to go along with it and one night we went up on the hill and there was this huge oak tree and I was building a house around that oak tree. Before that I kept coming home with plans, L shapes, U shapes and so forth. Every time I brought one, that's it lets build it. Wait a minute. So finally the round house she had a nerve, guts to agree to that. Incidentally she was at Harvard with me and got exposed to the Bauhaus, contemporary architecture and so forth so I didn't have to sell her on contemporary architecture and so we went up on the hill one night and it was all flooded with moonlight and lightning had hit that tree and exploded it so I decided the Lord wants me to enclose the court and that's what I did with a folded plate roof. There is a picture of it over there on that file.

Q: So tell us, did you study under Walter Gropius at Harvard?

CA: Yeah. Well he was the Chairman they called him; the critic I had that was far and away the best critic I had in all the years I studied architecture was Breuer. Incidentally they just had an exhibit here of Breuer's work. His office did the library downtown but I don't think he had much to do with it. He was sick by then but he was known not only for his buildings and form giver but for his furniture, metal furniture. But what he was into was trying to get from the students the best possible answer or result from what the student was trying to do not saying you do it this way. Another critic up there was Hugh Stubbins who incidentally graduated from Tech originally and went to Harvard and got his Masters there. Stubbins was highly different. He said if you don't want that X you have got to do it this way. Stubbins, years later spent the night in my house and he was really taken with it. He said it feels like a tree house, it's on a slope and the main floor is right up in the trees and the next building he did had a roof like mine over it.

Q: They say imitation is the best form of flattery.

CA: But Hermi loved that house and she said more than once that I'm never leaving here, they are going to have to carry me out feet first.

Q: Do you have a copy of the Life Magazine article that it was featured in?

CA: Yeah. I've got that picture. It's on the wall in my bedroom.

Q: So when did you move around from the round house? Was it tough to sell?

CA: Well when Helen and I got married we both decided we ought to start over with another place. I had too many memories and you know it was hard for her to move in where I had all these memories. So we bought a house on Oakdale, the Neel Reid house, a beautiful house but something went wrong with it every week.

Q: I know the feeling.

CA: Where was yours?

Q: Well we're just around the corner there.

CA: Something happening now?

Q: Well something is always falling apart.

CA: Well this one too by the way but it was . . .it had a beautiful garden in the back and we put in a swimming pool that I used maybe three times. And when they were filming Driving Miss Daisy, Beresford, the director, rented the house next door to us and Helen went over there and left a note that I think with a cup of sugar that said I'm really presenting the fact I'm an actress and so on and so forth and we got to be friends and Ms. Beresford and her two children used our pool over and over again. So when the time came both of us were given bit parts in Driving Miss Daisy. Helen in the opening scene and she is talking to . . .it happened to be Mrs. Beresford and while Miss Daisy is backing her car in the wall and then she was supposed to have another talking part and two women hiding behind the hedge on Oakdale, as Polk drove by with Ms. Daisy a line squall and they had washed it out and they never went back and did it again. I was in the scene where Booley is getting a businessman of the year award in five hours.

Q: Over and over and over.

CA: What?

Q: Over and over and over. Made you glad you chose architecture and not acting, right?

CA: Boy that was enough for me. I sat next to Patty Lapone who if you will pardon the expression, I think was a bitch. She never acknowledged I was anything there and I was sitting there but Akroyd messed up his lines three or four times; there was lightning and thunder that . . .this was in a mansion out on Abernathy; it was supposed to be the Commerce Club and Beresford was rejected two or three takes; it took five hours and what

did I get? I got . . . I think I got \$44.38 so I'm a professional actor. But one of the funny things, when I came in I happened to lead this line of guys that was going to fill up the table and I knew they expected me to go to the end of the table and I decided to sit next to Patty so I wouldn't get cut. So that's where I sat and when the director came in he said, he looked around and said I need two younger men and I thought sure I was gone but one of the two that was going was George Heery. That was the only time I ever got the better of him. Come on stay with us.

Q: Cecil is getting ready to tell us about Sparkles.

CA: I will. Anyway Heery told...told Eerie out, George never got over that. It's the only time. . .we had our own going joint venture with Heery & Heery for 17 years. We had a shotgun wedding to do the Atlanta Fulton County Stadium and stayed together. That's the only time I ever one-upped him when he got kicked out.

Q: You sure you want me to stay?

CA: Sure.

Q: We want you to tell us about your star role on the Georgia Lottery commercials.

CA: How about coming around? The day that Helen contracted pneumonia, two days later she was having an audition. She doesn't quit. But I got two stories about it. She came to Atlanta and she was on Broadway 1948 and Arthur Harris took one look and said I'm going to marry you now and she said oh this is a big step I have got to go back to New York and talk it over and he said you do that and you're going to find out things about me I don't want you to know. Two and a half weeks later they were married. I'll say this about the marriage, they had three great children. Anyway about three years ago she was doing a commercial for the Georgia Lottery and she is this very prim and proper teller in a bank, no makeup, high neck dress, hair in a bun and a very attractive young guy comes in with a huge check. He has won the lottery. She looks at it and blinks and says just a minute please, goes out and comes right back hair down, heavy makeup, false eyelashes, low cut dress, she says my name is Edna but my friends calls me Sparkles. He's like this and then the last line is I have a hot tub. But people that saw that still remember it.

Q: I remember it. I remember it. I thought it was one of the funnier commercials they ever made.

CA: But Helen has been everywhere, done everything.

HA: My press agent.

CA: She and my first wife were good friends and Hermi used to say if anything happens to me that's your woman so I had permission.

Q: How did you and Hermi know each other Helen?

HA: We were neighbors.

Q: Here in Atlanta?

HA: Uh-huh.

CA: We lived right around the corner from each other.

HA: She would come over, I planted a lot of seeds, flower seeds. More than I could cut and Hermi would come over with a big hat and lots of scissors, she liked free things and she would cut a lot of flowers so it helped me and it helped her.

Q: Now when were ya'll married?

HA: We were married; Cecil when were we married?

CA: Are we married? We married in 1985 at Lake Toxaway.

Q: You guys are coming up on your 25th anniversary.

CA: It's a reunion too. Yeah we just had the 24th on December 1st.

Q: Well tell me a little bit, as far as Buckhead when you moved on Pharr Road and you mentioned you had a bunch of acreage, what was it like living out seemingly I guess the country at the time?

CA: When I lived. . .

Q: When you mentioned that before you built the round house you lived in Buckhead, your uncle's place, what was life like living at your uncle's place in Buckhead? Buckhead now versus then?

CA: Well it was a small town. When I was kid going out to wherever, my uncle builds this house in Wieuca that was an expedition. When my uncle was building that house, it was a mansion, I think it had something like 16,000 square feet in it; he had two theories of investing, invest in Coca-Cola and hold it and invest in Peachtree Property and hold it and he was one of the ones that when Woodruff bought out the Candler he was asked to participate in the buyouts and he did all right. But, we lived in a little house that had been built a [unintelligible] carpenter right by the street; it was only about 50 feet back and right next to us was a Gulf Station with a sign flashing Go Gulf, Go Gulf and when we moved out here onto Mt. Paran my daughter said Daddy why did you have to put such big windows in here? She missed that Go Gulf. There was a man in my squadron, Dick Dominick whose family, Dominick & Dominick, the stockbrokers in New York, very wealthy and this Phoebe Franklin, the one I mentioned, the Norman Fund was a friend of the Dominick's and they told them they should look me and Hermi up in Atlanta. So they

figured any friend of Dick Dominick probably lived on West Paces Ferry in a mansion. But it so happened we had a septic field in front of our house and it was clogged and we had it all dug up and the Franklins showed up and I heard this later, Phoebe said to her husband this can't be where a friend of Dick Dominick lives. But it was. Phoebe and Hermi got to be very . . . I guess best friends in spite of the dug up plant. He was in Carter's regime, he went to Washington. Their marriage got on the rocks when he was in Washington, which happened to so many people.

Q: So Helen you obviously lived a long time in Manhattan, New York, what is your impression of Buckhead compared to Manhattan?

HA: Well when I first came here I was really depressed for several reasons. One I was used to working with African Americans and made friends and I couldn't stand the attitudes here and did something about it later. That is another story. And we had some amusing experiences. We would go to a restaurant like Hart's on Peachtree and they used to raid it frequently and they would call Mr. Hart and say we're going to raid you boss. Okay. And so we were served Bloody Mary soup when that happened. That's a true story.

Q: What year was that?

HA: I moved here in '47 so it must have been '48 or '49.

CA: Bill Hartsfield said we've got the best of all worlds; we've got the laws for the drys and the whiskeys for the weddings.

Q: Where was Hart's? Where was that restaurant?

HA: On Peachtree. There used to be a Chevrolet agency in front of it, not in front of it but where it was.

Q: What is there now?

HA: What is there now? Hotels.

CA: There was a Chevrolet thing there.

Q: Is that where Publix is now?

HA: No.

CA: It is around there yeah. The Peach.

HA: No honey that's not where it was.

CA: Well this place you know, it's a unique street really. It's beautiful and it is so convenient to so many things.

Q: Have you ever heard the story of why there is no stop sign on Muskogee?

HA: No.

Q: Do you know the story?

HA: There should be.

Q: There should be, right. I have heard that back when Hartsfield was the Mayor, one of his big buddies lived on Muscogee and didn't like having to stop to get to work in the mornings and told Hartsfield to take down the stop sign and they did.

HA: My daughter lives on that street and I'll have to tell them that story.

Q: Have you heard anything. . . I guess ya'll really haven't been in this house that long obviously, someone told me that story to explain why there are no stop signs. When you look at it, clearly there should be stop signs.

HA: Right. There sure should be.

CA: You know there are more wrecks at four way stops than any other intersection.

Q: Really? Do you guys remember when there was the pass over bridge up there on Peachtree at West Wesley? When I was at the History Center looking at the bridge file to find the Hermi's bridge documents I came across some documents about a little . . . they had put it up there as a traffic control measure in 1941 and it was a bridge that went, it started on the east side on East Wesley and went over Peachtree onto West Wesley so if you were coming up to Peachtree you just went over the bridge and the traffic went under it and there is a picture, a newspaper article with a picture of this pass over bridge.

HA: Was it built?

Q: It was. It was built and it was up for . . . I don't know how long it was up, a year or two and I was thinking that's actually a pretty good idea. I wonder why they don't do that more often. And they have it at the History Center, the blueprint designs for this small little bridge. Someone else told us about that bridge. Who was that?

Q: Maybe Mr. Knox.

Q: Yeah I think it was. Do you remember ever going to see the Buckhead Symphony? Does that ring a bell at all? I think back in the 40s there was a Buckhead Symphony and they played in the . . . apparently the place where they played was kind of an open amphitheatre with sort of a shell behind it and it was supposedly up close to Pharr and Peachtree, a little bit south of Pharr on Peachtree.

HA: There used to be an entertainment venue at Peachtree Battle Shopping Center, jazz and all that.

Q: What were some of ya'll favorite restaurants back in the 40s and 50s?

CA: There were only two or three of them. There was one out on Lee Street. What was that named? It moved into town later. Herrons. It was much easier to think about where you were going to eat.

Q: How about the Pig N Whistle?

HA: Yeah.

CA: Oh yeah. One of my memories of the Pig N Whistle, when Georgia Tech went to the Rose Bowl and won in 1928 or something like that and the story of how they won is interesting but one of their player's names was Stumpy Thompson and he brought a bear back with him from California.

Q: An actual bear. A live bear.

CA: Yeah, a black bear and he would go to the Pig N Whistle and give the bear a coke.

Q: Stumpy Thompson. Was that the year that Wrong Way Roy Regal. .

CA: Yeah, he ran the wrong way.

Q: That's right.

CA: Regal used to come back to Atlanta and he was wined and dined.

Q: He was a hero I'm sure. Who were they playing? Who did Regal play for?

CA: California; University of California.

Q: He ran the wrong way; picked up a fumble and ran the wrong way and Tech won by I think one point; 7 to 6 or something like that.

CA: He picked up a fumble and got confused and one of backs Vinnie Long tackled him on the 2-yard line and then they . . I don't know. . .I think California fumbled or something happened bad.

Q: What did Stumpy do with his bear?

CA: I don't know.

HA: Put a leash on him.

CA: But they had a parade for him and Stumpy was riding in the back of his convertible with the bear with him.

Q: Do you remember Fred's Fruit Stand?

CA: Who?

Q: At Peachtree Battle, Fred's Fruit Stand.

HA: No.

CA: Oh yeah, yeah.

Q: It used to be right there where the Peachtree Battle Shopping Center is now and they would serve ice-cold watermelon wedges. Do you remember that?

CA: Oh yeah. You know the Battle of Peachtree Creek really, in my opinion ought to have been called the Battle of Collier Road. The real fighting was along Collier Road not Peachtree Creek, they had to get across the creek. The monument in front of the Piedmont Hospital to those who fought in the Battle of Peachtree Creek, my uncle gave that to the city.

Q: I didn't know that. Which uncle is this?

CA: Harry, Henry. They called him Harry. He was a top flight constitutional lawyer and was a republican before they were popular and he had a sign, an outdoor advertising sign in front of his house on Peachtree and it said re-elect Ike and Dick and he was ordered to take it down. He went to Court and said that's an infringement on my rights and free speech and the judge agreed with him. One night some guy went by there and with a couple of strokes of paint changed the sign from re-elect Ike and Dick to something else.

Q: I got you.

CA: My uncle was outraged at this that he put Mr. Shirley, his night watchman who was foggy as he could be, put him in a car at the head of his drive with a shotgun and I said Uncle Harry I'm not coming to see you as long as Mr. Shirley is out there with that shotgun. He hasn't got any judgment and his eyesight is no good. He even might shoot you. He said don't worry he doesn't have any shells.

Q: That's funny. Well are there any good stories as far as cocktail parties or neighbors or anything like that from Buckhead that you want to laugh or share?

CA: Tell them about when we got called racist.

HA: We had a dinner party here with a mixture of people and they were talking about what is it?

CA: Freaknik.

HA: Freaknik and this woman who was sort of blind and was black and . . .

CA: Her husband, I had worked with her husband in financing and he had died.

HA: So she was here alone, she was very vulnerable and she was listening to this and she said everybody at this table is a racist. That started the best evening.

Q: Why did she think everyone was racist?

HA: Because we were talking about Freaknik.

CA: We objected to Freaknik.

Q: What wasn't there to object to?

HA: [Cat enters room.] As Callie as in Calico.

CA: She's a huntress, she was a stray that was Helen's daughter took in.

Q: Have you seen the foxes that live next door?

CA: Yeah.

Q: I haven't seen them in a while.

CA: I haven't seen them in a while but I've seen them a couple of nights when we were coming in. I don't think they bother cats. What worries me are coyotes. Have you seen any coyotes?

Q: I haven't but somebody told me they saw a coyote on Rivers.

Q: I have seen one on Arden near the creek.

CA: What is that?

Q: I have seen one down near Arden on the creek, at Peachtree Creek and Arden.

CA: There were two or three things I never thought I would see when I was a kid growing up here. One was coyotes and another one was rapid transit, which I had my hands in and the third one was major league baseball. I like to say I have I think five things maybe in common with George Bush. We both like Scottish Terriers, you know he had Barney and

I always had Scotties and that we are both pilots, we both like baseball, we both have undergraduate degrees from Yale and graduate degrees from Harvard and in both instances, both his and mine it is very evident that those degrees in no way prepare you to be president of the United States.

Q: What plane did you fly in World War II and what arena did you fly in?

CA: Well one I flew in combat; I had sixty missions sitting over there as an SBD dive bomber and toward the end we got Corsairs, bent wing which were way ahead of their time. They cruised at 400 knots and it was propeller. Three were of the astronauts were here and there was a reception for them and I was talking to one of them and Dick Rich was then president of Rich's and came up and said what are you doing Cecil, trying to sell him on a bunch of crap on that old crate you flew in World War II? I said come on Dick, Corsair was a great airplane. This astronaut says Corsair, Corsair that was one of those things that had something in the front that went round and round.

Q: How many missions did you fly? How many combat missions?

CA: Sixty dive bombing missions.

Q: Was that in the Pacific?

CA: Yeah, the Central Pacific.

Q: So you flew off a carrier.

CA: No, just once. I flew off. . .when we transferred from Honolulu to the Marshals we went on Gambia Bay which was a jeep carrier. We had field carrier practice learning to follow the signals and so forth down near San Diego but I never actually landed on a carrier. But the Gambia Bay took us down and launched us; they had a hydraulic booster because the deck was so short and we went into Maduro which was. . . the Marshal Islands had been deeded to the Japanese as a mandate after World War I. Japanese were allies then and they were supposed not to fortify them but they fortified the hell out of them and when Nimitz went in he bypassed some of the heavily armed islands and took only Aquadraline and then we thought they had had such a bloody fight at Tarawa which was in the Gilberts and he didn't want to go through that again. But the islands that were left were Januett and Milly and Wozie and Melorlab and our assignment, which got deadly dull to all of us, still dangerous was bombing these bypassed islands. We just pulverized them. But they never quit firing at us. Milly was in the news as a possible place where Amelia Earhart had landed and the Japanese had captured her and Noonan, her navigator taken them to Saipan but I don't know. All those theories about what happened to Amelia Earhart; I think she just ran out of fuel and landed in the ocean. There is no glamour in that.

Q: Have you done any of the oral history interviews related to World War II like they did at the History Center?

CA: That's the only one I think.

Q: You did go and do that one?

CA: Yeah and so did Helen. Helen was with the U.S.O.

HA: USO Camp Shows.

Q: Oh you went and performed for the troops.

HA: Yeah and. . .

Q: Mostly through Europe or did you go...

HA: My parents said don't go to Europe. Your brother is over there. We couldn't stand it so I didn't go but we still played all over the United States and we played one-night stands. I did a book about it where we played camps, Camp Chaffee, Camp Wood and so on for one night and then went on by bus. So it was a hardship for the older people but not for me, I loved it. We had a good time. I bought a dress in Paris, Texas. I wanted the Paris label.

Q: Well Oglethorpe was a big fort too at the time, didn't they have a bunch of troops that trained at Oglethorpe University or had their barracks at Oglethorpe during World War II?

HA: Who is this?

Q: Just a question. I thought that there were some troops that were trained at Oglethorpe and there were some barracks and it was kind of an intermediary area.

HA: It was used as a veteran's hospital after the war but I don't know during the war. Camp Gordon was World War I and I think it was used again in World War II. I was in service before we got in the war; I was at MIT and one weekend I got invited to New York and I have forgotten who invited me but there was a couple there, Jews who escaped from Berlin and he told what was going on at Krystal Noch and so on and from that point on I had no interest in the education. I wanted to go fight and when . . . I went through the civilian pilot training program and I had a commercial pilot's license and on the way home I stopped by the Royal Canadian Air Force recruiting office which was in LaGuardia and when they discovered I was a Yale graduate and one year of MIT and a commercial pilot they said buddy you are not leaving here until you sign up and I said oh yeah, I want to go back to Atlanta and check out the Navy and the guy was actually standing in front of the door and I said let me out of here. He said well we need you, come back. Well when I came to Atlanta I joined the Navy and I was in training out here and Frank Neely, I was out at . . . [phone ringing].

Q: Do you want me to grab that for you?

CA: [On the phone.] There is nobody there honey.

Q: Are you going to make a T-shirt out of that? I'll be the first in line.

CA: That's on the back.

Q: Well Cecil, thank you very much. I think we can . . . we've had you for almost two hours; we promised you one. So, we thank you very much.