

TAPE TRANSCRIPT
Durham Civil Rights Heritage Project
CDS, Durham, NC

Interviewee: Faye Bryant Mayo
708 Harmony Road
Durham, NC 27713

Interviewer: Jim Wise
207 W. Carver Street
Durham, NC 27704

Place: Hayti Heritage Center
St. Joseph's Historic Foundation, Inc.
804 Old Fayetteville Street
Durham, NC 27701

Equipment: SONY TCD 5 Pro II Cassette
Recorder
Audio-Technica AT825 microphone

Tape: BASF C-90 Chrome

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Description of Interviewee: Ms. Mayo, African American, grew up in Wilson, NC and came to Durham to attend NCC. Graduated in 1963. Was involved in Durham demonstrations especially during her senior year at NCC. She also attended the 1963 March on Washington and took trips to MS during that year. She was arrested for her protesting activities. She worked briefly for the NC Fund that was coordinated by Howard Fuller, Ben Ruffin and Nathan Garrett, who worked in rural communities on civil rights issues.

Ms. Mayo worked for many years in the Durham Public School system where she was a guidance counselor. She conducted programs and activities for students about civil rights issues. In the interview she also reflects on how Durham has changed especially in the areas of economic, housing, educational opportunities.

Circumstances of the Interview:

JW: It's November 15th, this is Jim Wise, I'm talking with Fay Bryant Mayo for the Durham Civil Rights Heritage Project. We are at the Hayti Heritage Center. Mrs. Mayo, you brought quite a lot of material, and we've got some newspapers here, you've brought in some displays that you used. Tell me about how you use these at the present time.

FM: Well, normally when I was employed as a counselor at Durham public schools, I used to speak with the students from the 3rd to maybe the--3rd grade through 5th for the elementary, and middle school from the 7th to the 9th. And I also did a reaction of the civil rights movement when I was at Chewning Middle School, when I introduced all of the kids to the events. And we came on three buses to visit the Hayti Heritage Center, and there they met a lot of the civil rights workers. We did that for two years.

JW: When you're presenting the events, the situation of 40 years ago to children, junior high-middle school age, how do they respond to it? Do they find this is something very strange, or is this something that they've heard about before?

FM: Well, most of them had not heard about it, because some of them would have been their grandparents, would have known and had more information and knowledge of what was going on. And it seems that no one really had been talking to the children about this, and they were really amazed, and just could not believe these things actually happened. But I always make them aware of the fact that it was not an all-black movement, that we were involved with the students from Duke and UNC, Durham Business College, Hillside High School, North Carolina Central University, and that it was a joint effort.

JW: Why do you think it's important to do that? Was it your idea to present this history to the children?

FM: Yes, it was.

JW: Why did you think this was something that you needed to do?

FM: I really don't know, except that I just felt, as I look at the little innocent faces, and I thought about, these children don't even know what has gone on. If we don't keep history alive, it will die. And someone needs to continue to let them know that these things actually existed, and that is how we brought the two races together, and that the two races were involved in this, because if it had been all black movement, then things would have been totally different for the black demonstrators. For an example, I'm sure that we would have all been arrested and served

time, because we were in violation of the law in some points, but it was something we felt that had to be done.

JW: You told me that you were originally from Wilson, and you came to Durham to enter North Carolina Central, which was at that time North Carolina College, is that right?

FM: Yes.

JW: Tell me, why did you decide to come to school here?

FM: Well, at the time I finished high school, my mother could not afford to send me to college. I was working in Philadelphia, and I decided, this is the only place I could work without a college education, because at that time you could not find jobs in the south. So I decided to enroll in North Carolina Central University so that I could be a resident again of North Carolina rather than Pennsylvania.

JW: Did you work while you were in school at North Carolina?

FM: The first two years I did.

JW: What sort of work?

FM: I worked in the Dean's office as a secretary.

JW: What was it like growing up African American in Wilson?

FM: Well, it was the same, we were segregated, of course, but it was beautiful. I enjoyed it. I would not take anything from my high school. I mean, it was great, because we didn't know any different, no way. And my mother always made me feel good about myself, and I always felt good about myself. And we enjoyed the little community, we were involved in all the activities in school, because we didn't have to go out to training places to become a cheerleader or take band lessons, private lessons before you could be in the band. I mean, we were it. Talent or no talent, this is what you have to work with. (laughs)

JW: What was it like coming from Wilson to Durham--well, to Philadelphia? How did you get to Philadelphia?

FM: Well, I got to Philadelphia because after I finished high school, this is when I went to Philadelphia, because I could find a job there. And I worked as a secretary for the federal government. I went to business school. And then I just decided this was not where I wanted to live. And in order to live in the south I would have to have an education.

JW: How did you first become aware that there was any such thing as a civil rights movement or an integration movement going on. This would have been when you were quite young, the

Brown vs. Board decision came down, the first activism, not the first but I guess before Martin Luther King's bus boycott, the first widespread activity, very visible activity was going on.

Were you aware of that?

FM: Well, having grown up, I knew about segregation, but like I said, it did not affect me, it did not bother me. But once I became a student and Dr. King came to the campus and spoke to us, and Floyd McKissick and Ben Ruffin and John Edwards. But we decided that there was something we were going to have to do if we wanted to make a change.

JW: How did you involve yourself in the movement?

FM: Well, we just had rallies on campus, and I just became active in a demonstration, by just picketing and sitting down at Sears and Roebuck, which was at the Health Department at that time.

JW: On Main Street.

FM: On Main Street. And we would go down there, because we couldn't find jobs, and we just sat there on the pavement. And we also did the same things for the demonstration at the Kress and the Carolina Theatre, because I knew about the balconies--well, I was from Wilson, so that was no big thing. Now we realize that sometimes the balcony actually had the better seats. Better view, you know. (laughs) None of this was anything new, it was just about a change.

JW: How did you feel, being on the picket line outside of Sears in Durham? Was it frightening?

FM: It's amazing, when you think back, with me being a student, and the danger of it all and the sacrifice that I was making just to get to school and just to get an education, to be out on the picket line where my life could have been in danger or my education could have been at risk. But somehow, you just sort of grew strong as you marched--you were angry, and I guess that was where you were really getting your strength from, your inner anger as you walked around the Carolina Theatre in the rain, and couldn't use your umbrella because it was considered a weapon. As you listened to people calling you names and spitting at you and everything. But it was like a drive once you got involved. It was like something just kept pushing, pushing.

JW: What was the response--well, for one, how did your parents feel about it, and how did your professors and the administration of the school--

FM: Now, my mother did not know, because my mother was in Wilson and she just knew her little daughter would not be out there. It may have been someone else, but not her daughter,

because I usually kept informing, through communication of school telephone or writing. But I never mentioned, not until she said she thought she saw me on TV once. The instructors, Mrs. Hughley and Reverend Hughley, they really backed us up, because the instructors wanted you not to get into trouble, not to get hurt. You'd have to keep up with your studies, which we did. But they were all state employees, and I guess I didn't know what it meant to be a state employee, and be going against the state. I know now, but I guess at the time I was young enough where we didn't get as much support from the faculty.

JW: Did you have any sense of how the college administration viewed the participation in the demonstrations? Did that not filter down to the students?

FM: Well, yeah, we knew, we knew. In fact, they were saying one time, we're gonna have to send you home if you continue to do this. But as the group got larger and larger, we knew they couldn't send us home. It was out of their control.

JW: How did you feel when--were there white students from Duke, or white people involved at the outset, or did they come into the demonstrations after y'all had gotten started? And how did that make you feel?

FM: Well, no, in fact, something only Quentin Baker and myself, we got involved with the students from Duke. We rolled on Duke's Campus. We were in the back seat. We had to keep our heads down in the car, because they were not supposed to be seen with us. They sneaked us into the dormitory, and we met with them. And we became very, very close. Like I was saying today when I saw Peter, I remember him from way back then. And they were very, very supportive, and again, like I said, I don't think it would have been successful if they had not joined in. Because they would have left us in jail.

JW: I understand that you were in this crowd of--I believe that's a 1963 demonstration at City Hall.

FM: Right, at the county courthouse. Now, this one almost turned into a riot.

JW: Really?

FM: Yes. Because the students became very, very angry. This is one that could have easily-- but we kept having to remind, and I don't know if it was these people that were leading it that tried to keep the crowd down and calm, but it was really at the point where I think everyone was getting fed up with trying to be peaceful. But we did remain through the talks that came. And the--

JW: The movement in Durham, Peter Klopfer was just telling me that compared with what happened in Chapel Hill, the demonstrations in Durham in the early '60s remained quite peaceful, and progress was made peacefully. In a way, it's very surprising that Durham has the image of being a very tough, blue collar, redneck kind of town. What contributed, do you think, to keeping it peaceful and to actually making progress?

FM: I think one thing, the majority of the students were black from North Carolina Central, so we were kind of like in control of Durham. When we went to UNC it was just a few blacks that went, because that was UNC-Chapel Hill territory, and we were focusing more on Durham. In fact, I think this is where one of my friends may have gotten arrested, in Chapel Hill. I don't recall ever going to Chapel Hill. I think they did more in Chapel Hill after I graduated, because we were so focused on Howard Johnson, where we were arrested, of course. And the businesses here in Durham.

JW: Speaking of Howard Johnson, I have a newspaper story here from the Durham Sun, written in 1987, where he's talking about singing we're gonna eat one of those 28 flavors. What made Howard Johnson's a particular symbol? I've read that there were--great groups of people would go out to sit in a parking lot on Sunday afternoon, load up at church and go out right after church.

FM: Right.

JW: Why that place?

FM: Why Howard Johnson's? I guess because we wanted one of those 28 flavors. And we wanted to go inside and have ice cream, and so we went out on a Sunday morning, and asked to try to go in and buy some ice cream like everyone else that was sitting and buying ice cream, we wanted to go in too. And so we just said, if you're not going to let us in, we'll just sit out here in the parking lot. So as we took seats on the pavement in the parking lot, none of the cars could come out of Howard Johnson's, more cars could not come in, so this was their business day. And they said, well, if you don't leave, we will have you arrested. So they called the sheriff and they brought five Trailways buses. We were told not to get up until they read us our rights. So the sheriff had to read each person, "You have the right to remain silent, nothing you say will be held against you." And then they loaded us up on the buses. So when they took us down to the jail, the courthouse, and we met one of the students from Duke, and he said, "What happened?" And we told him, "We just got arrested, man, you know, we were sitting down in the parking lot at Howard Johnson." So he just jumped on in the line and went on in jail with us. And he hadn't

even been out there, and went on in jail with us. So we remained, we continued to sing and sing and sing, that we were gonna eat one of those 28 flavors one of these days, one of these days. And then the jailer would come and say, "Ain't y'all tired yet?" And we'd say, "Yes, Mr. Chyler, we are tired of segregation." So were very hungry, and it was really funny because one of the students, her father was a policeman, and he came to the--and looked, "Hi, Daddy." And there was Daddy on one side of the door, and his daughter on the other side behind bars. We were tired, but it was funny, and we were angry, we were strengthened from within. And it was just, Mr. Stewart came up and he said he talked to them for a while, and next thing you knew, we were on our way back to campus, and of course they sent, the school, did send us some sandwiches and some drinks, because we had missed chow.

JW: So did you go back the next Sunday to Howard Johnson's?

FM: I think that's, I don't know if that was the last Sunday. I didn't hear any more about that. That was a biggie, that was--.

JW: Yeah. You heard Martin Luther King when he came to speak?

FM: At White Rock Baptist Church.

JW: What was that experience like?

FM: Oh, it was--that man, he had to have been a prophet. He had no notes, he just stood up there, and he just made you feel so good, and so strong, and just made you feel that you could do anything, that we can do this, very encouraging. He continued to talk about nonviolence, cause I guess he sort of felt that things were getting pretty hot, because some of the Muslims were getting very protective of us. And he was just dynamic, it was just dynamic. And I heard his wife Coretta, she did a concert at North Carolina Central. So it was just a wonderful experience. And of course I heard Dr. King at the march on Washington, I was there.

JW: I noticed that you're wearing two March on Washington buttons from that occasion in August of sixty--one from '63 and one from '93.

FM: Yes, and they tell me this one from '63 is very valuable, so they don't make that anymore. And I went back in '93, and it was still very feeling, but it was very, very hot in '93, and it was a lot of young people, so you knew that these were the children of the original civil right workers, and that was encouraging to see that some people are letting their kids still live on and revisit, but it was hot. I didn't try to go this last time, cause I remember how hot and dehydrated I got in the '93.

JW: Well, it must have been pretty hot in '63, too.

FM: Well, I was much younger then. (laughs)

JW: You had graduated by the time of the March on Washington.

FM: In May, I graduated in May.

JW: So what did you do after you graduated, and how did you happen to be in Washington as part of the March?

FM: Well, I went there, I was, I guess I must have started working in Washington for the federal government, and I knew they were coming, so I went down.

JW: What was that experience? Was it similar to White Rock, or--

FM: Oh, yes, it was just, oh, to see that many people, and people of different colors together, people that were happy, people that were sad, people that we loved. If you ever want to feel love, you get with a group like that. And you feel like, whether they love you or not, you feel like everybody loves you. It's just radiant on everyone's face, and it was just so good to have that many people together, and then to hear the speakers. I think Joan Baez was there, she, if I recall, I think she sang, and I believe Mahalia Jackson and of course Dr. King's speech. Who else? I can't even recall some of them right off hand now, that were there that gave such dynamic speeches. But it was just great. And they were so organized, because no incident, and to have that many people moving. And of course you still, no one knew what might happen, because you never know where your enemies are, or who your enemies are, but all fear leaves.

JW: I understand you were also doing some work in Mississippi along in that era.

FM: Oh, yes. That was my senior year, so you know I must have been young and stupid (laughs). But anyway, Quentin and I, we don't know yet who paid our way. We went, we had to clear it with our instructors and everybody, some encouraging, some discouraging, to go. My mother did not know where I was. But we went down, and we stopped at all the little bus stops, you know, the bus stations, they would say, still had some of the signs up, but Quentin and I went on all of the white sides because it was the end of that. But they had the signs up still. And I guess I was, I did not like that visit very much, because this was one of the times I became really sort of bitter. There was a white young lady that met us on the bus station and took us on campus, and we went into one of the white instructor's home, and he showed us where they had shot in his home.

JW: This was in Tupelo, Mississippi?

FM: Uh-huh. And then when we got ready to--we heard, you know, and he saying the white civil right workers had to hide, because no one would let them stay at their houses. And a lot of these kids had left colleges, they were northern students and had given up their education, but they were on the run. I mean, they were truly worse than we were. And you wonder why, you know, you say, you had everything, why are you down here, why are you doing this, why are you risking your life like this? So when we got ready to leave the campus, this Caucasian student told us to get in the car, and she drove us to the bus station. She said, "Now, I hope we make it, because I'm not supposed to have blacks in my car." She said, "They'll know we're civil right workers." And so she dropped--she said, "But I want you to go inside the white side of this bus station because we have worked too hard for you not to do that." So Quentin and I went inside the white station, and we looked around, and everybody started clearing out, and this old white lady came over, she said, "Let me tell you, they've got a nice station waiting room over there," said "They got some jukebox and hamburgers and hot dog. Why don't y'all go over there?" We're not moving. So we looked, nobody else in the bus station but Quentin and I, everyone else had cleared out. We didn't know exactly what that meant, and it was kind of frightening. But, you know, we were there, so we walked out and we got on the bus, and I'm glad the bus came when it did. And that's when I think I really became angry, really really angry. And we had seats by ourselves, Quentin had his seat and I had my seat, because no one wanted to sit beside us no way. And then the bus driver turned the air conditioner on, where we were sitting in the back, we kept saying, "It's too cool up here." And for the first time, to be honest with you, I felt like if I had a machine gun, I would just go bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam, bam.

JW: Did that feeling stay with you?

FM: I guess it must have, because I'm still talking about it now. I must felt sort of angry still, and in spite of all that we did, and I did, that was the most traumatic, because even one guy that finally got on our bus with us, and he sat beside me, and he was telling me that he was a college professor, but he could not vote. He said, "I have never voted in my life." And I thought, well, at least in North Carolina, we are voting. He said they give you this hard test and ask you how many beans are in the jar and things that they know you don't know. He said, "But I have never voted."

JW: Did he say why?

FM: They wouldn't let the Blacks could not vote. And when they did try, they'd rig up these tests that they knew they couldn't pass. And we were voting in North Carolina. And I've been voting since I was 18, and I don't miss an election right now. I've never missed an election.

JW: Good for you.

FM: Yes, that is a privilege.

JW: What was your reason for going to Mississippi?

FM: Well, I guess they really wanted us to just meet with these people, or these were other students and their advisors, and other than that we didn't go down there to do any kind of demonstration, we just went and met on campus and talked about the issues.

JW: On campus of which school?

FM: Tupelo. I never heard of it before.

JW: Well, this was your first experience in the deep south.

FM: Oh, yes.

JW: Mississippi on down to Georgia. Clearly, it affected you, you saw that was something different, or more so than what you'd experienced in North Carolina?

FM: Mm-hm. And I guess--

JW: Could you explain a bit about the nature of the difference? Was it something you felt?

FM: Okay, I guess, like I said, I felt good growing up. I had no complex whatsoever. I love my high school, which was Charles H. Dean High School. It was a segregated high school. We lived on one side of the railroad track, and the Caucasians lived on the other side of the railroad track. We had basically everything that we needed. We had support from our teachers. And I had a good self-esteem, but I think that experience was something during the () was something to make me lower my self-esteem. And I said, no, you're not gonna do this to me, emotionally, you know. And I guess this is why I became angry, and I wonder, how did these people accept this. How did they allow this to happen to them. We saw like the plantations and the little houses where the people were living on the big plantations, and how we didn't have that in North Carolina.

JW: What was different about North Carolina? Why was it different here, do you think?

FM: I guess it's what you call the deep south, and the further south you go, the more fearful, because all of the lynching and killings were taking place down there. They were not really taking place in North Carolina, and I guess my little community was sort of a protective area

where everyone knew each other, and families and, you know everyone protected everyone's children, and I just wondered, how did you allow this to happen, what is it. But I can imagine it was the fear, and the threat.

JW: You must have felt threatened and afraid when you were in Mississippi.

FM: Yes, and this is why I became angry.

JW: How did you direct that anger, what did you do with that anger?

FM: Well, all I could do was to get back on the bus and it was nice having my seat to myself. It was cold back there, but we had jackets, because we knew if he had turned the air conditioner on. And I graduated in May, so this was sometime around March, so I was on my way out, really. And it was at that point, I guess, when graduation and when we realized that we had been arrested, on those charges for trespassing, that we all had police records, and we were supposed to come back after graduation for the hearing. But Governor Sanford at that time signed a petition saying that all the charges were dropped. So I really have always admired him. I was in touch with him before he died, because we had planned to connect to talk about the movement, so while I was at Glenn Elementary, he did call me, and he said we were going to make arrangements to meet. And of course he died, but prior to that, he did send us a picture of himself. And I left that at the school for the students there. But our future was really at stake.

JW: So you graduated, you went to work in Washington, and how did your life develop from that point on? Were you in Washington when Martin Luther King was killed?

FM: No. I had gotten married, and I had moved back to Durham. And I was planning a surprise birthday party for my husband, I think it was my first year of marriage, so I know it was April the 4th. And we heard this news, you know, everything is closed down, all this, and it was just unbelievable. It was just unbelievable. We just sat and watched TV and that's all you could hear, people were so sad and crying. Of course, they did some rioting in Durham at that time. I was not involved in that. I was older and I was home and I was with my husband. But some rioting did take place at that time.

JW: How did you feel when you heard--how did you learn that Martin Luther King had been murdered?

FM: Television. Like I said, it was just unbelievable.

JW: Was it a shock, or was it something that you had sort of thought might happen?

FM: Well, I think he thought, he felt like it would happen, and he never, you know, when he did this last, "I've been to the mountain," his last sermon that he did, gave us indication that he knew. And I guess we all wondered if he was in danger, it was just very () and very shocking, but we knew he was in danger, he was.

JW: Then how did you feel when you got the word?

FM: Well, there was really nothing I could do about it. I felt sad, I cried. We reflect back on a lot of things and we bought as much of his speeches, and I still have a lot of his--probably all of his speeches now. I mean, it wasn't like I felt like I did when I was in Mississippi, when I said I felt like--. It was just sad. I mean, we knew, how could a man like this continue to live, you know. But I think it was that he was, again, like a prophet, and he was sent here () part of his mission, and he realized that it was over and we were able to see from our point of view that it was over. You did what you were supposed to do.

JW: Were you involved with civil rights, with the movement, after you came back to Durham? Did you get re-involved yourself?

FM: Well, everything was just about over when I came back. I came back in '67, I think I came back about '67, 1967. Jobs were available, housing. Of course, when we got married, there was no place we could find to live because () housing evidently still was segregated, because the only thing that was available was like the College Plaza, was apartments, and that was a big problem. But other than that, over all I think it has really strengthened me. I have established a closer relationship with God, and I think that all of this was sort of like in a plan, sort of like with King, there's certain people to do certain things. And I feel good about myself, as I did then. I feel my self esteem is high, I don't let people try to destroy it, although I found out that people will try to do that. I took up the role in the school, not because anyone asked me to, because I felt that it was something that I needed to do. I'm not sure that I got all the support that I should have gotten from the schools, or from the administrators. Because I felt like they wanted like hush, hush, or they don't want to start a riot, so this is why I always made sure that my kids knew that it was a black and white movement, everything that I did for the schools, I made sure it was well integrated. And to keep any kind of tension down. But again, like I said, I guess some people would have wanted me to forget it, forget it, this is the past, don't bring it up, you know, we might get in trouble.

JW: There are people who still feel that way. You became a school teacher?

FM: I was a guidance counselor.

JW: A guidance counselor. At Glenn School, or where did--

FM: Chewning Middle School is where we organized the Freedom Riders. And then at Glenn, I just went into the classrooms.

JW: What building at the Chewning Freedom Riders? What was this?

FM: Now that was very risky, because Chewning was--if you know anything about location?

JW: Well, for the record, Chewning is out in the northeastern part of Durham County, very--well out in the country.

FM: And at that time, I had--I was there as a counselor when Chewning was () with their rebel flag.

JW: This would have been in the mid-'80s?

FM: Yes. And this is when the--everybody said the Klansmen are coming, were across the street from the schools and everything. Watching all that was going on, because the principal at the time had said that the kids could not wear anything with the rebel flag. So it was kind of like a flashback. Oh, no, going through this again. So we were under watch with the sheriff there for several of the--several days we had the sheriff out there watching to make sure that the people didn't come from across the street. That sort of died down eventually. So when I decided to do the Freedom Riders, I knew what I could have been up against in that particular.

JW: Seems like old times?

FM: Seems like old times. But the cooperation, obviously, from the parents, the letters, and these little--and the children, it was beautiful. They were amazed, some of them did not even know where Hayti Heritage Center was, they did not know where North Carolina Central University was, it was well-integrated. And I think that really started at Chewning, kind of carried over to them in high school there. I think they still wanted more Durham Black History Month, because we had started this at the school. And before they could go, they had to write an essay or a poem or something to be selected to even make the trip. So we visited Hayti Heritage Center and Mr. Bryant spoke to them. What was the other man's name, I can't think of his name right now. And we went down to North Carolina Central University, and Joycelyn McKissick came and spoke to them and told them about her experience at Durham High School, Peter came, Klopfer, was there. And we just had--I mean, people were just coming from out of the wall, that's why I knew it was one of God's plans, because they were just coming, you know. I was

there and I wanted to make sure I had some Caucasian people from Duke, and people from UNC. So that when we all had lunch, and then we went to the church, and we met and they had more speakers, and the young lady that was first person to enter UNC Nursing School talked about her experience, and how hard, and how they tried to make it very difficult for her to just even graduate. And of course Quentin Baker. It was really, really really great. But that was one time I really went out on a limb. Dealing with the population that I, you know. And the kids enjoyed it. I don't think they will ever forget that, and that's the one thing I'm glad of, that they have had that experience. Because they're older now, they probably have their own children, but that experience they had.

JW: Very good thing to do. When did you become a guidance counselor, or when did you get into the education field?

FM: Well, I retired after 29 years, so that's a long time. The majority of that was spent at Chewning, and about 3 or 4 years at Glenn Elementary, and there I did with them the Peacemakers, and that was a nonviolence (), I went to all the classes from Pre-K to 3rd grade, talking about nonviolence, and the Peacemakers talk about it, they don't fight about it. Because even though I don't feel that I got the support that I should have, I still feel that it's great to start nonviolence at an early age. Because we were talking about, they don't fight about it, they talk about it. And (). All of this was in music, done by music, and I cannot sing. I dance, but I cannot sing. But I went into all the classes, and the teachers helped us, and the first graders would do Peacemakers and the second graders would do another song with the peace--() Peacemakers. We had T-shirts, the parents supported us in some of that, and I went out begging to private industries, and St. Joseph's gave us some money so that all the children could have a Peacemaker's T-shirt. And I did that for 3 years there. And that was the only way I felt I could relate that early the importance of non-violence. And of course for the older students, the 4th and 5th graders, I did the posters during Black History Month, because that was something I felt they could relate with also. And it would be kind of difficult for the kindergarten and 3rd to understand that, but I did want them to know about the importance of nonviolence.

JW: Right. You have been doing--you were, I believe you said that you were a secretary for the federal government when you were in Washington, and then got married and came back to Durham. Did you work as a secretary in Durham or did you ()?

FM: I worked for the North Carolina Fund for a short period.

JW: Oh really. The North Carolina Fund was very much involved with some civil rights issues in Durham.

FM: Howard Fuller and Ben Ruffin, Nathan Garrett. And that was really about the only jobs available for blacks, other than North Carolina Mutual and the Fund, and then I worked for the federal government for a short time, and of course they reminded me that I was in the south and that I was colored. And I could not believe this, you know. “Why could she come in at this grade and we’ve been here all this time?” Because I had worked for the federal government before, and because I have a degree. This is just about when I left, you know. But my husband said, “Faye, just come on home.”

JW: Tell me a bit about the North Carolina Fund work, and Ben Ruffin and Howard Fuller and your--what sort of contact and association did you have with them and with their work in town?

FM: Well see, they were mostly, like Howard Fuller, they were mostly in the field going to these small places. I was just in the office working as a secretary, typing up reports, but I never--

JW: What kind of work was the North Carolina Fund doing in Durham?

FM: They really focused mostly on small counties. They were trying to get improvement in some of the little counties like Siler City and Warren County. I used to hear them talk about that. And Durham was pretty much stable by then, and secure. But they were really out in the field.

JW: What led you to become an educator?

FM: Well, first, that was all you could do in the south, was to teach. So when I moved back here, since I had been to business school, I decided to stay in business education, and I became a business teacher, and I got my master’s in guidance and counseling.

JW: Where did you teach business?

FM: Durham Business College.

JW: Ah. Were you working in the public schools at the time of the integration charettes in ‘71?

FM: Let me see. Yes, is that one of these articles right here. I was a counselor at Chewning. Do you know Linda?

JW: Yes. She was at the Durham Sun some years ago while I was at the Herald. She’s not with the newspaper anymore. She’s I think a full time freelance writer, or maybe doing some marketing consulting, something like that.

FM: Oh, yeah, those were Chewning.

JW: What's the effect been in Durham, or on Durham, of the work you were doing in the early '60s, the protests and the integration? How has Durham changed as a community? Besides the fact that it's much bigger and we've got the Research Triangle Park, obviously that's changed things.

FM: And the job market has changed, because at that time even in Durham blacks couldn't find jobs unless you were teaching. And that's no longer the case. There's still a lot to be learned, a lot of people don't know. There's still a lot of young people that think this is the way it's always been. They don't know that there's some people, even on your job, that you still can't trust.

They think you can love and trust everybody, that there's no difference, but they have to find out sometimes the hard way that some of these things are still inborn, as far as segregation, as far as prejudice, and a lot of the young blacks are learning the hard way, even in places like Durham.

JW: Were you involved with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee? Someone said that they thought you had had some connection with that.

FM: No. That was SNCC I think, right? No. I don't know who, like I said, paid for these trips. I knew this existed, but we were so--() no, that was separate, it came later on. This was sort of like a group, I think, that moved away from the NACP, and maybe I didn't know much about SNCC, I just knew of them, but--.

JW: Did you know Floyd McKissick Sr.?

FM: Oh, yes.

JW: Did you--

FM: We used to meet at his house. And little Floyd was just a kid, that's why now it's really funny, because he was about 4 or 5 years old, but Joycelyn and Andre I remember very well, because they were involved in the movement. And I remember when they went to Durham High, and we did meet there for our, had our little meetings, and he would speak to the group on different occasions.

JW: Was he a major supporter of what you were doing?

FM: Oh, yes, because he was one of the main leaders. And also, I can't even think of the man that became mayor at the time.

JW: Grabarek?

FM: Grabarek, yes. I remember him quite well, too, because he spoke at St Josephs Church, and it was that time that we received a bomb threat at the church, and they asked us all to leave.

And Dr. ()--not Dr., Mr. J. J. Henderson picked some of us up on our way back to campus and took us to the Chicken Hut and bought us some chicken, so that was a big treat for a college student. So Grabarek was one of those persons that I admired. And I remember Mr. Mutt that had the store downtown.

JW: Right, Evans?

FM: Yeah, and they used to tell us, well you can go in there, you can go in there, he'll let you eat. Well we didn't have any money to eat with no way.

JW: What was it in the school that you saw as a need that led you to create the Freedom Riders and the Peacemakers? Did this develop from the incidents over the Confederate flag, that you thought something needed to be done, or was this an idea you had had for some time before that?

FM: No, because it just came to me that this was something that needed to be done. It wasn't because of the Confederate flag, because, like I said, that was stepping on the same territory, the same population of people, you know. It was just, I began collecting information and I just felt like I need to use it, I need to do this, and the more I got involved, the more people were coming to me with (). Students came from Durham Academy, they heard about us, and Carolina Friends School brought some students to our programs at the church. But it just did, I just did it. I just did it. Really with very little support. Really no support, except for the parents that I--.

JW: Did you keep that program going as long as you were at Chewning?

FM: () I think it was two or three years, and that's when I left to go to the elementary school, but those last two or three.

JW: Did it keep going after you left? Did anyone pick up the ball?

FM: No one picked up the ball, or the Peacemakers either.

JW: Did you start doing the other schools while you were still working at Glenn, or is this something you started doing after you retired?

FM: No, I only went to one school since I retired this past--last year, I went to one school. I don't know whether at Oak Grove or (), I think it's Oak Grove, I went there to speak with those kids.

JW: Is that something that you would like to continue doing, teaching the history of the movement?

FM: Yes, and you know, I'd rather to have been at the school, because we got parent permission, and I knew the population that I was dealing with, because when you go into a

strange school, you don't know the people that well. The schools where I worked, I knew the feeling of the people, but when you walk into a strange school, cause you don't want anyone to ever say, "She started a riot. She brought out tension. She should have kept--" So you would have to be very, very, very--

JW: Through your whole career and your involvement, first with the movement itself and now with preserving its history and transmitting that on to younger generations, is there any particular moment or situation that stands out as one particular shining moment to you?

FM: I guess the biggest--

JW: We talked about so many different things, that--

FM: I guess the March on Washington in '63 was one of the things that I really, really treasure. And I always think about Howard Johnson when I go down, because Howard Johnson was located across the street from South Square, and that always kind of gives me a little laugh. And when I see the courthouse downtown, and I walk in and look at those beautiful marble floors, you know, I (laughs), and I think about it then, because we were () all over the place, I mean, they couldn't put all of us in cells because there were so many. So every time we were all, you know. I flash back every time I go inside of that building. And I look at the side entrance, and I remember that was the door that we all went in, and outside the courthouse, the kids from the universities were outside singing, and we were on the inside in jail, and hanging out the windows, sort of. And they were saying, "Come on, book yourselves, write your name." We said, "No, Mr. Chyler, that's your job. You write us up." (laughs) And I guess that was an expression, when we didn't know a white person's name, we called them Mr. Chyler, you know. And some of those people that had been heckling, we said, "What you gonna do with them? Where you going to put them?" "We're gonna take care of that." I said, "Well I'm going to stay right here and see where you're gonna put them." Cause I felt like they would let them go anyway.

JW: Is there anything we haven't talked about yet that you would like to get on the record?

FM: I can't think of anything else.

JW: How would you sum up your experience? How would you sum up the changes that you've seen in your lifetime, looking back on it from the perspective of having been through it for--

FM: Well, housing is a great change, because () people had money and wanted apartments, but there were very few apartments. Everyone in Durham stayed at the apartments owned by North

Carolina Mutual, and those people got there and they stayed. Then the College Plaza was built, and that was just about all that was in Durham.

JW: Where was the College Plaza, or is the College Plaza? Is that down Fayetteville?

FM: Fayetteville Street, uh-huh, on the right hand side, across from the Chicken Hut. Then the eating facilities are nice, you have much better places you can go to eat, feel good about eating and dressing. People have jobs now, because at that time they were only working in the restaurant, I mean in the stores behind the counter. In fact, during my senior year in high school, I worked in the stockroom at Woolworth in Wilson. And they used to call me downstairs to help wash the dishes during lunch, and the girl said, "I want a ice cream sundae," and her mother said, "She can't serve you." So after I finished college, I went back, I sat down at that counter in Woolworth, the same clerk back there, still served. And I immediately introduced myself to her again. (laughs) On the other side of the counter. Oh, cause that was supposed to have been an honor, that I was even given a job in the stockroom. The manager of Woolworth said, "Now, if you don't want to go to college, we can offer you a job right up here in the stockroom." And his son said, "You get out of here." And I said to myself, "Yeah, you're right," because here you were, he was in school, in college, and going to be a pharmacist, and he was gonna tell me he could give me a job in Woolworth. So that was another determination factor that I had. It's just been a nice change, just having housing, employment. And schools, as you can see, still they are integrated, and what was the city schools and county schools, and they always had, still even now, feel like there's some tension, that they came from the county--the city schools to work in one system. Those people that came from the city still feel like, you know, that they're reminded, well, somewhat psychologically they feel, I don't know. Because I started out with Duke County. But there seem to have been some differences.

JW: Thank you very much for sharing with us.

END OF TAPE