

**INTERVIEW OF JOHN K. OTTLEY, JR.
FEBRUARY 21, 2010**

JO: John K. Ottley, Jr.

Q: Interviewer

Q: This is an interview with John King Ottley, Jr. of 4490 Old Burlington Street, Alpharetta, Georgia. The interview is being conducted on February 21, 2010, at his residence. The interviewers are Wright Mitchell, Chad Wright, and his son James Ottley, representing the Buckhead Heritage Society of Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Ottley, thanks for taking time this afternoon.

JO: Absolutely.

Q: You've given us a little bit of overview of your time in Buckhead and your progression through your career and ending up at this residence here. Can you go back and just restate a little bit about where you were born in Atlanta, grew up, and just a quick overview of the timeline and then we'll come back and delve back into your time in Buckhead.

JO: I was born on October 8, 1931, at St. Joseph's Hospital when it was downtown, I believe possibly on Piedmont. My family at that time, mother and dad, lived on Penn Avenue, P--e-n-n. Then Dad was transferred with Eastern Airlines to New York, and so my very earliest years, like maybe age – I can look these dates up if we need them, but I'm thinking maybe one through three – were actually in New York City. Then he was sent back to Atlanta and we lived on Rivers Road as a child. That was up through about the sixth grade. Then he volunteered for the Air Force. I think it was the U.S. Army Air Corps at that time. It was part of the Army, not a separate service. So the family picked up and followed him out to Mississippi and then Texas. Then he was relieved from active duty in about April of 1945. The accordion was shrinking down and they were just throwing out all the non-essentials they could. Not throwing out, but letting them off. So we got back to Atlanta in, I think it could've been March. It seems like I had about two months to go in that school year and they put me into North Fulton and, boy, the teachers were just like, what is this kid doing? That's all I need is a new kid that hadn't studied any of the things we're studying, and that sort of thing. So it's kind of hard on them to –

Q: What year do you think that would've been?

JO: That would've been like the last month of the ninth grade as best I recall, sort of first year of high school in those days. So then the next September they sent me to Darlington up at Rome. Had four years up there including a post-graduate year, and then went off to Davidson. I got lucky enough that the Korean War had come to the armistice phase or the negotiated cease fire, whatever you want to call it. So I was able to postpone my Army service for a year. I was an ROTC grad, and I got my Master's in Journalism at Columbia before I went in the Army and served about three years and eight months. That included

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

going to Army Aviation School which added to my time, because they want to get their money's worth.

Q: So they didn't put you on the Stars and Stripes then?

JO: That's right. And so when I got out of the Army, got off active duty or getting close to the time, I just wrote a letter to the Charlotte Observer and said I was kind of interested in coming to work for them and, amazingly, they said, well, come on in. It's like a completely different world from today where these kids are sending out millions of resumes and they finally have to work at Burger King or something like that, a completely different world then. Well, maybe it helped that I had gone to school near Charlotte at Davidson and then had that Master's degree. That probably helped a little bit. So anyway, I worked there for a while, and Bob Fowler, who was editor of the Marietta Journal, was taking a little swing through Southeastern cities looking at all the newspapers to see how they did things. His sister was my first wife's best friend, and so we were living in Charlotte and she said, oh, be sure to go by and see John and Prilla [phonetic] while you're making your swing. And he shows up for dinner and I said, well, Bob, would you like to go down and look at the paper after dinner? Yeah, that's what I'm doing. So we went down there and showed him around a little bit, and then ran him off because I had to go to work. I was just taking my supper break. So then he invited me to come to Marietta and work with him on the Marietta Journal, and I thought that'd be a lot of fun, and that kind of brought me back to the Atlanta area. I had trouble, even though I was flying in the Reserve, feeding my family. An opportunity came up to go into public relations work, and so I went into that. That's all in that bio which I sent you, and you may have it there.

So then from there, I sort of got hired by the client. We were doing a public relations campaign for the Southern Society of Orthodontists and they, unbeknownst to me, had kind of been looking for a full time executive director and one thing kind of meshed with another, and so I went with them and stayed about 13 years or so. I thought we needed maybe one more person in the office and I thought, well, maybe it'd be better than me hiring that person and then leaving that as a legacy for the new executive director, it'd probably be better to let the new person hire the initial troop there, so I stepped down. There was an international orthodontic organization that was kind of unhappy with their executive director and they said, well, why don't you come work for us? You can work out of your home. Famous last words. It didn't take long and I realized I had to get back in a tie and probably open an office to do it right, and so fortunately I was able to find one of these organization management firms, a multiple-client type firm, and they said they would be delighted to take this group on, add it to their client mix. So I stepped down from that and ran a poetry magazine for a few years and realized that was a quick path to financial ruin. I sold that to a guy, and since then have been just very active in various civic and community activities and that sort of thing. In a nutshell, that's kind of an overview of my career.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Come full circle. You mentioned growing up on Rivers Road, and I know your family, your dad and your granddad, lived in Atlanta in the Buckhead area as well; is that correct?

JO: Yes.

Q: We'll get back into your father and your grandfather, but tell me a little bit about growing up on Rivers Road. Did you go to E Rivers?

JO: Did go to E Rivers. As I look at the way things are now, I think the thing that probably is most different is the kids would just walk to school and the parents were not worried about somebody flashing them or kidnapping them or what else. So you'd see little groups of kids walking down Rivers Road or Wesley and all that down to E Rivers, or riding their bikes, and it would just seem like no fear whatsoever. One morning, there was a little ice on the sidewalk and I kind of wrecked my bike and got skinned up a little bit, and I thought, well, I'm not too bad, I don't need to go back home. So I just got back on and rode to school bleeding a little bit. Hey, what happened? I just had a bike wreck. Oh, okay, fine. But I mean nowadays they'd have the 911 and we don't want to be liable for child abuse or anything like that, so that was quite different.

This was the old E Rivers, the stone building before the guy burned it down trying to get that wasp nest, or at least that's the story I've heard. I haven't researched that, but that's the story I heard. Anyway, it was a pleasurable experience.

Q: Roughly what year would that have been?

JO: Probably maybe '37 or '38, something like that.

Q: Any favorite teachers or memorable events that happened in those four or five years there?

JO: I don't remember any favorite teachers. I did kind of enjoy my sixth grade teacher, a Mrs. Wilson I recall, but the rest of them were just kind of, they were the teacher and I was the kid.

Q: Did you go to Miss Bloodworth's kindergarten?

JO: I did not go to Miss Bloodworth's. I think by the time we got back from New York maybe I was too old for that or something like that.

Q: So as a kid growing up in that neighborhood, where would you ride your bike to when you weren't in school? Was there anything on Peachtree that you would venture out to or back at –

JO: Normally we'd just ride to a friend's house if you were going over to play with somebody in the afternoon. That's the only thing. I don't remember riding it down Peachtree. I think

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

I did remember one incident where some of the guys that went to E Rivers lived in those apartments kind of up the hill from Peachtree Creek there. I might have been riding over to see one of those guys or something, and this guy flipped an egg at me out of the window of his car. I didn't know what had happened at first. It was kind of like, gosh, you know. Then I saw the shell running down my front and that sort of thing. But no other real significant bicycle adventures stand out.

Q: Did y'all play much in Peachtree Creek or was it already kind of nasty by then?

JO: Actually we didn't. There was a little creek that ran down parallel to Rivers Road, and I don't know where that thing empties. I guess maybe eventually it ran into Peachtree Creek. That would be kind of the pattern of the drainage, but we'd play down by that creek, build little dams and come up and tell the folks about it and they'd say, well, don't leave it dammed up! We don't want any beavers locating down there and all that sort of thing, but mostly just playing in the yard or over at some other kid's house.

Q: That stream, because I live on West Wesley so I live right around the corner from Rivers. I know the street you're talking about. If you dammed that thing up now, it'd take two years before you had a puddle. Was it a bunch more water volume in it back then or just about like it is?

JO: I don't remember too much water. Now, interestingly, at the bottom of our yard was a little pond when we moved into that house, and Mother and Dad were so afraid of water moccasins, that they had that thing filled in, they had that pond filled in. But I remember a little water down in there when we first moved in.

Q: Do you remember the address?

JO: 2625.

Q: 2625 Rivers Road. Do you remember any of the neighbors, any characters that suck out in your mind in the neighborhood as a kid? Trill Tree [phonetic] or --

JO: His mother lived next door.

Q: Is that right? How about that.

JO: And her older sister was a little bit more my age. We didn't have too much to do with girls in those days, except they got bicycles before my brother and I, and so we were over there kind of riding their bikes.

Q: What was her maiden name?

JO: It was Margaret Meriwether and her sister was Betty. Then on the other side, Jane Campbell who is now Jane Schweers, she and her -- I'm trying to think if she had a brother or not. Her mother and dad lived on the other side of us facing Rivers. Beyond

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

them was a family, the Sullivan family. The interesting thing about the Campbells and the Sullivans was that the driveway off of Rivers was a common drive and then it split going up to the respective houses.

Q: It still does.

JO: I always found that kind of an interesting thing.

Q: One of the myths that seems to have persisted throughout the years and years and years of folks who live in Buckhead is that there were tunnels or are tunnels between a couple of houses on Peachtree Battle that the Klan would use. It's a fact that Klan officers owned a couple of houses on Peachtree Battle, but there have been these stories for years that there were tunnels underneath. Did you hear any of those stories growing up?

JO: I never heard about the tunnels, and I never heard anything about that – I know that house you're talking about – until kind of later, and it was presented to me more that that was just where a Klan official lived. I don't remember what the high guy was now.

Q: Grand wizard.

JO: Yes, grand wizard maybe, but it was never presented or told to me that Klan offices were in there.

Q: As far as shopping, where would your mom go do her grocery shopping, dry cleaning, those sort of things?

JO: The grocery I remember was called Barrett & Leach. The big deal there was that they would deliver the food. You could order on the phone and they would just kind of run a tab on you. Before Dad volunteered or before he left in World War II, we had gas rationing and that sort of thing, so if a guy would deliver the groceries, that was great. I'm trying to think. There was another place that she shopped. That's the one that kind of stands out in memory.

Q: Did you guys go to church?

JO: We did, and did a much better job than I'm doing presently. I would quickly add that.

Q: Where did y'all go?

JO: We went to North Avenue Presbyterian, and then it seems to me that at some point Dad moved his membership out to that church that's kind of at the corner of Morris Mill and –

Q: Trinity.

JO: Trinity, exactly. He kind of got enamored of that pastor.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: It's a beautiful church. In talking about your dad a little bit, what did he do?

JO: He was with Eastern Airlines for a while and then he – I'd have to get his story out to get it straight, but at one point he was a reporter for the Journal, and then he may have left that job to go with Eastern Airlines. Then after the War, he came back and – let me see if I can get this straight now. Maybe he was in advertising with the paper at the outset of the war, and when he came back the paper kind of – they sort of were supposed to hold your job but it might not be the exact job when you came back. He had a job with the Constitution briefly and then went into an advertising agency, Liller, Neal, Battle and Lindsey. I'm kind of embarrassed not to know the exact sequence, but we can track it down through his bio if we have to.

Q: Was Eastern based in Atlanta at the time or sort of a satellite? I can't remember.

JO: I'm kind of thinking it was headquartered in New York.

Q: Tell me a little bit about, delve into a little bit of your dad and your granddad because I think there is some pretty interesting Buckhead history in your history and your lineage back there. Tell us a little bit about, is it Joyeuse? Is that how you pronounce it?

JO: Joyeuse.

Q: I was way off. There you go. In the South, though, we say Joyeuse.

JO: I think it's French for joyous, is maybe where that comes from. Well, it's funny. I was talking to James just the other day that our grandfather, he was almost untouchable. I don't mean to say that he was standoffish, because the guy had a million really good friends. But my brother, I don't know how he felt about it, but I just felt like this is some guy up on a pedestal, chairman of the bank, big house out on Peachtree.

Q: What bank was that?

JO: First National.

Q: Now, his father, did he live in Atlanta as well? Your grandfather, so your great-great-grandfather?

JO: No, he did not. He was from Columbus, Mississippi. The old advice, go west, young man. Well, he went west a little bit to Memphis and then came back to Atlanta and got in the – he was in the banking business in Memphis. In fact, I think his history, he is supposed to have been the nation's youngest bank cashier or something like that. So he left Memphis, instead of going farther west, he came back to Atlanta.

Q: What was his name, full name?

JO: John King.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: So you're the –

JO: Well, at the time I was born, my birth certificate had John King Ottley, V on there, but we soon decided that King Ottley V was a little heavy for the first grade at E Rivers, so we kind of all backed down a few degrees, and my grandfather kind of identified himself as Senior and then my dad said, okay, well then I'll be Junior so I was the third until he died, then I kind of moved up to Junior.

Q: So you're kind of Junior squared actually?

JO: Yes.

Q: So just to kind of simplify this, what do we want to call – what did you call your grandfather?

JO: Called him Papa.

Q: So Papa was born here in Atlanta, was he?

JO: No, he was born in Columbus, Mississippi and moved to Atlanta. Dad was born here.

Q: When did Papa move to Atlanta?

JO: Well, I'll have to look at the record to get that year for you. I could tell you, but I don't remember it off hand.

Q: So tell us a little bit about the house on Peachtree, where it was, how it all came about and your memories of that area.

JO: Originally he lived on that corner where North Avenue Presbyterian is, North Avenue and Peachtree, and bought the property which is basically the Lenox Square property. They sort of took over the entire property when they built that. He bought that as just sort of a weekend retreat.

Q: Do you remember what year that would've been that he bought it?

JO: I would have to look that up for you. So they would have guests out. And he was a very enthusiastic horseman and that gave him a place to keep his horses and they had a bunch of bridle trails out there. I think I've got a photo somewhere. It kind of shows all those trails going around the property and whatnot. So then at some point, he and his wife just decided to move out there full time. I guess the trolley service was good and all that sort of thing. So my first recollection of it was when they were living there full time, and you came in the entrance and the drive dipped down a little bit and then it kind of rose up to a hill, which the hill is still there but they leveled it to build Lenox Square. But if you look at Lenox Road how it kind of goes up from Peachtree and then dips back down by the

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

MARTA station and whatnot, well that hill went all the way across the property when he owned it, and so it was kind of a grand approach, like coming up to a castle.

Q: If you're going north on Peachtree, was it on the left or the right?

JO: Right hand side, exactly where Lenox Square is now.

Q: When was the house built? Do you know?

JO: I'd have to look that up. I'm not even sure I've got the date on that.

Q: Describe the house a little bit. What are your memories of it?

JO: I think it's called English Tudor, where they have the exposed dark beams and maybe white behind that or cream colored. To a little kid, it just seemed to be huge.

Q: Do you know if there are any contemporary references to it, like written descriptions of it?

JO: I found something online that describes some of it, walking into the interior, a grand room on the left and this and that and described the stables to some degree.

Q: Where did you find that?

JO: Really by doing a search on Google, John K. Ottley, Buckhead, and that pulled up.

Q: When you went out there as a kid, would ride the horses, as well?

JO: Usually it would be like a Sunday dinner and they would have a couple of maids serving the dinner. We were just in the hall. It was like, holy smoke, these guys really must rich to have all this. But, no, we didn't ride horses, and I don't know that we were forbidden to. I just don't recall ever having been invited to ride one of his horses. Dudley and I would go out kind of exploring around. The funny thing about it is at that time it just seemed like if you went much beyond where the stables were, that you'd just be going into a wilderness and almost get lost. But you look at it today, it's like that's nothing at all to go from Peachtree all the way back to East Paces. It's nothing.

Q: What else was out there other than the house back then?

JO: He had stables which kind of included his room, I think they called it a tack room where they keep the saddles and all that. Then there was a barn, and I don't recall much of what was in there, maybe just that's where the farm equipment or garden equipment. He didn't really run major crops. They just had a kind of extensive garden where they grew stuff for the table and that sort of thing, as I recall. I don't remember any tractor plowing long distances and all that sort of thing. Then at the back of the property was a little riding rink I guess for maybe training horses or showing horses or whatever, but those are the main

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

structures I recall. He had a few artifacts there. They had one of these lock boxes where they used to keep prisoners that the cop on the beat would lock the guy up and then the wagon would come around to get them out, make the circuit and get all the prisoners out or arrestees you might say. There were some other artifacts there, too, that I have a little trouble recalling.

Q: You may have told me this, but I heard that in the stable he had teller windows out of one of the bank branches.

JO: That could well have been. That kind of rings true.

Q: I also heard that Sundays in the riding stable that they used to have interracial football games. Does that ring a bell?

JO: Now, my friend Bill Drayer said that he and some of his friends used to come over and play football on that back side of the property, but whether it was interracial or not, I don't know. I never saw it.

Q: Somebody told me, I can't remember who it was or maybe I read it somewhere, but that on Sunday afternoons, because there was a black community not far from there –

JO: That's absolutely correct. I think it was called Johnsonstown. It was a little street that ran I guess north off of Lenox Road opposite their property and housed some low income people over there.

Q: Is that where some of the staff that worked for your granddad probably lived?

JO: I think it wasn't just his staff. I think there were other African Americans that lived there that worked other places. It was just a little black community.

Q: Was Peachtree paved all the way to the house or do you remember?

JO: Yes, yes it was at that time.

Q: And the trolley came all the way up to the house as well?

JO: It may have gone all the way to Oglethorpe. I'm not sure.

Q: It probably did. Would you ever ride the trolley up on your own, walk down Peachtree and go visit?

JO: I don't think I ever rode it out there. One really good memory that stands out is they would cut firewood out there and split it, and from time to time they'd bring a wagonload of firewood to our house on Rivers Road. One time I got to ride the wagon back through Buckhead, a mule-drawn wagon back through Buckhead out to his house, and that was just one of the greatest things of all time.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Do you know how many acres he owned out there?

JO: Well, here again, I think we could probably look it up without too much trouble.

Q: I'm asking because of the interesting facts for an article on acreage and size of the house, that sort of thing.

JO: When y'all get back, if you want to write down some of these questions, I think we can probably find it for you in some of our stuff. You can kind of imagine, like I say, it's the exact dimensions of the present Lenox Square, so if you –

Q: So did they sell the property directly – did your family sell the property directly to Lenox or did it change hands once?

JO: No. After my grandfather died, the family I think sold it to – what was the firm?

Q: Haas & Dodd.

JO: Haas & Dodd. They were not only in insurance but they were into some real estate at that time. I don't know what the price was, but I think everybody was just really satisfied that it was a wonderful price. I believe the Noble Foundation bought it from Haas & Dodd to do Lenox Square.

Q: Can you spell Harris & Dodd?

JO: No, H-a-a-s & D-o-d-d. Are they still in business?

Q: They got bought recently by a larger insurance company. They had not had real estate for a long time.

Q: So did they have a –

Q: [unintelligible] Peachtree Park part of it.

JO: But another tie-in was that our next-door neighbor, [unintelligible] Meriwether, worked with Haas & Dodd. I think he was a senior vice president or something like that. So that is our neighbor on Rivers Road, James' mother, and her dad was with Haas & Dodd. I don't know that that played any part in it, but it may have. Dad may have known him.

Q: Did they use it as an office or what was their intent when they bought it?

JO: They just held it.

Q: Kind of speculative.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

JO: Might have been a little school out there of some kind, maybe somebody ran a little – I don't know, but

Q: What happened to the house after your –

JO: I think when the Noble Foundation bought it, they just tore it down and got dynamite out there and leveled a lot of that terrain.

Q: So how did you come back around to marry your neighbor? Did you reconnect back in Marietta?

JO: I don't know if it's safe to have this recorded.

Q: Well, if you're not comfortable –

Q: It's the good stuff. That's the best stuff, stuff you don't want recorded.

JO: I had been divorced from my first wife and I was at some kind of a party or something and ran into your mother's sister, and oh, Betty, how are you doing? Fine. She said, well you ought to date Margaret. I said, gosh, I would like to date Margaret and just find out what she's been up to all these years. I hadn't seen her in a ton of years. So I called her up and she said, oh, I can't come over, I'm doing the laundry. I said, well, you can do it over here. I got a washing machine. And no, no, no. But anyway, that's kind of the way we reconnected. Not really romantic, but it was just sort of a casual thing. I was like, yeah, I'd like to see her.

Q: What year was that?

JO: Here again, I'd have to double check it.

Q: Roughly, was that in mid early '60s?

JO: Guess it was '60s.

Q: Was her family still living on Rivers Road at the time?

JO: No. They sold that house and moved to Blackland Road, 250 Blackland, pretty soon after Dad was released from active duty.

Q: Was the question her family?

Q: Oh, right. So your dad moved to Blackland Road?

JO: My mother and father moved to Blackland, but Margaret's family I think, yes, kept the house and lived there. Her mother and his grandmother lived there for a long time. They recently – I think the family recently sold that. Did they tear it down or remodel it?

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Unfortunately it was torn down.

JO: Torn down?

Q: That's a shame. As far as your dad went, any memories of social events? I know as a younger child, you're kind of looking up at this since you were not in Buckhead really as an adult or as, I should say, while you're still with your dad, as a son I should say. Any memories of the social scene back then? Did they have parties at the house?

JO: They had what seemed to me to be a very active social life, lots of friends. I think both Mother and Dad were just very socially inclined so they had guys over and they'd have some cocktails and then go out to dinner. I think he was very active in the Nine O'Clocks and played golf out at Brookhaven almost every Saturday and Sunday.

Q: Would that be Capital City?

JO: Yes, Capital City Country Club. So I guess the answer would be a resounding yes.

Q: Do you have pretty fond memories of Buckhead? How would you say –

JO: Oh, yes.

Q: How would you say it's changed? In that nostalgia, what were some of your favorite things about it? What would you like to see that were there as a kid that you had but you feel like don't exist now?

JO: You know, I think the thing that stood out so much about it was what you might call kind of the small town aspect. It just seemed like Mother and Dad dealt with the same dry cleaner and the guy would know them when they came in, and the same with the drugstore and stuff like that. It just seemed like you really knew the merchants that you dealt with maybe more than you do now. Obviously the traffic was not what it is now and the density was nowhere near what it is now. I would say just in general that it was more like living in a small town than it is now. There were just services available like you could drive the car to the Gulf station to have it washed and filled with gas and the guy had a little three-wheel motorcycle with a thing that flipped over and attached to the rear bumper and he would drive the car back and then leave and just go back to the service station on his motorcycle and you could order prescriptions from – let's see. What drugstore did they use? The guy would deliver them on a motorcycle, and that was always a huge thrill because all the neighborhood dogs when they heard the sound of that motorcycle coming up that hill, boy it was just like a wolf pack descending on him. I think your mom's dog actually got hit by a motorcycle, nipped a closely and maybe got thrown off or maybe the guy kicked him or something. That was a big deal.

Q: Where was the Gulf station?

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

JO: As best I recall, and this is another reason I didn't want to be interviewed jointly with Dudley because his memory of it is distinctly different from mine and we'd be arm wrestling over where it was. My recollection is it was right on the corner of West Paces and Peachtree, maybe one business down south of there. That's just a recollection and it's certainly subject to confirmation. We'll put it that way.

Q: Now, your grandfather was kidnapped.

JO: I think Hawk's was the name of the drugstore and it was —

Q: Hawk's?

JO: Hawk. It's the same family as Judson Hawk who was very big in the — what was the hospital that was so good on orthopedic for children? They're now part of that Children's Healthcare.

Q: Egleston? Scottish Rite.

JO: Scottish Rite, yes.

Q: So Hawk's drugstore. Was it a soda shop, too, or just purely a drugstore?

JO: I think they had a soda counter in there.

Q: Do you remember where that was located by chance, roughly?

JO: I'm thinking maybe where Moe's is now, on that corner, or maybe down. There's a service station a little bit farther south, but it was definitely on the east side of Peachtree on one of the corners.

Q: You mentioned a year at North Fulton High school.

JO: It was just two months.

Q: Yes, two months. I know interviewing some other folks, fraternities were pretty big at North Fulton, high school fraternity. You probably didn't have time to get involved with that?

JO: No time, no time. They had an ROTC battalion that would go out and drill. I was there so late, I didn't even get in on that. I'd sit in the stadium and watch those guys march up and down and that sort of thing, just a transitional sort of a school.

Q: Your grandfather was -- one of the more salacious stories in Atlanta is the time that he was kidnapped. Were you alive at the time? Do you remember anything, or stories?

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

JO: Well, I told Wright that just looking back on it, I was only two years old at the time and I read that they put the children, like Mother and Dad, under police protection and all that sort of thing, but I wasn't aware that it had happened and I guess even if they'd told me, it wouldn't have registered at two years old. Then I can't remember now when I did hear about it, but mostly what they told was just kind of word of mouth. Did you get those collection of articles that Dudley got up from the Atlanta –

Q: I've got them right here.

JO: I learned more from reading that than I'd ever learned from what my family told me.

Q: The article says that your dad was in St. Simon's when it happened.

JO: Yes.

Q: Were you in St. Simon's with him?

JO: I don't think so. I think he was probably down on some kind of airline business or something like that.

Q: So you were in New York? Was he living in New York when it happened or was he still living here?

JO: I'm thinking at two years old, we might've still been on Penn Avenue. I don't think we were at Rivers Road at that time because I have a recollection of the house, of moving into the house on Rivers and if I can remember that, I must've been at least –

Q: I think the article said that the police were sent to the house on Penn Avenue, if I remember that correctly. So that would've put y'all there.

JO: That seems logical.

Q: Was it talked about a lot over the years as you grew up? Was it often referred to or was it kind of –

JO: Well, you know when I was working with the Southern Company, they had an office in those twin towers that are across the street from Lenox. Just going to get a haircut or something like that, oh, Ottley, yes, wasn't your grandfather kidnapped? And so it was – I think that's when I began to grasp that it was a much bigger story than had been made out to us as children.

Q: So your dad's brother, George McCarty, is it?

JO: Yes.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

- Q: The newspaper account said that his, I guess, wife and their children were at Joyeuse when it happened.
- JO: That was my father's sister and her husband. She married George McCarty. Yes, I think maybe she had – I think they lived out there for a while and I'm not exactly sure. The story that was passed down was that George and my grandfather just were really close and they thought a lot of each other, and maybe just said, why don't y'all live with us, because they had all that house with nobody there.
- Q: One of the things that's not clear from the articles is – and I would love to find out kind of what the thinking of these guys' was, Delinsky and Grover. Obviously probably everyone knew who John Ottley was by virtue of his standing in the community, but how they targeted him and concocted this plan.
- JO: Exactly.
- Q: Do you remember hearing anything?
- JO: I never heard anything about that other than the guy that apparently ran a fruit stand there and how did Delinsky get up with him? The fruit stand guy probably would've known, well, that's probably somebody important living in that estate.
- Q: Not Fred's Fruit Stand?
- JO: No. I think a guy just ran a little fruit stand on Peachtree up north of maybe possibly at the corner of Lenox Road and Peachtree, the far corner, or wherever it was. But how did Delinsky meet that guy? I don't know.
- Q: I wonder if there are any papers surviving, documents surviving from – I don't know if he was tried. I don't know if he pled guilty or what happened. I wonder if there are legal documents that still survived. I know that looking that far back, especially in the Fulton County records, is a lost cause.
- JO: Really?
- Q: Yeah, they send them off to archives, but it's kind of a great black hole. They never come back, if they haven't been destroyed.
- JO: What about the Georgia archives?
- Q: Yes, that's another potential source. Another thing that was interesting to read in the articles is that the kid Bowen caved pretty much from the start. It was kind of strange, and I kind of wondered to myself if he didn't cut some sort of side deal for himself.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: I thought the article even said that before he even got into partnership with him or when he was offered a partnership, he said, oh I can use this to get a job or something like that. I think that's what I saw.

Q: And on the ride out to Suwanee I think was already saying to your grandfather, don't worry, I'm going to – so I think maybe he saw this as an opportunity to possibly ingratiate himself to your grandfather or maybe – I don't know. It's just very interesting, and the people who would know those things are long gone, so all we're left with are the newspaper accounts. We're just curious if you'd ever talked to your grandfather or anyone else about how that all went down.

JO: I did not, and the other thing is, obviously, when the guy was interviewed by the paper, he's going to give the best possible story that he could to make himself look like almost an innocent bystander.

Q: For the sake of the tape, can we just get a quick two-minute synopsis of what did happen? We all have read the articles, I know.

JO: As I say, I think I learned more about the thing from those articles than I did even from the Franklin Garrett write-up and learned more from that than I ever did from my family. But I think grandfather was driving out of his driveway. It seemed like there was a circular drive and you went in on the driveway that was the southernmost and typically came out on the one that was almost at the corner of Lenox Road and Peachtree. I think there was a little stand out there like a little trolley stand where people could stand to wait under shelter for the trolley.

Q: Was there a gate up?

JO: No, there wasn't a gate. And apparently this guy, Delinsky, just flagged him down like could you give me a ride, and I guess he let him in the car and then the story says that he put a gun on him and that he made – I think he made the Pryor boy drive and Delinsky got in the back seat with Grandfather and they apparently started toward town for some reason and then maybe turned around and then headed back out Peachtree to the Suwanee area and let them out some place sort of near the river. Then Delinsky came back and delivered this really crude ransom note to a stable boy that was walking up Peachtree. He said, take this up to the house. I guess the kid just, yes, sir, and took the note up to the house. I don't know who received the note. It might have been George McCarty's son, and so then they got the cops, notified the cops when the note came. I'm a little foggy as to where Delinsky got the idea to hightail it out of town, but maybe he heard sirens coming out or something like that or coming out Peachtree, and so he just fled the scene. By this time, I think – the story that was passed down to us was that Grandfather talked to the Pryor boy and said, you know, son, you're going to ruin your life by this. He apparently wasn't too enthusiastic about it to start with, and so he'd already gotten loose before Delinsky left town and so they brought him back to town and apparently the only thing he was really upset about was that he lost his glasses, custom made glasses. So the

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

span of time was very short. I mean, it was less than a day. He was kidnapped on his way to work and was back home before closing time.

Q: The article says that Bowen and Delinsky, they refer to – maybe using an alias, Collins? But I've always heard the kidnapper referred to as Delinsky. That he and Bowen met at the Salvation Army where they were staying. Bowen was on his way to Chattanooga to pick up his sister and Delinsky said, hey, I'm going to kidnap this big banker. All you got to do is guard him and I'll give you ten grand.

JO: I'm wonder if Bowen knew that's what the deal was, or did he just tell him, look, I've got a job lined up or something like that, and I need a helper.

Q: This is Bowen's own words, at least to the paper, were he said he was going to kidnap a big banker here and all he wanted me to do was to guard him while he negotiated with his wife for \$40,000 and --

JO: Okay.

Q: -- money, so to put \$10,000 on a silver platter for me if I helped. At first I refused. He was not insistent. I thought of what a great job I'd get for myself and agreed to help him. He said earlier that --

Q: And he was 17 years old, right?

Q: He said previously, these are his own words, that I hoped to make a hit with him. It sounds to me like he was thinking -- my working theory -- this is just reading back. Because he immediately, from the point they abducted your grandfather, was saying to him in the back seat or whatever, at some point they had an interaction, he said, don't worry. And so I think he was trying to curry favor with him and hoped he would either give him money or --

Q: A job.

Q: So Delinsky picked the wrong accomplice.

JO: Well, if you look at that note, and they got the text in those articles. The guy was not the brightest caliber fellow you'd hope to meet up with.

Q: Did you get the impression that your grandfather was at all traumatized by the incident or was it just kind of an inconvenience?

JO: I think he was upset by it, no question about it. I mean, you could see -- that picture that shows him, he looks like he's pretty shaken when they took the picture of when he was released.

Q: And then the article says he carried a pistol with him in his car from then on.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: I think Delinsky got 21 to 28 years.

JO: Dad talks about being able to go along with the FBI guys that brought Delinsky back to Atlanta from either San Antonio or wherever he was caught, so I'm thinking that maybe the trial took place in Atlanta. Would it have been federal court since that's –

Q: Kidnapping. The thing is, I don't know where we'd find these records.

JO: I don't even know what year the guy was tried, and I'm thinking maybe the place to start would be at the Atlanta paper or the history center microfiche and see what – they would've probably mentioned the court.

Q: It was such a big case, that I'm sure they followed the trial when it happened.

Q: There are articles. When I wrote that story about Buckhead murders and everything, I did a little – because I was more focused on the big murders I could think of, but I did a little research on your grandfather's kidnapping. There are AJC articles, but what would be interesting to find are, to the extent they were, Bowen obviously gave some sort of confession. I'm sure that the police took it down. It'd be interesting to find the actual written confession as opposed to what he told the papers. I just don't know where you – Fulton County Courthouse. Go down there and ask to look in their files, I guess, for whatever they may have from that case.

JO: The thing that's just ringing a little bell in my mind is I've seen these articles, and Dudley had a full page article from the Journal when the kidnapping took place when I think he gave to the Millennium Arch museum. But I have never seen the first line of print about Delinsky being tried or Bowen, so that's kind of a gap that I'm sure that's in the paper.

Q: And what happened to Delinsky? Was he paroled? Did he die in prison?

JO: Yeah, right.

Q: Bowen got like a year in some form of chain gang. Your grandfather said, well, I don't want anything bad to happen to him, yet it sounds like he still got – so I'm just kind of curious. Where did these guys go with their lives after this incident? Those are the kind of things that interest me. You can read, everyone knows what happened, but what happened leading up to it and after it?

Q: The ransom note, did that stay in the hands of the police or is that –

JO: They've got a picture of it in those Atlanta, Georgian articles and it's very crudely done, the writing is kind of like that, and the wording is not too swift.

Q: Georgia archives might have something.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Wouldn't that be evidence, though? The original file, to the extent it wasn't destroyed, in the Fulton County Superior Court. They send stuff off to God knows where. It'd be interesting to get the, to the extent it still exists, the original case file from the police department or but I know in the way those things go –

JO: Does Delinsky's full – why not try and Google him, Delinsky and Pryor Bowen and just see what happened? You found out about the house.

Q: You'd be amazed what you can find on Google. There was a guy who called in when I was writing that story about the origins of Buckhead, a guy called in back in like 1988 to the AJC and his name was – something similar to Whitley which was the name that's appeared in some of the stories. He called in and said that he has always heard that his great-great-great-grandfather was the one that had killed this buck at Buckhead. I found this article with his name in it in like 1988, and so I Googled. It was a Rusty, it was a very unusual name, so I Googled this name and I got a phone number for this guy and I called him up and it was the same guy. I said, did you happen to call the AJC back in 1988 and tell them that your great-great-great-grandfather had killed this buck, and he said yeah, that's what I'd always heard. So I started asking him about it and he didn't remember how the story had come about or who he heard it from. But you're right. Delinsky's son or daughter is probably still running around.

JO: Is Delinsky's full name in those articles? I've got a copy of the articles and I can look it up.

Q: I haven't read them as closely as I should, but –

JO: I'll look it up and I'll see what I can find.

Q: I think it'd be very interesting to talk to Delinsky's son and find out how did this affect your father's life and I'm sure the State Board of Corrections would have some record of when he was released, you would hope and what happened to him. I don't think he was up for parole a few years back or [inaudible]

Q: When did your grandfather pass away?

JO: I think he died in 1945. I've got that date. I can look that up for you.

Q: How about your father, just roughly?

JO: '60s, late '60s.

Q: Late '70s.

JO: Late '70s, okay.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: When you went to Darlington, were there other Buckhead guys that were at Darlington that you knew from the neighborhood or –

JO: Yes, there were a few and I see those guys from time to time. I can get my annual out and look up some of the names. David Lacy, Forrest Fowler are a couple of them I remember, Richard Wilson.

Q: So it was pretty typical, it was a common thing then? You weren't all by yourself up there?

JO: No.

Q: It was a common thing for Atlantans to send, Buckhead's citizens to send their kids up there?

JO: Right.

Q: Wright, do you have any more questions?

WM: Do you know how your grandfather got the idea for the name for the house Joyeuse?

JO: I don't know that. I don't know that. That's a great question.

WM: I've just been kind of keeping a running tally of some questions that I think that if we had the answers to would be very interesting for the article, like how big the lot was and some things, so I'll –

JO: Well, I can definitely -- if you'll either email me or send those questions, I can definitely get you the size of the lot and that sort of thing. Interestingly, I don't know how she got it, but my sister got the Joyeuse name plate and she's got it mounted on the wall of her house up in the mountains.

Q: Oh, really?

JO: Yes.

Q: Interesting. So before they tore it down, obviously, somebody –

JO: Somebody got it, yes.

Q: -- retrieved it from the – or maybe when they sold the house the first time.

Q: Now he was also a director of the railroad, I think. Isn't that right?

JO: That's correct.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: And he had a railroad stop there behind the house?

JO: I think the train, there was a commuter train that ran from like Gainesville to downtown. I don't know that there was a scheduled stop. It was maybe kind of like the old bus driver, cross country buses you could get off out in the country if you asked the guy to stop, didn't waste a lot of time getting off and that sort of thing. But it was not a scheduled passenger stop for the main passenger trains.

Q: James said that he had a hand in bringing the airline here, aviation. I guess it was the airport, right?

JO: As I recall, the big deal was the air mail routes and where they were going to go because they subsidized the passenger service by paying for the air mail to be delivered, and so the big question was like New York to Miami, was it going to stop in Birmingham or Atlanta or maybe somewhere else and I think both my grandfather and my father kind of got together and exercised whatever influence they could to make Atlanta the air mail stop between New York and Miami.

Q: Interesting. What would've been their motive to do that, given their lines of business?

JO: I think maybe my dad just kind of envisioned that airlines were going to be a big thing and I think maybe my grandfather just saw that was going to be good for the town.

Q: Good civic duty then.

JO: Yes.

Q: They were right. The city wouldn't be the same without it I don't think.

JO: It's just kind of incredible in a way that -- it just seemed like back in those days -- I'm not saying this as fact. just kind of an impression that you could go to see eight or ten guys and get just about anything done that you wanted to get done. If those guys were in favor of it, it was going to happen. I know my dad always just put huge weight on his acquaintances and contacts more than researching history or something like that. I think a lot of the stuff I've read about my grandfather, he was just one of the guys you needed to see if you wanted to get something done, not that he was going to necessarily -- the bank was not necessarily going to be the sole financing for it, but with his contacts and others, that was just the way to make things happen. You just could hardly think about that now. Look at the Grady mess for example. Back in those days, that could've been straightened out in a week's time, but not today.

Q: Is your Aunt McCarty still alive?

JO: No. The only survivors of that family are George McCarty, III, Rucker McCarty and Perry McCarty, those three boys are the only survivors. You might know Rucker maybe. He's probably a little bit older than you and James.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Still in Atlanta?

JO: Yes, all three of them.

Q: So you didn't, I guess, realize the national importance or interest in the kidnapping until you were much older? Because I gather at the time it was a pretty big deal nationally because it was on the heels of the Lindbergh kidnapping.

JO: Exactly, and I forget the year that that happened, but it was not that much earlier. I've got that Scott Berg biography of Lindbergh and we can look that up real quick. I think they called that the crime of the century and so this followed. That may be where Delinsky –

Q: You're right, copycat. Again, that'd be a very interesting question to ask Delinsky's descendants or if Delinsky himself ever –

JO: Your question as to how in the world he got in with that fruit stand guy and how would he pick Mr. Ottley as opposed to some other banker, unless –

Q: Or Woodruffs or someone like that.

JO: Unless it was the remoteness of that house out there. Maybe he thought, I could pull this off. It's out from town.

Q: How would you get up to Suwanee? Would you go back up Peachtree, like Peachtree Industrial?

JO: I'm thinking that's where they went, yes.

Q: As James – I know with his interest in Franklin Garrett, you can get sucked into these things. But these questions which are intriguing, they just over time, it just becomes an event and people forget about all the ins and outs of it. It just was a kidnapping that's pretty much it.

JO: And here again, if there's any way to get the transcript of that trial, I bet that's one of the questions that they asked him, how did you come up with this idea?

Q: If it's out there, we'll find it. Just a matter of making some inquiries which I intend to do. I'm sure you all are just as interested as I am.

JO: Well, I talked to James at one point. I thought, gosh, you could almost do a book on it. I've already got the title, The Taking of the Banker. It's still – I talked to Judy a little bit about it and she said, well, just like I say, less than a day. I mean it was not even 24 hours and all that was compressed into that. So unlike the girl they buried up north here, the real estate heiress that was in the box for however many days, it didn't have that long of a suspense to it, but it was huge when it happened.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

- Q: It was, I guess at the time, virtually unheard of, kidnapping for ransom.
- Q: Because back when you were talking about there weren't that many, as many worries back then as far as somebody doing bad things to other people, trust and –
- JO: I cannot imagine a chief executive nowadays – well, maybe I'm exaggerating, but I'm thinking someone like Jim Kennedy, I doubt if he ever drives himself to work. He probably has a security man pick him up.
- Q: Do you remember any good stories since your dad and your granddad were both in Buckhead, in the area? Any good Buckhead stories or anything that you think might be good trivia? Kind of passed down lore?
- JO: I feel like after looking up those questions for James' 40th, I'm about trivia'd out. Well, the one that I ran across – they had a history of the Capital City Club and then – I don't know whether it was a separate history about the country club or not, but anyway, at some point my grandfather's brother Ernest moved to Atlanta. I think it was Ernest, but anyway the guy was a good golfer and played out at Brookhaven. He bet somebody he drive a ball from Brookhaven to the Buckhead Post Office in a certain number of strokes. And this is in there in black and white. And I'm probably going to get some of it wrong, but somehow it maybe was on a Saturday or early Sunday morning. So they cleared the traffic off of Peachtree and the guy teed off at the Capital City and got it to Buckhead. Then the guy tried to Welch on paying because he said, well, you said the Buckhead Post Office and there isn't a post office in Buckhead, I mean not named Buckhead, Georgia. There is a post office there. So finally I think they finally made him – because there is a Buckhead, Georgia out –
- Q: Yes, out near Madison.
- JO: Yes, right. And said, well, you did drive it to the Buckhead post office. But I mean of course they probably just completely wrecked his club hitting off the asphalt. But I mean, you could imagine doing that in this day and time. Couldn't find a time of day when there could be no traffic. But back to your question, I don't remember any really interesting stories. Dudley probably would have a million good stories about that.
- Q: One thing that's always fascinated me a little bit, too, is the Battle of Peachtree Creek, how most people that even live in Collier Hills and the neighborhood really don't have an understanding of really just the gravity of the battle and the bloodshed and everything that went on. Was there still a semblance of respect of the battle and the area? What was the landscape and the mindset and the psyche of residents living in Buckhead with being so close to that battlefield?
- JO: I can't answer as far as the landscape and the general mentality, but my mother sometimes in the afternoon would say, we're going to look at some monuments. She would drive over to that set of tablets at – what's that little creek?

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Tanyard.

JO: Tanyard. Well, she – not to make any invidious comparison, but she was kind of like Susan Bernard [phonetic]. She wanted to tell the story of it but she didn't want to actually get the facts of it and get into great detail and that sort of thing. But I mean, just hearing the stories that she would tell about it.

Q: What were some of the stories?

JO: Well, that the great Joe Johnston was fighting a wonderful battle and was so admired by his men and then command got snatched away and they put Hood in charge and he was so impetuous and all that sort of thing. All of that has a basis of truth, but that wasn't the complete story. I remember going to several of those tablets, and this is what happened here. So she had a good interest in it. She was a native of Denver, so to move here and get that interested in the Civil War was pretty commendable. To even get interested in the Civil War was pretty commendable on her part.

Q: Would anybody talk about it as a battlefield? Would anyone refer to it as the battlefield or –

JO: I had no concept until I got in that Civil War roundtable and started hearing some talks and looked at some books and some maps, I had no concept of the width of the battle or even the purpose of it until I started studying on my own.

Q: I know Dudley came to the lecture last year that Bob Jenkins gave at Bobby Jones. Were you at that? The Civil War, writing a book about the Battle of Peachtree Creek.

JO: No, I didn't go to that.

Q: He's coming back, so you'd be pretty interested in that I think.

Q: Wright found a cannonball up on West Wesley right behind where you grew up. So I didn't know, did you find any artifacts or anything?

JO: No, did not, did not find any.

Q: We've interviewed some folks who grew up a little bit further up Peachtree, a little bit past the apartments you were talking about, Peachtree Creek, and they'd go back and I guess there's an old dairy back where Bobby Jones golf course was that they remembered and they'd quail hunt back there and remember finding a bunch of bullets and a bunch of artifacts back in there.

Q: Apparently there's a mortar that's embedded in a stone down in the creek there right where Peachtree crosses over Peachtree Creek that I've read about and heard people talk

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

about. I was going to go down there and try and find it, but it's virtually impossible to get down there. I went and tried to go in the summer, but – [inaudible] biohazard suit.

JO: Did you ever see the book the guy did about canoeing Peachtree Creek? I've got it downstairs and I keep meaning to drag it out and read it in detail. I heard the guy give a talk about it, he showed a bunch of slides, but –

Q: I ran past it today. It's just an absolute crime how polluted that stream is. After a flood, there's toilet paper hanging from the branches of trees and no one seems to be the least bit concerned about it, other than this guy who wrote the book. You'd think there would be like a Friends of Peachtree Creek group or –

Q: Well, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has been trying to keep an eye on it and it's part of their consent decree from Atlanta to clean up their combined sewer overflows because Peachtree Creek is a recipient of a lot of the overflows and that's why you find all toilet paper and unmentionables hanging from the branches.

Q: Well, any parting comments, statements?

JO: No, I guess my interest in the kidnapping, it was certainly heightened by getting a copy of those articles and hearing some of your questions. I'm kind of fired up to, maybe we can all work together to find out something there.

Q: We'll get something done.

Q: What about the connection of bringing things back full circle, Bob Fowler?

JO: Oh, yeah, that's kind of interesting. When I went to work with Bob, I started out as kind of a reporter. I guess he wanted to see if I was really any good, and so they acquired the Smyrna Herald and sent the guy who was the managing editor of the Marietta paper over to run the Smyrna paper and moved me up as managing editor. So I kind of had the news side of the paper and Bob the editorials and selected the editorial columns and all that. I just really loved working with the guy and loved the guy himself, just a really neat guy and was a very serious journalist. In fact, he had started some kind of a little neighborhood newspaper when he was at a really early age, and had in mind owning a weekly paper ever since he was a young man. So I left the Journal and went with the Southern Company and so forth and so on. So Bob died of some kind of a heart ailment and I went to the funeral. They kind of keep the family cloistered and so I signed the book and I didn't get to see any of the family. Anyway, some years later, this friend of mine said, well, you ought to call up Judy Fowler, sort of like, you ought to call up my sister. And I thought, yeah, gosh, I haven't seen her in 30 years. So I just kind of put her name along with a lot of other possible people. I was at the Driving Club for a Beverly DuBose Civil War lecture with a lady that was a member over there and you know how they set the bars up at this end of the ballroom, and I was back getting a drink for my date waiting for the thing to get started and Judy walks in with a guy she was dating at the time and a couple of other friends. I knew Amanda, the PR lady –

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: Olmstead.

JO: Right, and her husband. I said, gosh, that looked like Judy Fowler, so I went up and gave her a big hug, gosh, I haven't seen you in 30 years. So it took several times to get a date with her because in those days, I'd call them up at maybe 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon to go out that same night and they couldn't go. On with the rolodex, you know. So finally I gave her about a week's notice and she said yes, that'd be fine. So we had a real nice evening and I found out – oh, this is kind of a funny story, but my friend said, now look, John. You've run through a lot of women. He said, why don't you do a little different on this one? I said, what do you mean do different? He said, well, maybe don't talk about fishing or hunting on the first date and that sort of thing. I said, oh, I could try that, you know. I haven't got anything at stake. So I had no romantic interest whatsoever, just getting together with somebody I hadn't seen in a long time and used to work with her husband. So we decided to meet for dinner at – what's that little French place in Buckhead?

Q: Anis? A-n-i-s? Was it Anis?

JO: It's almost across from – you've got Johnny Rockets and then you've got some kind of a big food store down there.

Q: Oh, it was the old La Madeleine.

JO: La Madeleine, yes. And I said why don't we meet there? We were going to a lecture with this other couple, and I said why don't we meet there and have dinner and we can kind of catch up with each other and then we'll meet up with them at the History Center and go to the lecture? I think Ferrol Sams was talking that night. His second book had come out. So anyway, we were talking about different things. She was talking about living in Alaska with her father who was the Navy officer, and she said, oh my dad loved to fly fish and taught me how to fly fish. Boy, I sat up straight in my chair. Fly fishing? Gosh, this really has some possibilities. You guys ever met Chris Scally that guides on the Hooch? He's a very pleasant young man. It's almost worth paying the fee just to be with the guy for a day because he knows the river backward and forward. So I called up Chris and I said, how about let's schedule a little trip? Fine. So we got Judy, so our second date was fly fishing. Boy, we got out of the boat and she was putting that line out and I thought, holy smoke, this woman knows how to cast, and damn if she didn't catch the first fish. Then she caught the second one, and I was thinking to myself, why don't y'all just take me back to the damn landing and then when you get through having fun, we'll have lunch or something like that. So things kind of clicked from there and we've had a wonderful marriage and relationship.

Q: How long has that been now?

JO: Well, I think we're working on our sixth year. Judy says it's the sixth. I kind of thought it was the fifth, but I do remember the anniversary.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: That's what matters.

JO: I don't forget that.

Q: Keeps you out of trouble.

JO: But that was – I knew her pleasantly when I was working with Bob. That was the boss' wife. Be nice to the boss' wife but I never –

Q: Had ambitions of marrying the boss' wife.

JO: Or even dating her for that matter. I'm glad you mentioned that. That was a funny story when the guy said try something different.

Q: Well, thank you for putting us in touch with James. We had initially approached your dad about getting involved with Buckhead Heritage. He said, well, you need to talk to James.

JO: Yes, I had been to lunch, and I said, now Wright said why don't you talk to James? You don't want some director dying out on you. Oh, yeah, well, that might be a good idea.

Q: And all this emanated from Alec's 40th birthday party.

JO: Were you there, Chad?

CW: I was not.

JO: I don't know how we got started talking but we did and I –

Q: For some reason, I remember asking Dudley something. I had read something about the kidnapping just recently. I can't remember why I – I don't think I was specifically doing research. I just came across a reference to it somewhere.

JO: Well, the other really good thing about it was a lot of people say, oh, yeah, that's Wade Mitchell's son. Yeah, I remember him quarterbacking and all that, and I had no idea you were Wade's son or anybody else. I just liked the guy because he was interested in history and he mentioned the Buckhead Heritage thing and I thought, gosh, that's kind of neat. And we just hit it off immediately. So that was a very good connection.

Q: Well, thank you. We're glad to have James on board and get another young gun, young blood in the group. Appreciate your time this afternoon, too.

JO: I'm delighted. I hope I was some help. Like I say, if you'll send me a list of questions, I'll do my best to look up the answers.

Interview of John K. Ottley, Jr.
February 21, 2010

Q: And we'll give you a CD of the audio as well as a DVD of the video, too. Thank you so much.