

Gift and Release Agreement

We Cleveland Thomas and Eddie Dempsey  
Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

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147 Rock Quarry Rd, Oxford AL 36203

on the date(s) of 3/28/96

for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

Cleveland Thomas Date: 3-28-96  
Interviewee's Signature

Address 147 ROCK QUARRY RD.

OXFORD, AL. 36203

Phone 835-2968

Eddie Dempsey Date 3-28-96  
Interviewer's Signature

Address 3100 Bobwhite St

Oxford AL 36203

Phone 835-3730

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Cleveland Thomas MDF:

Address: 147 Rock Quarry Rd. Oxford Al. 36203

Phone number(s): 835 - 3968

Approximate age or date of birth: 12/22/36

Mothersname: MARY J. THOMAS

Father's name: GUS THOMAS

Places lived and when: Lodge Quarter's, Al. 1936 - 1937 Oconee Al  
Anniston Al. 1937 - 52 Oxford Al. - 1952 - present.

Education: 12<sup>th</sup> Street School, Anniston, Al. Cobb High School Grad<sup>1956</sup>

Religion: Protestant, Baptist.

Business, political and social memberships (past and present): MASON'S # 250-A Montford, Al

Present occupation: DANA CORPORATION.

Former occupations: MONSANTA. Chemical Plant, Anniston Al.

Special Skills: Construction, Welding, Supervisor, Managerial Experience

Major Accomplishments: RAISED 5 children, Received many Achievement  
AWARDS FROM MONSANTA FOR QUALITY, U.S. SENATE 9 QUALITY AWARD.

National Events in which interviewee has participated: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Events in which interviewee has participated: MASON'S, March of Pines

National born U.S. citizen? Yes/No Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No

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: HUGH BALL, BERTHA BALL

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

Needs title  
in intro.

While interviewing Mr. Cleveland Thomas he informed how segregation effected his life. Mr. Thomas was a black man born in 1936, a time when segregation and racism <sup>was at their</sup> ~~was~~ at its peak. Mr. Thomas was born in Lodge Quarters, Al, where he lived for one year and then moved to Oconoe, Al, in 1952. He moved to Oxford, AL, where he still resides today.

Cleveland received his elementary education from 12th, ST. school, in Anniston, Al. He then graduated From Cobb High School in 1956. Mr. Thomas tells some very interesting stories about his school days. He remembers white friends, and learning through casual conversation that black students of the same age were being taught material two years behind the white students. Cleveland said, "I approached my teacher about this, and she said that was the way the government wanted it to be." Cleveland felt like "If you start out behind, you will stay behind". Mr. Thomas explained how his elementary teachers prepared them for the real world by telling them about segregation and racism. "They were preparing us for the real world".

After Cleveland finished High School, he was faced with the responsibility of helping raise his brother and sisters. Cleveland had four sister's and six brothers. Cleveland said "I wanted to go to college but at the time I had to help my mother raise the family, my mom and dad were divorced".

Cleveland recalls how he and his family were treated in a corner store. "The white kids could run around the store and get what ever they wanted, But the store clerk would make us wait until they got finished, and then he would walk us around

and watch what we got . I guess he was afraid we would still something.” Cleveland went on a date one night and he recalls having to eat in the car because he could not eat with the white people.

Cleveland seemed to be a hard working man . He was able to maintain good jobs during a period <sup>when</sup> jobs were scarce. Cleveland worked for Jeff's B.B.Q. in west Anniston, and then went on to sell insurance . Cleveland's best job was working for Monsanto Chemical plant .He received many awards for his accomplishment . Cleveland retired as a supervisor and then went to work for Danka corporation and is still working there today. Cleveland feels like racism is in the work environment - .Cleveland said “black people have to work twice as hard to achieve the same goals as the white person.” Cleveland feels like there is a lot of favoritism in the work place today and wishes jobs would be given to the best person for the job not the best friend or best dressed.

Cleveland Thomas is a man who would do anything for you . He is honest , decent , and a very caring person . I'm glad Mr. Thomas is my neighbor.

I do think segregation is still around today in some ways, but I think black people have the same opportunities as any other person in the U.S. Some Family are not as fortunate as other's, but I don't think every person will ever be treated the same. It's true ,In this world today, that it's not how hard you work but it's who you know, and what you are. For blacks I think it would be harder because they are a minority and that means there's not as many people to help them as majority figure.

Good interview

Paper needs to be longer, need more information  
Watch grammar etc.  
Puncture writing  
80

## **I CHILDHOOD HISTORY**

- A. PLACES LIVED
- B. EXAMPLES OF SEGREGATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

## **II. EDUCATION**

- A. SCHOOLS ATTENDED
- B. STORIES ABOUT SEGREGATION IN SCHOOL
- C. OBSTACLES KEEPING HIM FROM GOING TO COLLEGE

## **III. FAMILY HISTORY**

- A. HELPING TO RAISE FAMILY.
- B. MOTHER RAISING A FAMILY BY HERSELF.

## **IV. OCCUPATION HISTORY**

- A. SEGREGATION IN THE JOBS HE HAD.
- B. CHANGES FROM 50'S TILL PRESENT.

## **V. CLEVELAND'S VIEW OF CIVILRIGHTS MOVEMENT.**

- A. BLACK LEADERS IN ANNISTON WANTING EQUAL VOICES .
- B. OPINION ABOUT MARCHES.

MOTHER Mary J McClurkin , Talladega AL.

MOTHER Francis Ikinés McClurkin

FATHER Willis McClurkin

FATHER Gus Thomas Sr. , Talladega AL.

SISTERS

Lousiana Hilliard

Francis Ward

Betty Thomas

Louise Thomas

BROTHER

Willie Thomas

Robert Thomas

Gus Thomas Jr.

James Thomas

John Thomas