

Ladi Jarmon
1-18-95

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Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

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_____ on the date(s) of 3/18/95 for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

Selma Miller
Interviewee's signature

Address 5076 Panola Mill Dr.

Phone 297-2354

Date 3-18-95

Ulydia L. Jarmon
Interviewer's signature

Address 502 E. 9th St.
Tusculumbia, AL 35674

Phone 205 883 2002

Date 3-18-95

Ladi Harmon
10.13.95

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Selma Miller M/F F
Address: 5026 Panola Mill Dr.
Phone number(s): 297-2354
Approximate age or date of birth: 49
Mother's Name: Laura
Father's Name: James
Places lived and when: South Carolina
Education: High School
Religion: Methodist
Business, political and social memberships (past and present) _____
Present occupation: Accountant
Former occupations: Secretary
Special Skills: _____
Major Accomplishments: _____
National Events in which interviewee has participated: _____
Local Events in which interviewee has participated: _____
National born U.S. citizen? Yes/No
Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No Date: _____
Country from which he/she emigrated: _____
Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in the possession of the interviewee: _____
Individuals recommended by the interviewee who might be candidates for an oral history interview: _____
Additional information: _____

Selma Miller
By: Uyladia L. Jarmon
March 18, 1995
5076 Panola Mill Dr. (GA.)
Civil Rights and her history

Side A

Selma Miller's parents are from Anderson, South Carolina. She has one brother and four sisters; she is the oldest child. Her father has fourth grade education and her mother has a fifth grade education. Her mother was a house wife while her father went to work in the cotton textile mill.

Mrs. Miller has a high school education; she earned a scholarship to college but she instead got married. She now is an accountant.

Anderson is a small town where her family lived border line poor. The blacks and whites of the community did nothing together. They used different doors; they did not mix at all. The blacks had to use a different water fountains and leave certain towns before dark came.

The whites had a better school system, better building, and better teachers. She discuss how the black children are very fortunate to be able to get an education. The blacks was taught the basic learning of math and reading. The whites had better classes and more opportunities.

One year after high school she wanted to be a clerk, but they ~~was~~ not hiring blacks. She took the exam for a clerk's position and she was told that she did not pass the exam. She was in great need of a job so she took the nurse's aid. The person who gave her the exam lied, because she did pass the exam.

The exam was racially bias^{ed}; it asked questions about the things she never had available to her. Now in this day and time, she has learned more because she has access to more information.

Mrs. Miller encourages reading, anything. When she was growing up, reading was not enforced. Some of the parents could not read or write. The only reading material was at the school.

She was a member of a Methodist church, Mt. Carmel. Her grandmother was very religious. The older people would say, "You can not do this because you are black." She wanted to be a singer, but she was told you can not because no one will ever sign you.

Mrs. Miller family did not have a television, but she listened to the radio about the civil rights movement. She was not directly involved with the civil rights movement, but she followed what Martin L. King was doing. She feels the movement was well worth it.

Side B

Mrs. Miller gives advice to the younger generations about securing their present rights. She feels black children are getting involved in the wrong things. The children should take advantage of what is offered to them far as education is concerned. Some black children are concerned with crime and violence.

The parents are more concern^{ed} with providing their children with nice clothes and with a nice car than rising them to be well rounded men and women.

She remembers a violent act: the KKK chased her and she got away by throwing a rock into the rear window of the car. She noticed discrimination a year after high school when she was looking for a job. For example, when she was at Emory, she was training secretaries and she was only a clerk.

Selma believes that when they took prayer out of the school system is when the crime and violence grew higher. She feels that prayer was something positive for the children. Miller does not agree with taking prayer completely out of the school systems. She thinks they should allow it and let the ones be dismissed who do not want to pray.

Mrs. Miller feels that the present generation is going to school for all the wrong reasons, to meet with their friends. She also feel that they are not taking advantage of their education. She talks about how the parents are leaving the teachers responsible for raising their children.

Mrs. Selma Miller, an accountant, sums up her interview with words of encouragement to all students, "Keep on keeping on." She also tells[✓] all the students to stride to be and involve yourself around positive things. She strongly suggest that ~~you~~, all students, should not let anybody discourage ^{her} ~~you~~.

They will be utilized as proof readers and editors.

*These are Dr. Huntley's
own questions for his
project!*

~~5. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS~~

- ~~1. What part of the state are your parents from? Were you born in Birmingham? If not, how old were you when you came to the city?~~
- ~~2. How many brothers and sisters do you have? How many older and how many younger?~~
- ~~3. How much education did your parents have? What were their occupations?~~
- ~~4. How much education do you have? What is your occupation? (Struggles in getting education)~~
- ~~5. What community did you live in? How would you describe your community? Racial makeup, occupations, recreation, organization, etc....~~
- ~~6. What was your community's relationship to the Birmingham Police Department?~~
- ~~7. Were you a member of any community organizations? What were they? Did you hold an office?~~
- ~~8. How/why did you get involved in the Civil Rights Movement?~~
- ~~9. What role did you play and for how long?~~
- ~~10. Did you attend the ^{any} Movement's mass meetings on a regular basis? How would you describe the typical meeting?~~
- ~~11. Were Birmingham policemen present when you attended? What was their purpose for being there?~~

- Ermon*
13. Did you go to jail? What were the circumstances of your arrest? How long did you remain?
 14. Did others in your family participate? Go to jail? Etc....
 15. If you were school age, did you leave school and were you suspended?
 16. How did other family members react to your participation?
 17. What church were you a member of? What was the level of involvement of your pastor and church?
 18. What benefits did you, your family, and community realize as a result of the Movement?
 19. If you were in control of the movement and could go back and change some things, what would you change?
 20. What is your assessment of the ^{Civil Right} Birmingham Movement? How successful? What were its accomplishments? What were its failures?
 21. Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not dealt with?
 22. Do you have any items related to the Movement or to the development of Birmingham that you would like to donate to the Institute?

23. How would you desc. the mov't? Do you think it was well worth it? Why?

~~A group of additional questions will be developed for specific persons in specialized areas, based upon research to be carried out by the interviewer preceding said interview.~~

24. What advice would you give the younger generations concerning their Civil rights - how they can secure their rights?

Uyladia L. Jarmon
History 202 (MWF)
Dr. Marshall
Mrs. Selma Miller's history

Selma Miller

By: Uyladia L. Jarmon

March 18, 1995

5076 Panola Mill Dr. (GA.)

Civil Rights and her history

I. Side A.

- 1. Family backgroud**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Anderson (where she grew up)**
- 4. School system**
- 5. Work**
- 6. Reading**
- 7. Religion**
- 8. Civil Rights movement**

II. Side B.

- 1. Advice to the young generation**
- 2. Parents**
- 3. A violent act (with the KKK)**
- 4. Prayer in School**
- 5. Advantage of Education**
- 6. Words of encouragement**

Selma Miller
By: Uyladia L. Jarmon
March 18, 1995
5076 Panola Mill Dr. (GA.)
Civil Rights and her history

Selma was born in Anderson, South Carolina. She has one brother and four sisters; she is the oldest child. Her father has a fourth grade education and her mother has a fifth grade education. Her mother was a house wife, while her father went to work in the cotton textile mill. Even though she does not recall her father complaining about his job in the in the cotton mill, there could have been some up grades on the conditions of the mill. She remembers that the blacks often got the hardest jobs in the mill.

Mrs. Miller has a high school education; she earned a scholarship to college, but instead, she got married. She is an accountant.

Anderson is a small town where her family lived border line poor. The blacks and whites of the community did nothing together. They used different doors; they did not mix at all. The blacks had to use a different water fountains. The water fountains were made the same, but they had "for blacks" and "for whites" signs above them. The blacks knew to leave certain neighboring towns before dark came, so they would not be placed in a "white situation." They also had certain rest rooms they had to use.

The whites had a better school system, a better building, and better teachers. She discusses how the black children are very fortunate to be able to get an education. The blacks were taught the basic learning of

math and reading. The whites had better classes and more opportunities. The blacks were limited to what they could learn. Selma was not excited about taking her scholarship due to the fact that she knew her limitations in education and opportunities.

A year after high school, she wanted to be a clerk, but they were not hiring blacks. She took the exam for a clerk's position and she was told that she did not pass the exam. She was in great need of a job so she took the nurse's aid job. The person, who gave her the exam, lied because she did pass the exam. The exam was racially biased; it asked questions about the things she never had available to her. Now in this day and time, she has learned more because she has access to more information.

Mrs. Miller encourages reading, anything. When she was growing up, reading was not enforced. Some of the parents could not read or write. The only reading material was at the school.

She was a member of a Methodist church, Mt. Carmel. Her grandmother was very religious. The older people would say, "You can not do this because you are black." She wanted to be a singer, but was discouraged because it was thought that no one would ever sign her. The blacks were not trying to discourage her, but this is what was taught to them through the years. The blacks considered the church all that they had; it was there place to go socialize and to be free.

Mrs. Miller's family did not have a television; she listened to the radio about the civil rights movement. Her mother died when she was

eleven, and she feels that she missed out on a lot of things. She could not be directly involved in the civil rights movement. She followed the message of Dr. Martin L. King by listening to the radio and updates from other people. She feels that the movement was well worth it.

Mrs. Miller gives advice to the younger generations about securing their present rights. She feels black children are getting involved in the wrong things. Children should take advantage of what is offered to them, as far as education is concerned. She feels that children should further their education beyond the college level. Some black children are concerned with crime and violence. Mrs. Miller feels that the reason why some children are involved in crime is due to the single parent home. She believes that it is hard to raise a child by yourself; the children need the strength of both parents. She also feels that this is not always the case, because some single parent children do better than children with both parents.

Parents are more concerned with providing their children with nice clothes and a nice car than raising them to be well- rounded men and women. Parents should try to provide good morals and an outstanding education instead of materialistic things.

She remembers a violent act: she was on her way home at night when three Klu Klux Klan men chased her. She got away by throwing a rock into the rear window of the car. The rock broke the window out; this took the attention of the men so she was able to run home to safety.

She noticed discrimination a year after high school when she was looking for a job. For example, when she was at Emory training secretaries and she was only a clerk. She then realized that something was wrong: "Why would only a clerk be training women to be secretaries?" The reason why she was not a secretary was because they was not hiring blacks at that time. When they was hiring blacks as secretaries is the only time when she was able to get the job.

Selma believes that when they took prayer out the school system is when the crime and violence grew higher. Children are now bringing guns to school and they are getting involved in gangs. She feels that prayer was something positive for the children. Miller does not agree with taking prayer completely out of the school systems. She thinks they should allow prayer and let the ones be dismissed who do not want to pray. People should focus on God and not the different kinds of religions; they should be concerned with serving one god.

Mrs. Miller feels that the present generation is going to school for all the wrong reasons, to meet their friends and just to hang out. She also feels that they are not taking advantage of their education. She talks about how parents are leaving the teachers responsible for raising their children. Now the teachers have to teach and make the children behave, when parents should have already raised their child to act correctly in school. The present generation is not going to school for an education, they are going there for all other reasons such as: hanging out with their

friends, fighting among themselves and the teachers, and anything besides learning.

Mrs. Selma Miller, an accountant, sums up her interview with words of encouragement to all students, "Keep on keeping on." She also tells all the students to strive to be and involve yourself around positive things. She strongly suggest that all students should not let anybody discourage them.

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