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Mrs. Madie Dixion

Twila Haygood

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Interviewed is one of the young people who took part in the intergration of the nineteen-sixties. She is now a wife and mother and she can see the benifits of her struggle.

Interviewer: Twila Haygood.

Interviewed: Madie Dixon.

Q: What is your name?

A: Madie Dixon.

Q: How long have you stayed in Savannah?

A: Twenty-nine years.

Q: Did you stay here all your life?

A: Yes. I have.

Q: Where did you go to school in Savannah?

A: Oh, first I went to Florence elementary. From there to St. Mary's grammar school, from there to St. Pius and from there to my junior and senior year I went to Thompkins High school.

Q: There is a lot of talk about the schools being inferior when you went to school did the students talk about the schools being inferior or did they just except it.

A: During the time I was going to school we except things as they were in Catholic school at St. Mary's in eight grade my teacher she ask us back in fifty-six how how would we like to go to school with whites and about half of the class didn't min because we did go to St. Vincent and Benidict Team assio- cate with them.

Q: Did you attend private school because your parents through it was a better education.

A: It was I believe that is why they sent us there other two sisters because they wanted us to have the best of education. And during that time we really were. Because when I was in tenth grade over at Thompkins my six grade book, history book I was being taught from it and I had it in six grade.

Q: Do you remember any experience in Savannah that stand out in your mind?

A: Yes. I remember our boycott at Thompkins High School in 1961. When all us got up and walk out of school. During that time they were against the lunch room help because they weren't

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- A: giving us sufficient food at the time. And we through thrity for lunch was a lot at that time and we boycott and on account of that the whole school participated and we all walked off campus.
- Q: You said 1966?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Was it city wide or just Thopkins?
- A: It was for other black schools too. Because Beach High participated and Sol Johnson did, too.
- Q: Then it was just the Black Schools in Savannah?
- A: Right.
- Q: Was there anything that happen that didn't happen at school?
- A: Oh, I do remember went we was trying to intergrate. I was working down to Tybee. I go put off the bus lots of times for sitting among white people. Police came and took us off the bus I through that was a little exciting.
- Q: So you did it for the excitement?
- A: Yes. Just for the excitement.
- Q: So you took part in the demonstrations of the sixties.
- A: Yes I did.
- Q: How did you all organize or was it on the spurt of the moment?
- A: No. We were organized. We all had N.A.A.C.P. cards. And we all paid our monthly dues and the N.A.A.C.P. was trying to get all of us the young people to help intergrate the buses and thing . So we could have things better because we were trier of riding the back seat and plenty of times we would have to stand up and they wouldn't be but one or two whites sittin' down because they didn't want anybody to sit by them. So that is one reason why things really took effect.
- Q: I know you watched T.V. durin this time did you see that the demonstrations were any different or worst in Savannah at this time than any place else?
- A: Savannah wasn't as worst as some of the places because the demonstrations in Augusta was much worst than Savannah because they had a lot of roiting and fighting in the streets where in Savannah we didn't have all that.

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- Q: Do you remember anybody getting killed here in Savannah?
- A: Not here in Savannah I can recall.
- Q: Did you see that the demonstrations were lead more by outsiders like Martin Luther King or leaders here?
- A: Well, I thik Martin Luther King really had a lot to do with it but like Horesa Williams did quite a bit. And W.W. Law is still during quite a bit right own so they probably was following his footsteps to go about and get things changed.
- Q: You mention Horesa Wms. and W.W. Law can you remember anyone else that was vocal in the movement in Savannah?
- A: No. Not at the spurt of the moment because those two were the most well known persons in Savannah that was during something in Savannah that was worthwhile for us.
- Q: I know now that every fourth Sunday the N.A.A.C.P. have ma ss meetings at different churches was this begun during the demonstrations?
- A: Yes It did.
- Q: Can you remember any particular churches that were active in the movement?
- A: First A.B. and Bethleham Baptist and Thankful. Theyuse to have the meetings quite a bit at those churches.
- Q: Do you see where the demonstrations accomplished anything for you personally?
- A: Yes they have for one thing by bringing out those demonstrations and things they did make it better for us to ride buses. We first prilive because we paid our money just like the white man therefore we didn't have to be discriminate against us. We could sit anywhere we wanted.
- Q: Where are you working right now?
- A: Armstrong College.
- Q: How long have you been working here?
- A: Four years.
- Q: Well, you hace seen the black population out here double do you see the relationship of those students getting better or worst?

A: Well its sorta hard to say but usually this year I believe they have been together more than any year more then any year I have been out here They seem to cooperate more. The first year I came here there were only four or five black students that attended here but since they have different organizations they they seem to cooperate more.

Q: Do they cooperate with the white students?

A: Yes. uh-uh.

Q: Do you see any particular militancy in the black students some that don't want to be with whites at all?

A: Well, I know just about every black students out here and from what I have seen it don't seem to be any militancy at all. And they are trying to study and get their degree and make something of themselves and they don't seem to whole any prejudices at all if any thing the whites are standing off from them. They don't seem to except the black.

Q: Do you see any change in Savannah as a whole since the movement in the attitudes of whites and blacks like we they just meet on the street?

A: Yes. It's has been a great change now the white white man almost treat as if are the same color as they are. A couple a years back some of them wouldn't even speak to you because you were black. It has been a great chinging things everyday they have beening accepting things. Because now they have found that we are created equal to them and we have just as much right to the privlges and things that they have.

Q: You have children don't you?

A: Yes. I do I have two children

Q: Do you have them I school?

A: I have one in kindergarten, I have one in third grade.

Q: You have personal feeling about busing, how do you feel about it?

A: I don't have to worry about that my children are in private school.

Q: You don't have any feeling about busing?

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- A: Yes. I do if they were to go to public school I believe I would take them myself rather than ride the bus. Because I just don't believe in busing.
- Q: Do you think that the education of the students at Armstrong is better than at Savannah State?
- A: No. I don't think so.
- Q: Why do you think the students at Armstrong and Savannah State don't get along well.
- A: Well, I really don't know because I'm not a student myself and I don't go to class with the students so I really don't know.
- Q: What church are you a member of?
- A: Bethlehem Baptist.
- Q: Where is it Located?
- A: (Inaudible).
- A: Yes I have people don't seem to go to church as much as they use to and they don't seem to take an interest in services. Now to me at my church it seems more to be a fashion show rather place to go to serve God.
- Q: There have been a lot of talk on Gosples music and is very touching for those who like it and for those who don't like it sometimes it is touching and a lot of people don't sing gosples music in churches.
- Q: Some blacks have said that they feel gospel music is better to dance off than feel close to God how do you feel about this?
- A: I feel as if you can get closer to God by singing hymns and letting the spirit of God be among you. Because when you go to church I feel you should leave all your trouble and problems behind you and go there to serve God. You don't have to go there to see who have on what and what is she wearing and how does she have her hair fix. When you in the church you suppose to feel the presence of God if you feel sincere.
- Q: Do you feel the church was a moving force in the black community?
- A: Yes, it was and has been for sometime.
- Q: Was it important during the demonstrations?
- A: Yes. It was.

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Q: You are one of the younger blacks in Savannah do you want to improve anything?

A: Yes. Quite a bit I would like to see changed and improved in Savannah I would like to see more blacks come to Armstrong. I would like to see more whites attend Savannah State. I would like to see both colleges get together and be known as one here in Savannah. And not holding prejudices and try not make criticism and nasty remarks about the two colleges here. If the both united it might make a university out of it.

Q: The black students on campus are supporting a black man for mayor how do you feel about this? What do you feel a black man can do that a white man can't do in the same position?

A: A black man maybe able to do what a white man has not done yet for one thing Mayor Rousakis has not done anything about the black community about paving the streets and things. Mostly every white neighborhood that you go into the streets are paved and they have sufficient street lights and things. They have front sewage and things. When it rains here in Savannah in the black community with the water and thing you almost have to swim through it. Maybe if we get a black mayor in there he will start looking out for us because it seems to me every white man that got in there always looked foub for their people they not do anything for us.