

Interview Data Sheet

Collection/Project Name: M.B. Mayfield Museum

Processor's name: Lambert, Austin

Interviewee: Gammel, Betty

Interviewee occupation(s): Store Owner

Contributor: Gammel, Charles

Interviewer: Lambert, Austin

Date of interview: 2021-4-1

Location of interview: 399 County Road 101, Oxford, MS 38655

Interview context: Towards the end of the interview, Mrs. Gammel asked me to repeat a question because it was not clearly heard or understood the first time. No breaks were taken during the interview. At the 00:47:27 mark my laptop's Siri function triggered and you can clearly hear it interrupt the flow of the interview. Towards the end of the interview you can hear Mrs. Gammel's phone go off, but she silences it fairly quickly. There are a lot of moments where Mrs. Gammel and I finish each other's sentences, as well as many instances where both of us stumble on our words, and we say um and uh a lot.

Recording equipment: Zoom H1 Recorder

Recording Settings

bit-depth: 16-bit

sampling rate: 44.1 kHz

Length of interview: 1:36:48

Note about sound quality: The recorder was placed on a stool between Mrs. Gammel and I. There are times when you can hear Mr. Gammel in the background, and it isn't clear at times exactly what he's saying. There is one moment in the interview where I accidentally interrupt Mrs. Gammel mid sentence.

Interviewee biographical information

Gender	Female
Age	77 years old
Birth Date	July 4, 1943
Birthplace	New Albany, MS
Residence	New Albany, MS
Education	Sherman High School, finished eleventh grade, Sherman, MS, 1960 Obtained GED later

Abstract:

- 01:07 Betty Gammel. Born in 1943, she discusses life living as the daughter of a sharecropper in Union County. She was one of five children, and she discusses her close relationship with the only brother she had, as well as how her family had to be self-sufficient in order to survive.
- 03:46 Gammel talks about how she would catch crawdads and crawfish with her brother and sell them to a neighbor and her daughter. This was one of several little things they did to make money. They also could take an egg to the local grocery store and barter for a piece of candy.
- 10:06 Gammel talks about the peddlers, who would drive around in box trucks full of essential items like canned goods, meal, flour, kerosene, and caffeine. Gammel's mother would give them an extra egg or piece of spare change to barter for candy.
- 19:47 Gammel talks about the experience of going to a colored church. She discusses how when they would start singing, they got into it more than the parishioners at her church.
- 24:28 Gammel talks about her love for music, and how she was able to grow in her abilities when her school began to offer music class. She became a church pianist when she was 13 years old, and has been ever since. She also talks about some of the other instruments she plays, like the dulcimer, guitar, autoharp, and dobro.
- 30:57 Gammel talks about how Mayfield would make his paints out of berries, leaves, and a certain dirt from the creek near his house. He also made his own paint brushes from a small growth off of a tree limb.
- 42:56 Gammel states that nobody knew that Mayfield attended classes at Ole Miss. People knew that he was a janitor, but not that he was unofficially a student at the University. This is why he didn't face an intense reaction similar to James Meredith.

- 1:05:22 Gammel talks about her experience filming the documentary about Mayfield, “A Door Ajar.” She says that at first, she believed she was only playing music on her dulcimer for the documentary, but then they began asking about her life history. She clearly had a much bigger role in the documentary than she anticipated.
- 1:08:28 Gammel talks about her experience attending the film fest showing of “A Door Ajar.” She actually went down to the front with John Afamasaga, the director, to answer audience questions.
- 1:14:38 Gammel talks about how God has blessed her throughout her life, even through the many trials she had to endure, such as cancer and an 18 wheeler wreck. One of her accomplishments was having the opportunity to sew for Miss Mississippi.

Subjects and Key-words:

Names: Betty Gammel, Charles Gammel, M.B. Mayfield, John Afamasaga, Mr. Wilder, AD Mayfield, Dr. Payne, Jenny, Mr. Purser, James Meredith

Organizations: Ole Miss, Archives of Mississippi Women

Events: Formation of old East Union, Mayfield attending Ole Miss, Interactions with Mr. Wilder, Interactions with John Afamasaga and “A Door Ajar”

Topics: Segregation, Integration, Personal/Community Impact, Interactions with Community/School/Mayfield

Geographic: Mississippi; Union County; Pontotoc, Mississippi; Oxford, Mississippi; New Albany, Mississippi; East Union; Ingomar, Mississippi; Ecu, Mississippi; Memphis, Tennessee; Jackson, Mississippi; WellsGate

Temporal: 1943-2021

Related Documentary Materials:

Number of photographs: 5
 Format: Digital
 Description of photograph: Photograph of Mrs. Betty Gammel; Four photographs of paintings by Mayfield