

1988

Sallye B. Mathis and Mary L. Singleton: Black pioneers on the Jacksonville, Florida, City Council

Barbara Hunter Walch

Suggested Citation

Walch, Barbara Hunter, "Sallye B. Mathis and Mary L. Singleton: Black pioneers on the Jacksonville, Florida, City Council" (1988). *UNF Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 704. <https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/etd/704>

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNF Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UNF Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Digital Projects](#).

© 1988 All Rights Reserved

SALLYE B. MATHIS AND MARY L. SINGLETON:
BLACK PIONEERS ON THE JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, CITY COUNCIL

By
BARBARA HUNTER WALCH

THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1988

Copyright 1988

by

Barbara Hunter Walch

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT.	v
CHAPTERS	
I INTRODUCTION	1
II BACKGROUND: BLACKS IN JACKSONVILLE	18
1865-1890.	18
1890-1946.	30
III EARLY YEARS OF SALLYE BROOKS AND MARY LITTLEJOHN	57
Sallye Marilyn Brooks.	57
Mary Eleanor Littlejohn.	62
IV ADULTHOOD AND MARRIAGE	72
Sallye Brooks Mathis	72
Mary Littlejohn Singleton.	83
V NEW CAREERS.	107
Sallye Brooks Mathis	107
Mary Littlejohn Singleton.	152
VI ELECTION TO THE CITY COUNCIL	157
Deciding to Run for Office	157
A Spirit of Reform	163
The Election Campaign.	171
Election Results	184
Conclusions.	190
VII CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS	193
Symbolic Presence as Black Women	193
Emphasis on the Needs of Low Income People	213
Advocacy For Black Rights.	235
Encouragement of Participation	262

VIII EPILOGUE: AFTER 1972 273

 Sallye Brooks Mathis 273

 Mary Littlejohn Singleton. 294

IX SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. 328

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 343

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 364

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

SALLYE B. MATHIS AND MARY L. SINGLETON:
BLACK PIONEERS ON THE JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, CITY COUNCIL

By

Barbara Hunter Walch

December, 1988

Chairman: Dr. Daniel L. Schafer
Major Department: History

In 1967 Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton were elected the first blacks in sixty years, and the first women ever, to the city council of Jacksonville, Florida. These two women had been raised in Jacksonville in a black community which, in spite of racial discrimination and segregation since the Civil War, had demonstrated positive leadership and cooperative action as it developed its own organizations and maintained a thriving civic life. Jacksonville blacks participated in politics when allowed to do so and initiated several economic boycotts and court suits to resist racial segregation. Black women played an important part in these activities--occasionally in visible leadership roles.

As adults, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton participated as educators, family members and leaders in various

community efforts. Both had developed wide contacts and were respected among many blacks and whites. Mary Singleton had learned about politics as the wife of a respected black politician, and Sallye Mathis became a leader in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s in Jacksonville. In 1967, a governmental reform movement in Duval County, a softening of negative racial attitudes, and perhaps their being female aided their victories.

While Sallye Mathis remained on the Jacksonville City Council for fifteen years until her death in 1982, Mary Singleton served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1972 to 1976--the third black in the twentieth century and the first woman from Northeast Florida. From 1976 to 1978 she was appointed director of the Florida Division of Elections and in 1978 she campaigned unsuccessfully for Lt. Governor of Florida.

As government officials, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton emphasized the needs of low-income people and were advocates for black interests when they felt it was necessary. They were active as volunteers in numerous other community organizations and projects to further their goals.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In June, 1967, two black women--Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton--became the first blacks in sixty years, and the first women ever, to serve on the city council of Jacksonville, Florida. After decades of unsuccessful attempts by blacks to win election to local government positions, these two women were elected in an at-large city vote by wide margins. Re-elected easily, Sallye Mathis served on the city council until her death in 1982. After five years on the council, Mary Singleton was elected to the Florida House of Representatives from 1972 until 1976, when she was appointed Director of Florida's Division of Elections. In 1978 she resigned, ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor of Florida, and worked in the state comptroller's office until her death in 1980. This study considers how, after decades of racial segregation and the exclusion of blacks and women from governmental leadership, these two women decided to run for office, how they were able to get elected in a city-wide, at-large election in 1967, and what they accomplished in public service.

Historically, studies by white authors neglected or distorted the history, experience and viewpoints of women and/or non-European peoples--especially their protest or

political activities. Donald R. Matthews observed that "although 'the Negro problem' long has been one of the most important domestic problems confronting the nation," out of over 2,600 articles published between 1906 and 1963, only six contained the word "Negro" in the title and three others dealt with civil rights.¹

Since the 1960s, numerous works have focused on various aspects of black American history and black participation in politics, but few have focused on black Floridians. Among the helpful general works which at times include or refer to Florida are John Hope Franklin's From Slavery to Freedom, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick's From Plantation To Ghetto and The Making of Black America: Essays in Negro Life and History, and Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., and Benjamin Quarles' The Black American: A Brief Documentary History.²

¹Council on Interracial Books for Children, Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions in U. S. History Textbooks (New York: Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977), especially pp. 125-29; Chuck Stone, Black Political Power in America, rev. ed. (New York: Dell Publ. Co., 1970): "The Non-History of Black Political Power in America," pp. 3-10; Donald R. Matthews, cited in Milton D. Morris, The Politics of Black America (New York: Harper & Row Publ., 1972), p. 3; Audrey Siess Wells and Eleanor Cutri Smeal, "Women's Attitudes Toward Women in Politics: A Survey of Urban Registered Voters and Party Committeemen," in Women in Politics, ed. Jane S. Jacqueline (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), pp. 54-72.

²John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964); August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, From Plantation To Ghetto (New York: Hill & Wang, 1966); August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., The Making of Black America: Essays in Negro Life and History, vol. 2: The Black Community in Modern America (New York: Atheneum Publ., 1969); Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., and Benjamin Quarles, The

Historical studies on black women have been especially neglected in the past. Helpful in filling this gap are Paula Giddings' When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America and Gerda Lerner's Black Women in White America: A Documentary History, which include helpful material on the black women's club movement nationally and on a role model for many Jacksonville blacks--Mary McCleod Bethune, founder of Bethune-Cookman College at Daytona Beach, Florida.³ Insight is also gained from biographies, such as Stephen B. Oates' Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr., Shirley Chisholm's Unbought and Unbossed, and Anne Moody's Coming of Age in Mississippi.⁴

Numerous studies of black participation in politics have been published since the 1960s. Milton D. Morris, in The Politics of Black America, discussed theories and general trends in black politics nationally, while Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro in Negroes and the New Southern Politics and Numan V. Bartley in The Rise of Massive

Black American: A Brief Documentary History (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1967).

³Paula Giddings, When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1984); Gerda Lerner, Black Women in White America: A Documentary History (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

⁴Stephen B. Oates, Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row Publ., 1982); Shirley Chisholm, Unbought and Unbossed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970); Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi (New York: Dell Publ. Co., 1968).

Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s explored the increases in voter registration and voting in the South. Blacks were included in Jack Bass and Walter DeVries' The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequences Since 1915.⁵

V. O. Key, Jr., in his landmark 1949 study, Southern Politics in State and Nation noted a coalition between lower-class whites and blacks during the "New Deal" period of the 1930s and predicted that this coalition would re-emerge when black political participation increased. Key commented that poor whites as well as blacks were being held back by the one-party system, disfranchisement of blacks and poor whites, exclusion of blacks from political power, and control by rural conservatives through malapportionment of state legislatures. Bass and DeVries, as well as Numan V. Bartley and Hugh C. Graham in Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction, pointed out that these impediments to wide political participation had crumbled by the 1970s. However, Bartley and Graham concluded that the coalition based on economic class predicted by Key had not happened by 1975, since southern resistance to the civil rights movement

⁵Morris; Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, Negroes and the New Southern Politics (New York: World, 1966); Numan V. Bartley, The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); Jack Bass and Walter DeVries, The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequences Since 1915 (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

had united whites in a racially based, social coalition. By the 1980s, many upper and lower status whites had joined the growing Republican party in the South as a socially and economically conservative alternative to the Democratic party. Bartley and numerous other social scientists have observed that the heritage of race division and white supremacy, even though dismantled officially, lingers on.⁶ Characteristics, goals and problems of black elected officials were discussed in Sampson Buie, Jr.'s dissertation on "The Emergence Process of Black Elected Leadership in North Carolina," in Mervyn M. Dymally's anthology, The Black Politician: His Struggle for Power, and in Maxine Dora Sparks' "Black Political Leadership in America: A Content Analysis of Selected Journal Articles."⁷

Although materials on blacks in general are now plentiful, the assumptions of the authors need to be

⁶V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), pp. 665, 670; Bass and DeVries, p. 4; Numan V. Bartley and Hugh C. Graham, Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 184, 189; James Button, "Blacks," in Florida's Politics and Government, ed. Manning J. Dauer (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980), p. 293.

⁷Sampson Buie, Jr., "The Emergence Process of Black Elected Leadership in North Carolina" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, N.C., 1983); Mervyn M. Dymally (then a California state senator), The Black Politician: His Struggle For Power (Belmont, Ca.: Duxbury Press, 1971); Maxine Dora Sparks, "Black Political Leadership in America: A Content Analysis of Selected Journal Articles" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, Cal., 1981).

considered. As historian Lawrence W. Levine has noted, even some fairly recent studies have found "little more than dependence, servility and apathy in the black masses" during slavery and afterwards, and blacks have been seen "primarily as reactors to white society rather than actors in their own right." Such ideas have been questioned by some recent scholars such as Levine who has called attention to ways blacks have shaped Afro-American culture to deal with their situations. The Death of White Sociology, edited by Joyce A. Ladner, challenged the assumption, definitions, questions, and therefore the findings of sociology by whites.⁸

In Janet Jacquette's anthology on Women in Politics, various writers discussed changing patterns of participation in politics by women and the varied attitudes of both women and men about women and their roles. Audrey Siess Wells and Eleanor Cutri Smeal noted that women had been excluded from earlier political science research since political scientists had assumed that women would never organize as a voting block and had accepted as valid theories that "a woman's place was in the home and that politics was a man's world." In "The Political Role of the Stereotyped Image of

⁸Lawrence W. Levine, "The Concept of the New Negro and the Realities of Black Culture," in Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience, vol. 2, ed. Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel M. Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), p. 127; Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery To Freedom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Joyce A. Ladner, The Death of White Sociology (New York: Random House, 1973).

the Black Woman in America," Mac C. King discussed images which have been used to justify keeping black women low in the U. S. caste system. Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg also analyzed attitudes towards black women in The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images.⁹

Among studies of black politics in Florida, John Burt, Jr.'s dissertation, "Black Political Participation in Florida: A Test of Three Explanations," is a study of Florida's voter registration and census data primarily around 1970, with county and regional variations. David R. Colburn and Richard K. Scher have pointed out that politics in Florida has been more fluid than in other Southern states since the 1950s. Besides having more ethnic and religious diversity, a higher percentage of Florida's population lived in urban areas, where attitudes towards blacks tended to be more moderate due to greater anonymity, a higher educational level among blacks, and more possibilities for black employment independent of whites. Colburn and Scher also noted that more of Florida's population had moved in from other places, so that fewer voters had strong ties with local politics and some of the newcomers, even from other parts of

⁹Janet Jacquette, ed., Women in Politics (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974); Wells and Smeal, pp. 54-55; Mac C. King, "The Political Role of the Stereotyped Image of the Black Woman in America," in Black Political Scientists and Black Survival: Essays in Honor of a Black Scholar, ed. Shelby Lewis Smith (Detroit: Belamp Publ., 1977), pp. 24-44; Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg, The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1978).

the South, were more open to racial integration and other reforms. Accordingly, there was less violence in the civil rights movement in Florida than in some other states. However, Burt noted that because there was less violence in Florida, there was less implementation of some of the federal programs, such as those from the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Florida's blacks as a whole were less organized than in some other states during the 1960s. Therefore, Burt concluded, Florida had the fewest black elected officials of all the Southern states between 1965 and 1972. By February, 1968, only five blacks from Jacksonville and eleven other blacks had been elected to local governmental positions in Florida. By the end of 1972, there were still only fifty-one black public office holders in Florida--including two from Miami and one from Jacksonville--in the Florida House of Representatives, with none in state-wide positions.¹⁰

While there have been numerous studies about blacks in the South generally in recent decades, works about blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, are sparse. The standard works on

¹⁰John Burt, Jr., "Black Political Participation in Florida: A Test of Three Explanations" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 1982), especially pp. 53, 57-58; David R. Colburn and Richard K. Scher, "Florida Politics in the Twentieth Century," in Florida's Politics and Government, ed. Manning J. Dauer (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980), pp. 40, 44; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, Political Participation (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1968), p. 216; Hugh Douglas Price, The Negro and Southern Politics: A Chapter of Florida History (New York: New York University, 1957, reprint edition, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 44.

the history of Jacksonville¹¹ present white viewpoints on the city, with little awareness of blacks having perspectives and history of their own, except occasionally as statistics, faceless workers or problems. Black happenings were considered so unimportant to non-blacks that the Florida Times-Union of Jacksonville published a separate black edition until 1966 with the implication that black events were irrelevant to the rest of the community.

Yet, Africans came with the earliest plantation owners in the Jacksonville area and did much of the labor that built up the economy as an agricultural and shipping center under Spanish, British, and eventually United States control in 1821. In 1860, the port city of Jacksonville was the third largest city in Florida, with a population of 1133 whites, 908 slaves and ninety-five free blacks, while Duval County, where Jacksonville is located, had 1960 whites, 2008 slaves and 148 free blacks. During the Civil War, around 450 black males from Northeast Florida served in the Union

¹¹T. Frederick Davis, History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity: 1513 to 1924 (St. Augustine, Fla., 1925; reprint ed., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964); Pleasant Daniel Gold, History of Duval County (St. Augustine: The Record Co., 1929); Richard Albert Martin, The City Makers (Jacksonville: Convention Press, 1972); Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1971); James K. Ward, Old Hickory's Town (Jacksonville: Florida Publishing Company, 1982). See Barbara Richardson's comments in her "Decades of Disappointment: A History of Blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, 1860-1895" (D.A. dissertation, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1975; Ann Arbor, Mi.: University Microfilms International), pp. 4-5.

army; some of them were part of the Union troops that occupied Jacksonville in 1863 and 1864. After the Civil War, thousands of blacks and whites moved to Jacksonville from areas near and far and its population consisted of 3989 blacks and 2923 whites by 1870. In 1900 and 1910, blacks were over 50 percent of the population of Jacksonville, and in 1920 they were 45 percent.¹²

Since 1970, some books and articles have tried to give the perspectives and history of blacks in Jacksonville. Jacksonville's Ordeal by Fire: A Civil War History by Richard A. Martin with Daniel L. Schafer, included black participation in the Civil War in Jacksonville. Barbara Richardson's dissertation, "Decades of Disappointment: A History of Blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, 1860-1895," focused on black experiences, achievements and problems. James Weldon Johnson's autobiography, Along This Way,

¹²In 1783 the population of East Florida was listed as 11,300 blacks and 7,000 whites (Tebeau, p. 87). In 1830 blacks were 56 percent of the Duval County population. U. S. Census Office, 1830 U. S. Census: Duval County, Florida (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm), series M-19; U. S., Census Office, 1860 U. S. Census: Duval County, Florida (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm), series M-653; U. S., Census Office, Compendium of the Tenth Census, 1880, part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1976), p. 383; U. S., Bureau of the Census, Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 104; U. S., Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: State Compendium, Florida (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1924), p. 35; Richard A. Martin with Daniel L. Schafer, Jacksonville's Ordeal by Fire: A Civil War History (Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Publishing Co., 1984), p. 139.

described black life in Jacksonville in the late nineteenth century. Biographies of Johnson do so also.¹³

Some material about blacks in Jacksonville can be found in Joe M. Richardson's The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida: 1865-1877, in Jerrell H. Shofner's Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877, and in Peter Klingman's Neither Dies Nor Surrenders: A History of the Republican Party in Florida, 1870-1970. Articles by Edward N. Akin, James B. Crooks, Wali R. Kharif, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, and Daniel L. Schafer have dealt directly with blacks in Jacksonville through the early twentieth century.¹⁴

Additional studies of blacks in Jacksonville are few. Leedell Neyland's Twelve Black Floridians included information on four blacks from Jacksonville. Hugh Douglas Price included Jacksonville as one of four cities studied in The Negro and Southern Politics: A Chapter of Florida History. Edward D. Davis in A Half Century of Struggle For Freedom in

¹³Martin with Schafer; Barbara Richardson; James Weldon Johnson, Along This Way: The Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson (New York: The Viking Press, 1933; reprint edition, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973); Harold W. Felton, James Weldon Johnson (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1971).

¹⁴Joe M. Richardson, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida: 1865-1877 (Tallahassee: Florida State University Research Council, 1965; reprint edition, Tampa: Trend House, 1973); Jerrell H. Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877 (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1974); Peter Klingman, Neither Dies Nor Surrenders: A History of the Republican Party in Florida, 1870-1970 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984). See bibliography for other references.

Florida and J. Irving E. Scott in The Education of Black People in Florida gave black views on decades of struggles. David R. Colburn's Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida showed ties between Jacksonville blacks and their neighbors in St. Augustine, while Glenda Alice Rabby's dissertation, "Out of the Past: The Civil Rights Movement in Tallahassee, Florida," described the civil rights struggles in Tallahassee. Florida's Gubernatorial Politics in the Twentieth Century, edited by David R. Colburn and Richard K. Scher, made references to Jacksonville also. Daniel L. Schafer reported on "Voluntarism in Twentieth Century Jacksonville, Florida: Civic Involvement in Health, Welfare and Planning Councils." Richard A. Martin, Damon C. Miller and Joan Carver included black perspectives in their studies of the campaign for the consolidation of Jacksonville and Duval County which was approved by the county voters in 1967.¹⁵

¹⁵Leedell Neyland, Twelve Black Floridians (Tallahassee: Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Foundation, 1970); Price; Edward D. Davis, A Half Century of Struggle For Freedom in Florida (Orlando: Drake's Publishing Co., 1981); J. Irving E. Scott, The Education of Black People in Florida (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1974); David R. Colburn, Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985; Glenda Rabby, "Out of the Past: The Civil Rights Movement in Tallahassee, Florida" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1984); David R. Colburn and Richard K. Scher, Florida's Gubernatorial Politics in the Twentieth Century (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980); Daniel L. Schafer, "Volunterism in Twentieth Century Jacksonville, Florida: Civic Involvement in Health, Welfare and Planning Councils" (Paper presented at the First Conference on Jacksonville History, University of North

Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were subjects of a number of reviews, media articles and other short papers, as well as government records, but no lengthy studies. There is need for much more study of the many years of black history in Jacksonville.

The most helpful sources of information for this study were oral interviews with over one hundred black and white people who graciously shared with the author their knowledge of Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton. These interviews took place in the 1980s in Jacksonville unless otherwise noted. A few people sent informative letters to me. Several additional interviews of Jacksonville blacks, tape recorded in the 1970s, from the Oral History Archives of the University of Florida, Gainesville, were very valuable, as were an oral interview of Mary Singleton by Daniel L. Schafer and a tape-recorded speech by Sallye Mathis.

Numerous newspaper articles, especially from the Florida Times-Union and Jacksonville Journal, helped pin

Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, February 8, 1977, in "Conference on Jacksonville History" special collection, Thomas G. Carpenter Library, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.); Richard A. Martin, Consolidation: Jacksonville: The Dynamics of Urban Political Reform (Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Convention Press, 1968); Damon C. Miller, "The Jacksonville Consolidation: The Process of Metropolitan Reform" (B.A. thesis, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1968); Joan Carver, "Responsiveness and Consolidation: A Case Study," Urban Affairs Quarterly 9 (December 1973): 211-250.

down specific happenings and other information.¹⁶ Government records of legislation in the Jacksonville City Council and the Florida Legislature, the Duval County Clerk of Court, Jacksonville City Directories, U. S. Census records, reports of local committees, and voter registration and election data from the office of the Duval County Supervisor of Elections were also used. Additional information was obtained from miscellaneous materials in the Eartha Mary Magdalene White Collection at the Thomas G. Carpenter Library of the University of North Florida (Jacksonville, Fla.), the Eartha Mary Magdalene White Memorial Art and Historical Resource Center at the Clara White Mission (Jacksonville, Fla.), the Florida Collection at the Hayden Burns Public Library (Jacksonville, Fla.), files of the Jacksonville City Council Research Department, and personal files of several people in Jacksonville, Florida: Dr. James B. Crooks, Willye Dennis, Isadore Singleton (Jr.), and especially Grace Brooks Solomon, sister of Sallye B. Mathis.

The histories of Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton encompass the changes in the opportunities available to blacks and those available to women generally. They grew up when blacks in the south were racially segregated and both blacks and all but a few white women were kept out of significant political power. This paper will consider how,

¹⁶The Florida Times-Union and Jacksonville Journal (Jacksonville, Florida) are hereafter cited as FTU, JJ, or FTU-JJ (for their combined papers).

after decades of the exclusion of blacks and women generally from governmental leadership, Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Little Singleton decided to run for office in 1967, how they were elected in a city-wide, at-large election, and what they accomplished in public office.

This study will begin with an exploration of the black community in Jacksonville, Florida, in which these two women were raised and spent their adult years. There will be a consideration of how the black community dealt with new opportunities and yet continued racial discrimination and segregation after the Civil War. While making major contributions to the economic development of the Jacksonville area, black men and women took advantage of their new opportunities and founded economic, religious, educational, social and charitable organizations to meet the needs of their community, since they were excluded from white institutions and activities, especially after 1890.

In addition to this generally quiet resistance to their secondary status, blacks in Jacksonville also took advantage of what opportunities they had for political participation, including service in elective political office after the Civil War for a longer period than in most areas of the South. Some Jacksonville blacks continued to vote and be active in the Republican party until they won a 1945 court suit which enabled them to participate in the more powerful Democratic party as well. Black men and women of

Jacksonville also worked towards equal rights through several boycotts and other court cases, with some successes in the 1940s and 1950s due to changing federal court policies.

Special attention will be given to the important part black women played in these activities, with some women playing visible leadership roles. The ties between Jacksonville blacks and other black leaders and organizations in Florida and the nation, including several blacks from Jacksonville who achieved national prominence, will also be noted.

The paper will examine how Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton were taught the values of this dynamic black community in their families, schools, churches and other activities as they were growing up, as well as how they used their abilities and training during their adult years in the community as educators, family members and leaders in various community efforts. After the deaths of their husbands they reached out in further involvement to meet the needs of the black community at a time when the struggles towards integration were more visible and successful than in the past. Thus these two women participated in the major civil rights struggles of the times--Mary Singleton primarily as the wife of a respected black politician in the 1950s and early 1960s, and Sallye Mathis in efforts to integrate community organizations, public facilities, the school system and city government. Through these activities

they gained name recognition and respect for their personal qualities in the black community and some of the white community, as well as leadership experience and a growing understanding of community needs.

This paper will consider why these two women were encouraged by some black men to run for city council positions and why these women decided to accept the challenge. Also studied will be the factors influencing their support by enough black and white voters to enable their election in 1967 to positions where they could begin to work on the community's problems with some official power. The effect of the proposal for a major reorganization of government in Duval County on their election will be included.

The paper will also examine the goals, accomplishments and frustrations of these two public officials during their years on the Jacksonville City Council and, for Mary Singleton, her years as a state legislator and then a director of the Florida Division of Elections. Their emphasis on getting help for the needs of low-income and other needy people will be traced, as well as their willingness to speak out for the special concerns of black people. In spite of hindrances, they were able to give voice to the concerns of various groups of people and to achieve concrete results in many areas of endeavor. This paper should help fill in some of the gaps in the black--and women's--history of Jacksonville.

CHAPTER II
BACKGROUND

1865-1890

Some insight into the careers of Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton can be found in the heritage of black people in Jacksonville. Following the Civil War they worked hard to found and build the institutions they needed for an active community life of their own, in spite of racial discrimination and segregation. They resisted the limitations imposed on them, nearly always nonviolently, and they participated in the wider community life and politics when they were permitted to do so.

Between 1865 and 1890, black men and women in Jacksonville made varied attempts to become economically independent, and achieved impressive, though limited, economic gains. They "did not profit greatly" from the growing industry and tourism of the area because of their limited training and because of competition from whites. There was some upward mobility for blacks, but it was considerably less than for whites. A small middle class did develop in Jacksonville among small businessmen, clergymen, a few lawyers and physicians, and skilled or other regular workers. La Villa and Oakland (on the "Eastside") were

considered attractive, stable neighborhoods. Blacks tended to live in black neighborhoods, and most lived in severe poverty. Several unions among construction and sawmill workers and longshoremen tried to improve their working conditions and wages via several unsuccessful strikes.¹

Barbara Richardson noted that the blacks

were economically unable to carry out effective boycotts or to bring legal action against white businesses which discriminated against them. Consequently, Black leaders did not often agitate for reform. Instead, they counseled independence and self-help in matters of discrimination.²

Black leaders in Jacksonville, as elsewhere, expounded the basic American values of hard work, self-help, education and personal morality which many felt would make them more acceptable to whites and aid their assimilation into American life. To these values blacks often added black consciousness and black pride which served as a buffer against the continuing white prejudice.³

Black women had a large part in these efforts of the black community. They were taught to try to support themselves and usually had to, since their men were rarely

¹Barbara Richardson, pp. 76, 84, 85, 121; James Weldon Johnson, pp. 45, 22-28; FTU, April 1, 1985, p. B-1; Roland Harper, "Negro Labor Looks at Jacksonville," The Crisis (New York: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) 49 (January 1942): 13, 18.

²Barbara Richardson, p. 223.

³Barbara Richardson, p. 76; Jack Temple Kirby, Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1972), p. 157.

paid enough to support the whole family. The ideal of the proper "lady" who focused on gentle and obedient service within her own household, which was taught to most middle and upper class white wives, proved nonfunctional for black women. A limited number were able to get training as teachers or nurses, while black males were often forced to seek employment at an earlier age. Even many middle-class black women who did not need to work chose to continue their careers. These employed women earned respect as economic producers in their communities, even though most had to work at menial jobs. Black women were also the mainstays of their families, although black families were more flexible in adopting family roles to meet the needs of its members, such as other family members helping with tasks when the women worked outside the home.⁴ Black women also had a long tradition of active participation in community affairs. Faced with great needs among their people, they took upon themselves a third career--the "uplift" of the black race--guiding and encouraging not only their own children but all the children in their neighborhoods and communities. In Jacksonville, while black women were not usually visible in

⁴Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedastal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 3-22; Lerner, p. 287; Giddings, pp. 58, 673; Robert B. Hill, The Strengths of Black Families (New York: Emerson Hall Publ., 1972), p. 17.

top leadership positions, there were many who gave leadership and support in various organizations.⁵

A major aid in economic and other types of black development were the churches founded immediately after the Civil War, such as Bethel Baptist Church and Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church. As in the days of slavery, the black church, with its unique blending of African religious concepts and orthodox Christianity, interpreted the Bible in a way which gave blacks dignity, self-esteem, confidence in a God of justice, patience, and yet a basis for resistance to oppression.⁶ After the Civil War the black church in Jacksonville was the community's only institution totally controlled by black people. In the church blacks also learned skills of leadership, self-reliance, organization and money management. In the face of white hostility, the black churches "were the most powerful forces within the Black community."⁷

In 1891 Jacksonville had twenty-six black churches of which fourteen were Baptist of various types, eight A.M.E., three Methodist Episcopal, one Presbyterian, and one Episcopal. There were also black members of the Catholic

⁵Interview with Hettie Mills, June 11, 1985. See also, Giddings, p. 673.

⁶Barbara Richardson, p. 165; Gary B. Nash, Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), pp. 189-190; Levine, "The Concept of the New Negro," p. 133.

⁷Barbara Richardson, pp. 165, 176.

Church and some other groups, as well as camp and revival meetings.⁸

Church leaders, especially of the A.M.E. and Baptist churches, were very active in economic, educational, and social welfare efforts in the community, and a number of clergy became political leaders. In 1886 the Colored Pastors Union of Jacksonville met in Jacksonville and decided to discourage all travel not absolutely necessary by blacks on segregated railroads.⁹

In addition to economic and church development, black adults and children in Jacksonville took advantage of schools that were offered them and started some schools of their own. Educated black and white teachers came from the North to help with the schools.¹⁰ In 1868 blacks bought property and obtained money from the Freedmen's Aid Society to erect Stanton Normal School for eight grades of basic and teacher education. By December of 1869, the school had 346

⁸Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, 130th Anniversary of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, Jacksonville, Florida, 1838-1968 (Jacksonville, Fla.: Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, 1968), pp. 2, 6; Joe Richardson, p. 84; Barbara Richardson, pp. 167, 171.

⁹Barbara Richardson, p. 176; FTU, April 11, 1887; The Weekly Pelican (New Orleans), January 1, 1887, cited in Wali R. Kharif, "Black Reaction to Segregation and Discrimination in Post-Reconstruction Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly 64 (October 1985): 163.

¹⁰Barbara Richardson, pp. 126, 156; Joe Richardson, p. 103; Martin with Schafer, pp. 249-51; Gerald Schwartz, "An Integrated Free School In Civil War Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly 61 (October, 1982): 155-61.

students with six teachers and in 1870 it was turned over to the Duval County school system. In the 1880s, there were also three smaller, nongraded public schools for black children in Duval County. The public schools remained segregated and received considerably less funding than the white schools received.¹¹

Jacksonville blacks also worked to obtain further education to train teachers, clergy and other leaders. By 1892 the black churches had founded three secondary schools which eventually became colleges: Cookman Institute, Edward Waters College, and Florida Baptist Academy. Boylan Home Industrial Training School For Girls, later Boylan Haven School for Girls, was started by the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and soon gave a secondary education to black girls from around Florida. Black teachers organized a Duval County Teachers' Association by 1882 and a Florida Teachers' Association in 1889. The various black schools held public lectures and debates.¹²

¹¹Joe Richardson, pp. 110, 120; Barbara Richardson, p. 142; J. I. E. Scott, p. 42; Arthur O. White, "State Leadership in Black Education, 1876-1976," PHYLON 42 (June 1981): 169, 171; FTU, April 5, 1989.

¹²Interview with Lillian G. Smalls, October 29, 1985; Barbara Richardson, pp. 147-156; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 41-51; FTU, July 2, 1987, Sec. VIII, p.4; Joe Richardson, pp. 121-122; Bethel Baptist Institutional Church; Louise S. Brown, quoted in FTU, April 1, 1985, p. B-1; Arthur White, p. 169.

In addition to developing their own businesses, churches and schools, blacks dealt with their exclusion from most white organizations and government aid by creating their own self-help and charitable organizations. In 1868 black women organized the Daughters of Israel Society to aid the burial of destitute blacks, and there were several additional mutual aid societies by 1900. The Duval Fire Engine Company sponsored social occasions to raise funds to purchase a fire engine and construct a fire house. During the 1888 yellow fever epidemic, the Colored Auxiliary Bureau was started to help with black needs and continued as the Colored Relief Bureau of Jacksonville. Other service organizations included the Colored Orphan's Home Association, the Colored Law and Order League and the Colored Medical Protective Health Association.¹³

Jacksonville blacks also created social and cultural groups and programs. James Weldon Johnson, who was born and raised in Jacksonville and later became a nationally famous writer, diplomat and civil rights leader, described black-organized concerts, speeches, debates and baseball games which some whites attended during this period, as well as black literary societies, picnics, river rides, black

¹³Barbara Richardson, pp. 110, 118; Joe Richardson, p. 45; James B. Crooks, "Changing Face of Jacksonville, Florida: 1900-1910," Florida Historical Quarterly 62 (April 1984): 440; Kharif, p. 169; FTU, August 9, 1887; Jacksonville, Florida City Directory (New York: Webb Brothers and Co., 1882).

Masons, Odd Fellow's lodges and other types of social and mutual aid groups. Blacks took part in ceremonies in Jacksonville to welcome visiting dignitaries such as ex-president Ulysses S. Grant in 1877 and black civil rights leader Frederick Douglass in 1889. As Katie G. Cannon commented, "Black life is more than defensive reactions to oppressive circumstances. . . . Black life is the rich, colorful creativity that emerged and reemerges in the Black quest for human dignity."¹⁴

In the political arena, blacks in Jacksonville participated in voting and were able to get some of their number into public positions for a longer time than in other parts of Florida and most of the South. In 1865 they urged the new provisional governor of Florida, William T. Marvin, that they be allowed to vote.¹⁵ Encouraged by the Jacksonville Union Republican Club, begun in April 1867, they held political meetings and, by October 1867, 705 of the 1,090 registered voters in Duval County were blacks.¹⁶

Once allowed to vote by action of the federal government in 1868, blacks "became a major political factor" as

¹⁴James Weldon Johnson, pp. 44, 45; Katie G. Cannon, "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness," in Feminist Interpretations of the Bible, edited by Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), p. 40; Levy, Johnson, p. 9; FTU, April 5, 1889, p. 6. See also Jacksonville, Florida City Directory (1882).

¹⁵Klingman, p. 104; Barbara Richardson, p. 181, 188.

¹⁶Joe Richardson, pp. 184, 195; Barbara Richardson, pp. 184-87; Shofner, Nor Is It Over, p. 173.

both Republicans and Democrats tried to win and control the sizeable black vote. Blacks never controlled the government, however, at the local or state levels, and the Republican party had a majority in the Florida House of Representatives only between 1868 and 1872.¹⁷

Duval County blacks served as delegates to the Florida State Constitutional Conventions in 1868 and 1885, as members of the Jacksonville City Council and school board and as other local government officials. In 1888 a municipal judge and several justices of the peace were blacks.¹⁸ Jonathan Gibbs of Jacksonville was appointed Secretary of State in 1873 he served as the Florida Superintendent of Public Instruction to strengthen the new public school system in Florida from January 1873 until his sudden death

¹⁷Joe Richardson, p. 184, 195; Shofner, p. 173; Barbara Richardson, p. 178.

¹⁸Roy Singleton, Jr., "History Making Blacks in the Jacksonville Area," in 1985 Black History Committee, Black History: The Facts (Jacksonville: University of North Florida, 1985), pp. 15-17; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (New York: W. S. Webb & Co., 1876), p. 176; Klingman, p. 33, passim; Barbara Richardson, pp. 196-207; Edward N. Akin, "When a Minority Becomes a Majority: Blacks in Jacksonville Politics, 1887-1907," Florida Historical Quarterly 53 (October 1974): 126-134; FTU, April 22, 1887, p. 2.

in August 1874.¹⁹ A number of blacks represented Duval County in the Florida legislature until the late 1880s.²⁰

After 1876, conservative Democrats gained control in much of the South, including Jacksonville, where they split the black vote. Many blacks were critical of the failure of the Republican party to do more for blacks, but blacks continued to send delegates to district and state Republican conventions and other black and/or Republican meetings.²¹ According to historian Peter Klingman,

Jacksonville was the one exception in Florida to the decline in Republican fortunes. Negroes and white Republicans managed to maintain a voice in Duval County politics and Jacksonville city politics to a degree unmatched elsewhere in the state or in the entire South.²²

Thus, James Weldon Johnson could say that Jacksonville was "known far and wide as a good town for Negroes . . . long after the close of the Reconstruction period."²³ While he was growing up in a secure, middle-class family and neighborhood, he was aware that not only were "many of the

¹⁹Joe Richardson, pp. 185-86; Klingman, p. 49; Barbara Richardson, p. 195; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 82-84, 129-41;

²⁰Allen Morris, comp., The People of Lawmaking in Florida, 1822-1985 (Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida, House of Representatives, 1985); Joe Richardson, pp. 188, 195; Klingman, pp. 33, 104, passim; Barbara Richardson, p. 192; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 5-6; Akin, p. 126.

²¹Joe Richardson, p. 194; FTU, February 22, 1982; Akin, pp. 125-135.

²²Klingman, p. 104.

²³James Weldon Johnson, p. 45, passim.

best stalls in the city market owned and operated by Negroes,"but also that blacks had important positions in city government. The son of middle-class parents from the West Indies who filled their home with books, music and interesting people, he felt that the most fortunate feature of his childhood was that he "was reared free from undue fear of or esteem for white people as a race." He also felt that there was a direct relation between the unusual opportunities for blacks in Jacksonville . . . and the fact that Jacksonville was controlled by certain aristocratic families . . . who were sensitive to the code, noblesse oblige." Johnson observed later that when the aristocratic families lost control to "the poor white," the old conditions changed and Jacksonville became "a one hundred percent Cracker town."²⁴

When the political and other successes made whites fearful of black control, Jacksonville Democrats persuaded the 1889 state legislature to pass a bill to reduce black/Republican power in Jacksonville by allowing the governor authority to appoint a new city council of whites, who chose a conservative Democrat as mayor. To prevent black/Republican power in all of Florida, the 1889 state legislature also passed laws providing for a poll tax, a multiple ballot system with separate ballots and ballot boxes for each office, a five minute limit for voting, and other measures

²⁴James Weldon Johnson, pp. 44, 45, 89; Levy, Johnson, p. 16.

to reduce voting. In 1893, the elected mayor and council were restored to Jacksonville but the voting requirements so limited black voting that blacks had only minor influence in the council after that and their votes were no longer wooed by Republicans or Democrats. Nevertheless, blacks did continue to register as Republicans or Independents and vote in General Elections, and they were allowed to elect several men to the city council from the predominantly black Sixth Ward until 1907, when its boundaries were gerrymandered to prevent the election of blacks.²⁵

Thus, black men and women made limited gains in employment, education and institutions for religious, charitable and social life after the Civil War, even though the basic ideals and patterns of white supremacy remained and the temporary possibilities for real political influence by blacks in Jacksonville disappeared around 1890.²⁶ The removal of former opportunities in politics was not a total loss, however, in spite of the tightening of Jim Crow laws and near total segregation between the races. Black men and women of Jacksonville could take pride in the quiet achievements they had made since the Civil War, the institutions that had been founded, the numerous leaders who had gained recognition in the black community and, for some, in the

²⁵Akin, p. 139; Barbara Richardson, pp. 209, 215; Levy, Johnson, p. 59; FTU, April 4, 1889, pp. 1, 4; FTU, April 5, 1889, p. 1; FTU, April 11, 1889, p. 1.

²⁶Barbara Richardson, pp. 53, 221.

political life of Jacksonville. There were many role models for blacks to remember and continue to observe. Joe R.

Richardson pointed out that such things as

education, experience, and the knowledge of how it feels to be a free man could not be taken away. The Negro could view Reconstruction as something to strive for in the future, or perhaps to look back on with sadness and longing.²⁷

1890-1946

With significant political activity increasingly closed to blacks in Jacksonville after 1890, and as racial segregation and discrimination continued, black men and women continued to develop their own institutions and community life. In the South, efforts towards civil rights had to be carried out very quietly, if at all, to avoid severe punishment from whites. Although physical violence against blacks in Jacksonville was only occasional, blacks who were bold had to fear the possibility of physical violence or, more likely, economic reprisals against themselves and their families. Jerrell H. Shofner noted that while many whites in Florida "deplored" the lynchings and other violence, they

²⁷Joe Richardson, p. 240. See the program of the Lincoln Memorial Association, "1863-1913 Tri-Celebration--Lincoln, Douglass, Fifty Years of Freedom," Jacksonville, Fla., February 12, 1913 (in Eartha White Collection, folder O-2, Thomas G. Carpenter Library, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.), honoring prominent local blacks. See also, Thomas H. B. Walker, "The Story of the Negro in Jacksonville From the Pioneer Days to the Present," in The National Negro Blue Book, North Florida Edition (Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Blue Book Publishing Co., 1926); FTU, May 7, 1959, pp. 31, 50; Brief biography of Councilman George E. Ross, in "Sallye B. Mathis" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department, Jacksonville, Fla.

"still obeyed the infinite daily reinforcements of their segregated system and inequalities in jobs and pay."²⁸ Actually, black businesses and organizational life were strengthened by segregation and the resultant lessened competition from white activities. For some black leaders, a spirit of cooperation between the races, and especially with leading white citizens, was seen as the best way to soften the racism of the times and lead to racial equality in the future.²⁹

In the area of economics, blacks in Jacksonville were highly influenced by the ideas of Tuskegee Institute president Booker T. Washington on self-help and economic gain. They were involved in the founding of the National Negro Business League by Washington in 1900 as "an organization by which good business principles might be disseminated among Negroes."³⁰ Working with Washington was T. Thomas Fortune, who had lived in Jacksonville as a teen-ager, married Carrie Smiley of Jacksonville, and in 1881 moved to

²⁸Florida had the highest lynching rate in the United States (4.5 lynchings for every ten thousand blacks) between 1900 and 1920, according to Colburn and Scher, p. 37; Jerrell H. Shofner, "Custom, Law and History: The Enduring Influence of Florida's Black Codes," Florida Historical Quarterly 55 (January 1977): 293.

²⁹See James B. Crooks, "Jacksonville in the Progressive Era: Responses to Urban Growth," Florida Historical Quarterly 65 (July 1986): 52-71.

³⁰Daniel L. Schafer, "Eartha M. M. White: The Early Years of a Jacksonville Humanitarian" (unpublished paper, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla., May 1976), pp. 18, 19; FTU, January 19, 1974, p. B-1.

New York City where he became well-known for protesting injustices against blacks as editor of several black newspapers.³¹ Jacksonville blacks at the group's founding meeting of the Business League in Boston included Rev. Jerome Milton Waldron, pastor of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church from 1892 to 1907, and Eartha Mary Magdalene White, a businesswoman. A. L. Lewis became treasurer of the national group and Eartha White became its official historian for many years.³²

The League in Jacksonville, known as the "Negro Chamber of Commerce," encouraged the forming of new business ventures and numerous social and political organizations and was for many years one of the strongest chapters. At the center of the Negro Chamber of Commerce was Miss White, "for years its most energetic female participant and its official historian."³³ Like Washington, she believed that "business success, education, and uplift, could be effective

³¹Emma Lou Thornbrough, "T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Editor in the Age of Accommodation," in Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century, ed. by John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 19-37; Seth M. Scheiner, Negro Mecca: A History of the Negro in New York City, 1865-1920 (New York: New York University Press, 1965), pp. 59, 181, 198.

³²Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years", pp. 18, 19; FTU, January 19, 1974, p. B-1; Jacksonville (Florida) Advocate, February 20, 1982, p. 10.

³³Schafer, "Eartha White: The Early Years," p. 19.

instruments to combat prejudice in the future."³⁴ A state group of the National Business League was also organized.³⁵

In 1901, at the suggestion of Rev. Jerome Waldron, seven black businessmen each contributed one hundred dollars to found the Afro-American Life Insurance Company. A. L. Lewis became president of the company, which was worth a million and a half dollars at his death in 1947 and continued to prosper under the leadership of his son, James Lewis.³⁶

Brewster Hospital for blacks was opened with white Methodist help, and in 1902 had a nursing school to train black nurses. However, while a few white men supported black opportunities, city officials were removing blacks from all but the most menial jobs in city employment and most blacks still lived in poverty.³⁷

³⁴Daniel L. Schafer, "Eartha Mary Magdalene White," in Notable American Women: The Modern Period, ed. Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green with Ilene Kantrov and Harriette Walker (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1980), p. 727.

³⁵The Negro State Business League of Florida, "Program of the Sixth Annual Session of the Negro State Business League of Florida, July 30th-31st, 1913" (Jacksonville, Florida: The Negro State Business League of Florida, 1913) (in Eartha White Collection, folder B-3).

³⁶Bethel Baptist Institutional Church; Neyland, pp. 54-59; The Crisis (New York: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) 49 (January 1942): 21.

³⁷Crooks, "Changing Face," pp. 440, 460, 461; J. A. Thomas (executive secretary of the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League), "The Present Day Story of the Negro in Jacksonville," in The National Negro Blue Book, North Florida Edition (Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Blue Book

By 1925 there were approximately six hundred businesses owned and operated by blacks. During the Depression, however, numerous businesses, especially those of blacks, were forced to close because of the loss of patronage due to unemployment and difficulties in securing loans. By 1942 there were 359 businesses owned and operated by blacks in Duval County which employed over two thousand people.³⁸

In addition to economic ventures, black men and women also maintained their efforts to improve various kinds of religious and educational opportunities for blacks. By 1910 there were sixty-four black churches in Jacksonville and by 1936 there were over two hundred. Some church leaders continued to take leadership in developing educational and other opportunities.³⁹

In addition to founding Florida Baptist Academy in 1892, Bethel Baptist Church also became incorporated by the State of Florida in 1894 in order to carry on social betterment and vocational training programs. Pastor Jerome Waldron, a graduate of Lincoln University and Newton

Publishing Co., 1926; Walker.

³⁸J. A. Thomas; Northeast Florida Advocate (Jacksonville, Fla.), May 3, 1987; George W. Powell, "Business in Jacksonville," The Crisis, January 1942, p. 9.

³⁹Crooks, "Changing Face," p. 446; Courtesy Committee, National Baptist Convention, Inc. (Eartha M. M. White, chairman), "A 'Thumb-nail' Sketch of Colored Jacksonville, Florida" (Jacksonville, Fla.: Courtesy Committee, National Baptist Convention, Inc., 1936) (in Eartha White collection, folder Y-1).

Theological Seminary, believed that "Bethel should stand as a refutation of racial inferiority and an an object lesson of the better side of Negro culture and progress in the South."⁴⁰

In 1894, James Weldon Johnson graduated from Atlanta University and became principal of Stanton School, which had over a thousand students. Johnson quietly added the high school grades to Stanton, with the white superintendent's knowledge, until it became the only public high school for blacks in Duval County until 1950. He was president of the state Negro Teachers' Association in 1901.⁴¹ In 1895 Johnson also started Jacksonville's first black daily newspaper, the Daily American, in order to argue for black rights and self-help. He passed the state bar exam after being tutored by a local white lawyer.⁴²

Among the educational and inspirational events held in the Jacksonville community were the yearly celebrations to honor the Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln and/or Frederick Douglass to remind blacks of past achievements and to honor black leaders. For the 1900 celebration, Johnson wrote "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which was put to music by

⁴⁰Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, p. 8; Interview with Hettie Mills, June 11, 1985.

⁴¹James Weldon Johnson; Levy, Johnson, pp. 49-73, 78.

⁴²The newspaper did well at first, but lasted only six months, due to competition from "colored columns" in two local newspapers. Levy, Johnson, pp. 53-63.

his brother John Rosamond Johnson and sung by the students at Stanton School. The song spread in popularity until it was adopted as the official song of the N.A.A.C.P. and called "The Negro National Anthem."⁴³

Black educators and parents kept on trying to deal with problems in the public schools, which continued to underfund the staff, buildings and equipment of black schools. Dr. Charles Brooks noted that these were the days when blacks couldn't be anything but teachers, except for an occasional doctor or preacher, since there was no other training available for them. However, Stanton High School and private schools for blacks taught pride in black writers and history.⁴⁴ In 1927 a Florida Conference of Colored Parents and Teachers was founded by Mary White Blocker, who became the first president, and other Jacksonville teachers. Dr. Charles Brooks said that the P.T.A.'s purchased a lot of helpful equipment for the schools.⁴⁵

In addition to economic, religious and educational activities, black men and women in Jacksonville continued to develop charitable ventures. Stressing racial solidarity and self-help, blacks continually urged each other to help

⁴³Levy, Johnson, p. 71; Lincoln Memorial Association.

⁴⁴Brooks interview; FTU, July 18, 1982, p. B-1; FTU, April 1, 1985, p. B-1; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 42; Arthur White, p. 171; Edward Davis, p. 182.

⁴⁵Brooks interview; FTU, February 22, 1982, pp. C-1, 2; Florida Star (Jacksonville, Fla.), February 17, 1964.

the needy, especially, since blacks were usually denied the services of white organizations and tax-supported programs.

A person who gave outstanding leadership in the service of Jacksonville's needy people was Eartha Mary Magdeline White (1876-1974), who began by helping her mother, Clara White, feed hungry people at their home. Educated in Jacksonville and New York City, she taught school for a few years and began various successful business ventures that helped support her charitable work for the next seventy-five years. In 1900 she helped organize a Colored Citizens Protective League and in 1901 revived the Union Benevolent Association, which had been founded in 1875 to care for needy blacks. She and her mother raised money for the construction of the Colored Old Folks Home in 1902. According to Amy Stewart Currie, the first officers of the Old Folks' Home were all women.⁴⁶

For many years, Eartha White operated the only "colored orphanage" in the area, possibly in the state. She organized various forms of public recreation for black children and led in lobbying for better treatment of prisoners and other needy people in Florida. She visited the Duval County prison farm every Sunday and arranged Christmas dinners and programs for the nursing homes, prison farm, and various

⁴⁶Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years," pp. 14-22; Interview with Amy S. Currie, September 6, 1985. See also Scheiner, p. 200.

house-bound people. She always served the needy of all races, since she did not believe in segregation.⁴⁷

During World Wars I and II, blacks in Jacksonville helped enthusiastically with impressive contributions to bond drives, patriotic programs and services to black and white soldiers. Eartha White took leadership in these activities.⁴⁸ The Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.), which had been started by the (white) Woman's Club of Jacksonville in 1911, helped blacks to begin local Y.W.C.A. work with black women and girls in 1919, and by 1936 there were 250 black members of the Y.W.C.A.'s Girls Reserve in Jacksonville.⁴⁹

The local Welfare Federation, founded in 1915, began the Jacksonville Community Chest in 1924 and included a Colored Division, which worked with the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League, founded in 1925, to raise sixteen thousand dollars in money and pledges in 1926 from the black community and more from whites for the Old Folks Home, the Sunshine Day Nursery serving thirty-five hundred children,

⁴⁷Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years," pp. 6, 21-26; Interview with Grayce Bateman, September 13, 1985; Harold Gibson, "My Most Unforgettable Character," Readers' Digest 105 (December 1974): 123-127.

⁴⁸Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years," p. 32; Papers in Eartha White collection, folder V-2.

⁴⁹Jacksonville Young Women's Christian Association, "A Short History of Jacksonville Young Women's Christian Association" (Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Young Women's Christian Association, 1982); Courtesy Committee, National Baptist Convention (1936).

Brewster Hospital, Traveler's Aid and the Christmas Charity Club. An interracial committee was discussing community issues at the time.⁵⁰

In 1928, Eartha White and her friends established the Clara White Mission at Ashley and Broad Streets to continue the giving of food and clothing to the needy that she and her mother had offered through the years out of their home. Miss White lived at this site until her death in 1974, and the mission "became the headquarters for the activities for people of all races headed or sponsored by Miss White." These activities included a maternity home, a child placement center and orphan home, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Community center, a tuberculosis rest home, buildings for child care centers, a black history museum, food lines and programs of the Works Progress Administration during the 1930s, U.S.O. and Red Cross activities for blacks during World War II, and the Eartha M. M. White Nursing Home in 1967.⁵¹

In the 1942, blacks were welcomed at occasional integrated events sponsored by the Ministerial Alliance, the Religious Council of Women, the Y.W.C.A. and the Boy Scouts.

⁵⁰"Your Community Chest, February 14-20, 1926" (Pamphlet, Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Community Chest, 1926, in Eartha White Collection, folder B-1); J. A. Thomas.

⁵¹Schafer, "Eartha White," in Notable American Women, pp. 726-727; Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years," p. 26; Jacksonville Y.W.C.A.; FTU, November 1, 1941, p. 21; FTU, October 1, 1943, p. 21; Florida Tattler (Jacksonville, Fla.), August 19, 1944; JJ, December 5, 1970, p. 28.

Minnie Louise Wade, who had come to Jacksonville in 1919, said that "integration really began at the end of World War II when some whites as well as blacks felt that if blacks could serve and die in the Armed Forces they should have rights." In 1946 blacks attended programs in Jacksonville of the Florida Council of Church Women (which later became Church Women United), the National Conference of Christians and Jews and some other religious groups.⁵² There was also an integrated Friday prayer group of Christian and Jewish leaders which worked quietly with other concerned blacks and whites to obtain more equal funding for schools and street lights, black policemen in 1950, and private donations for the black library and playgrounds.⁵³ In 1946 an interracial group of prominent citizens, at the urging of black leaders, participated in an extensive survey of community needs by the local Council of Social Agencies. The survey led to the formation of a Jacksonville chapter of the National Urban League in 1947.⁵⁴

⁵²Robert T. Thomas, "Interracial Relations," The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 19, 27; Interview with Minnie Louise Wade (formerly Mrs. Norwood Phelps), January 22, 1986; Interview with Ola Mae Caesar, May 21, 1985; "Church Women United in Greater Jacksonville, Florida, Inc.," pamphlet (Jacksonville, Fla.: Church Women United in Greater Jacksonville, Florida, Inc., 1984); Telephone interview with Rabbi Sidney Lefkowitz, November 26, 1985.

⁵³Wade interview; Schafer, "Voluntarism," pp. 1-14.

⁵⁴Council of Social Agencies, "Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community--A Survey of Conditions Affecting the Negro Population in Jacksonville in Duval County, Florida" (Jacksonville, Fla.: Council of Social Agencies, 1946);

Blacks in Jacksonville continued to develop organizations and activities to meet their needs. Some were primarily social, but most combined social with educational or charitable goals to help the community. Through these groups, blacks increased their knowledge of public affairs and gained leadership experience. In 1912 and 1913, the Free and Accepted Masons of Florida, organized in Jacksonville in 1870, built a four-story building at Broad and Duval Streets which could be used for community meetings. References to Jacksonville in national black papers of the era, such as the New York Age, described it as "segregated but far better than South Florida or Georgia."⁵⁵

By 1926 there were twenty-eight black fraternal orders represented in Jacksonville. In 1927, some local blacks opened their own Lincoln Golf and Country Club since they were not allowed to play at white clubs. Black fraternities and sororities for college students and alumni provided new networks of friendship, inspiration and support for various

Council of Social Agencies, Bi-Racial Follow-up Committee, "Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community: A Brief Report of the Bi-Racial Follow-up Committee," (Jacksonville, Fla.: Council of Social Agencies, 1948); FTU January 29, 1946, p. 20; Jacksonville Urban League, Inc., Nineteenth Annual Report: Status of Blacks in Jacksonville, 1983 (Jacksonville, Fla., 1983), p. 6.

⁵⁵Crooks, "Changing Face," p. 440; The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 33; FTU, February 27, 1984, p. B-1.

civic activities. By 1947 there were over one hundred fifty clubs for blacks in Jacksonville.⁵⁶

Black women in Jacksonville, as elsewhere, organized some separate organizations. They had frequent contacts with the national black women's club movement. Mrs. M. E. Smith, who had come from the North as a teacher for the Freedman's Bureau, organized the M. E. Smith Club in Jacksonville as part of the Afro-American Woman's Club in 1896, and has been noted as the first club woman in Florida.⁵⁷ Eartha White and Sara A. Blocker of Jacksonville were listed as early leaders of the National Association of Colored Women which united several national and over a hundred local groups in 1896 in order "to combat racial discrimination and to express a sense of identity and solidarity among black women on a national level."⁵⁸ Representing over fifty thousand black women in over a thousand clubs in twenty-eight state federations by 1914, the National Association of Colored Women provided "expert

⁵⁶J. A. Thomas; Eleanor Jackson Maulsby, "Jacksonville Society," The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 34; Invitation to the opening of the Lincoln Golf and Country Club, Jacksonville, Fla., 1927 (in Eartha White Collection, folder N-2); Interview with Raiford Brown, September 11, 1985.

⁵⁷Joe Richardson, p. 103; Note on photo, in Eartha White Collection, folder C-28; The Crisis 49 (September 1942) 289.

⁵⁸Beverly W. Jones, "Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901," The Journal of Negro History 67 (Spring 1982): 20, 32. See also Lerner, p. 436; The Crisis 49 (September 1942), p. 289.

leadership and example to local women" and encouraged self-improvement, black pride and community involvement.⁵⁹

At the second annual session of the Florida Federation of Colored Women in 1910, four of the eight officers were from Jacksonville. In 1913, Margaret Murray Washington, prominent educator and wife of Booker T. Washington, spoke in Jacksonville at the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.⁶⁰

Jacksonville blacks had close ties with one of the most prominent black women in the country through her school and the club movement--Mary McCleod Bethune (1875-1955). In 1904 Mrs. Bethune founded a school for black girls of the railroad workers in Daytona Beach, Florida, which became the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Girls. In 1923 her school merged with the Methodist-funded Cookman Institute for Boys of Jacksonville to become Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach. Through the years, Mrs. Bethune made regular trips to Jacksonville and got support for her

⁵⁹Lerner, p. 437; Giddings, pp. 95, 104-108; Pittsburgh Courier, September 19, 1960, p. 15.

⁶⁰Florida Federation of Colored Women, program (Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Federation of Colored Women, 1910) (in Eartha White Collection, folder Q-4); City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, program (Jacksonville, Fla.: City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1913) (in Eartha White Collection, folder Z-2); Lincoln Memorial Association.

school, especially from Methodist Episcopal and A.M.E. churches.⁶¹

In 1917 Mary McLeod Bethune was elected president of the Florida Federation of Colored Women's Clubs (with Eartha White as treasurer). In 1920 she organized the Southeast Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, called "one of the most active groups in the club movement," and led programs addressing various types of discrimination issues.⁶² She became the eighth president of the National Association of Colored Women from 1924 to 1928--a position that catapulted her into prominence and gained her the attention of the national press and the friendship of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.⁶³

From 1927 to 1935, Mrs. Bethune worked towards the founding of the National Council of Negro Women as a cohesive umbrella for women's groups already in existence, to enhance their ideals and cooperation and help them apply for federal funds. In 1936 President Franklin Roosevelt appointed her director of the Negro Division of the National

⁶¹Interview with Dr. Charles D. Brooks, September 17, 1985; Telephone interview with Eleanor Hurley, May 5, 1985; Lerner, p. 135; Milton Meltzer, Mary McLeod Bethune: Voice of Black Hope (New York: Viking Kestrel, 1987).

⁶²The Crisis 49 (September 1942): 289; Southeast Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, "On To Memphis, Tennessee, July 3, 4, 5, 1923," program (n.p., Southeast Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1923) (in Eartha White Collection, folder G).

⁶³Brooks interview; Giddings, pp. 202, 219-230; Interview with Senator Arnett Girardeau, June 13, 1985.

Youth Administration--the first black to hold such a high-level federal position. During World War II she had several additional national positions. She also organized White House Conferences at which black women could express their views.⁶⁴

With her frequent visits, speeches and close friendships in Jacksonville, Mrs. Bethune was clearly a role model who inspired other blacks. She stayed with her "very close friend" Eartha White when in town and worked with her in a lot of clubs. Dr. Charles Brooks commented that, "although she never told me, I think Sallye Mathis used Mrs. Bethune as her role model. She was almost a mimic of her." Both were "excellent, regal" speakers.⁶⁵

As black women and men in Jacksonville worked to meet the various needs of their community, they continued to make use of the very limited political opportunities available to them. By 1901 blacks were definitely excluded from the Democratic party and its primary elections, where the decisive political decisions were made, for the next forty-four years. The Republican party in general no longer

⁶⁴Giddings, pp. 202, 213, 215, 220-230; B. Joyce Ross, "Mary McLeod Bethune and the National Youth Administration: A Case Study of Power Relationships in the Black Cabinet of Franklin D. Roosevelt," in Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century, ed. John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 167-190; Meltzer, pp. 45-55; Pittsburgh (Pa.) Courier, September 19, 1960, p. 15; New York Times, November 14, 1946, p. 42.

⁶⁵Brooks interview. See also, Ebony (Chicago) 21 (August 1966), p. 97.

really wanted black support and no longer had political power in the South, but a few local blacks remained active in the party. Attorney Joseph E. Lee was appointed by Republican presidents to the posts of Customs Collector for the Port of St. John's in 1890 and Collector of Internal Revenue for North Florida between 1898 and 1912. He was chosen local and district Republican party chairman for many years and secretary of the Republican state executive committee until his death in 1920. Rev. John R. Scott was Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue between 1903 and 1912, and chairman of the Duval County Republican Executive Committee in the 1920s.⁶⁶

White control of politics in Duval County was again threatened in 1920 when the Nineteenth Amendment for women's suffrage passed. Much of the opposition to the amendment had come from the South where whites feared the votes of black women, already active in their communities. Black women such as Mary McLeod Bethune had been active in the Equal Suffrage League, formed by the National Association of Colored Women. Also, by February 1920, two hundred black men had already paid their poll taxes in Duval County, compared to five hundred white men who had done so. Eartha

⁶⁶Klingman, pp. 110, 114, 117; FTU, February 22, 1982, p. C-1, 7; Jacksonville Advocate, May 14, 1986; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Columbus, Ohio: The Wiggins Directories Publishing Co., 1903), pp. 334, 470; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Jacksonville, Fla.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1912), pp. 434, 1026; Roy Singleton, pp. 15, 16.

White, who had long been an active Republican precinct worker, was in charge of the Negro Republican Women Voters in 1920. When the black women were forced to stand in long lines in the sun in order to register to vote, she encouraged them with buckets of cold lemonade.⁶⁷ The New York Age said that the high black registration in Jacksonville was a sign of "an exceptional black electorate at a time when many Southern blacks could not vote at all."⁶⁸

When black women who were registered to vote in Jacksonville, mostly as Republicans, numbered about half of the new women voters by October 1920, the Duval County League of Democratic Women Voters was founded by local Democrats in order to preserve white supremacy and Democratic control, with encouragement from the editor of the Florida Times Union. Judge John W. Dodge urged women to vote Democratic in order to repay the "white men of the South who for fifty years have done all in their power to protect you from the unmorality (sic), savagery and beastly characteristic of an inherently vicious black

⁶⁷Kenneth R. Johnson, "Florida women Get the Vote," Florida Historical Quarterly 48 (January 1970): 310-311; Kenneth R. Johnson, "White Racial Attitudes As a Factor in the Arguments Against the Nineteenth Amendment," PHYLON 31 (Spring 1970): 36-37; Meltzer, p. 38; FTU, February 7, 1920, p. 6; Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years," p. 31; Republican Executive Committee of Duval County, Minutes of Meeting, November 6, 1920, Jacksonville, Fla. (Resolution thanking John R. Scott, chairman, and Eartha M. M. White, leader of the Colored Women Republican Voters, for their help in the elections) (in Eartha White Collection, folder C-4).

⁶⁸FTU, February 27, 1984, p. B-1.

characteristic."⁶⁹ The attitudes of some whites were also shown that fall when three blacks accused of murder were taken from the jail in Jacksonville and lynched.⁷⁰

Blacks continued to participate in politics in Duval County, in spite of hindrances by whites. Eartha White became the only woman member of the Duval County Republican Executive Committee and in 1928 was the state chairman of the National League of Republican Colored Women.⁷¹ However, although she was among those blacks who worked for the Republican party for many years, she and other black leaders generally "fell in line with whoever was in office," since they needed white help for their philanthropic programs.⁷² A number of blacks in the 1980s remembered paying the poll tax before 1938, standing in long lines, and the indignity of having to enter the election building through the back alleys and the back door in order to vote. The elimination of the poll tax by the Florida legislature in 1937 (twenty-seven years before the poll tax was eliminated nationally), increased opportunities for black voting, but it was not until the all-white Democratic primary was declared

⁶⁹FTU, September 28, 1920, p. 13. See also FTU, October 6, pp. 7, 14.

⁷⁰FTU, October 5, 1920, p. 12.

⁷¹Nannie Burroughs (president) to members of the National League of Republican Colored Women, February 9, 1929, n.p. (in Eartha White Collection, folder C-4).

⁷²Bateman interview.

unconstitutional in 1945 that blacks could have significant influence in the more powerful Democratic party and its primaries.⁷³

Also motivating contemporary and future blacks in Jacksonville were occasional, more obvious protest activities by some of their numbers. Open protests by Jacksonville blacks were rare. James Weldon Johnson wrote about an effort of a group of blacks to stop white "crackers" from lynching a black who was in jail in the summer of 1898. Alonzo Jones, who had been on the Police Commission in 1887 and was a Sunday School superintendent at his church, had ordered rifles for a group of blacks who threatened from the rooftops around the jail to shoot if the prisoners were disturbed, and stopped the lynchings. One of the armed blacks that day was Rev. James Randolph, father of A. Philip Randolph (later a national civil rights leader). Jones was "punished" by being charged with a high enough bond to ruin him financially.⁷⁴

The biggest, open protests by blacks in Jacksonville in the early twentieth century were their boycotts of the streetcars in 1901 and 1905 when the Jacksonville City

⁷³Raiford Brown interview, 1985; Interview with Charles Lott, October 17, 1985; Interview with Charles E. Simmons, Jr., June 3, 1985; Price, pp. 23, 24; FTU, October 15, 1938.

⁷⁴James Weldon Johnson, pp. 131-132; Daniel S. Davis, Mr. Black Labor: The Story of A. Philip Randolph (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1972), pp. 1-4; Jervis Anderson, A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 42; Walker.

Council passed ordinances for the racial segregation of streetcars in spite of the bitter opposition of the black councilmen. Encouraged by black ministers and aided by black hackmen of the Coachmen's Union, the boycott was so effective that after a few months the city authorities ceased enforcing the ordinance. Although not part of the boycott, Robert R. Robinson and other blacks organized a trolley company which ran four trolleys on a regular schedule from 1902-1905.⁷⁵ When the Florida legislature passed a streetcar segregation bill in 1905, Jacksonville blacks again boycotted streetcars. They also initiated a court suit, but their efforts were defeated by new segregation ordinances in Jacksonville and Pensacola which were approved by the Florida Supreme Court in 1906. Eartha White, the James Randolph family and some others determined to never ride a streetcar again and apparently did not.⁷⁶

Jacksonville blacks were well aware of the activities of James Weldon Johnson, who moved from Jacksonville to New York City in 1902 and achieved national prominence as a black leader. He filled consulship positions in Venezuela

⁷⁵August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, "Negro Boycotts of Segregated Streetcars in Florida, 1901-1905," The South Atlantic Quarterly 69 (Autumn 1970): 525-533; Kharif, p. 163; Powell, p. 9; Interview with Luvenia Robinson (daughter-in-law of R. R. Robinson), May 30, 1985; Walker; Daniel Davis, p. 6.

⁷⁶Meier and Rudwick, "Negro Boycotts," pp. 527-533; Kirby, p. 158; Schafer, "Eartha White: Early Years," p. 29; Anderson, p. 42; Daniel Davis, p. 6.

and later in Nicaragua from 1906 until 1913. Then, as editor of the influential New York Age, founded thirty years earlier by T. Thomas Fortune, Johnson became more militant in his writings against racial injustice and in 1916 was ready to become Field Secretary of the N.A.A.C.P. In this position he became very active in the demanding and dangerous work of national leadership, organizing new N.A.A.C.P. branches and supporting local branches in their non-violent struggles against inequality. One of his projects was the silent parade in New York City in 1917 to protest the lynchings of blacks in East Saint Louis. Skillful in convincing both blacks and whites to work together, he was the guiding force in the intense lobbying for the Dyer anti-lynching bill that nearly passed Congress, 1918-24. Johnson was Executive Secretary of the N.A.A.C.P. from 1920 to 1930. Emphasizing the contributions of black people to American life, he played a leading role in the so-called "Harlem Renaissance" with his own writings and his support of other black writers and artists.⁷⁷

Peaceful struggle for equal rights in Jacksonville was not dead. In 1914 there was a Jacksonville branch of the

⁷⁷Levy, Johnson, pp. 109, 114, 151, 186, 188, 230, 265, 287; Eugene Levy, "James Weldon Johnson and the Development of the NAACP," in Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century, ed. John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 84-103; The Crisis 78 (June 1971); FTU-JJ, June 11, 1972, p. H-1; Robert L. Zangarando, The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), pp. 210.

N.A.A.C.P., with Rev. John R. Scott as president. A.M.E. Bishop Johnnie Gray took leadership in the early 1920s, as did Dr. C. F. Duncan in the early 1930s. The Jacksonville N.A.A.C.P. does not seem to have tried open protests until the 1940s. However, Eartha White became Florida director of the Anti-Lynching Crusaders Committee in 1922.⁷⁸

For many years, Mrs. Arnolta Johnston Williams, wife of physician I. E. Williams and active participant in many community service organizations, secretly used a pen name to report local black news for the Pittsburgh Courier as Jacksonville representative of the Associated Negro Press. The Pittsburgh Courier was the main printed source of news from black perspectives in Jacksonville.⁷⁹

In 1936, black labor won an important national and local victory under the leadership of another black from Jacksonville, A. Philip Randolph, who was raised in Jacksonville and graduated (as valedictorian) from Cookman Institute in 1907. In 1911 he moved to New York where he became

⁷⁸Interview with Theodore Redding, November 21, 1983; Grace Nail Johnson to James Weldon Johnson, February 2, 1914 (in James Weldon Johnson Papers at Yale University Library, Series III, Folder No. 5, noted in personal files of Dr. James B. Crooks, Jacksonville, Fla.); Dr. C. F. Duncan to N.A.A.C.P. members, December 27, 1930 and July 1, 1931, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Eartha White Collection, Folder Y-2); Mary B. Talbert to Eartha M. M. White, July 14 and 25, 1922, Buffalo, N. Y. (in Eartha White Collection, Folder Y-2).

⁷⁹Interview with Arnolta Johnston Williams, July 5, 1984; The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 18; Pittsburgh Courier, August 29, 1959, p. 3; Pittsburgh Courier, September 19, 1960, p. 2; FTU, March 1, 1982, p. C-1; Interview with Lloyd Pearson, Jr., November 20, 1985.

known as an outspoken orator and editor on behalf of black workers. In 1925, with encouragement from Jacksonville porters, Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which after much struggle finally won the first-ever contract between a black union and a major corporation, the Pullman Company, in 1937.⁸⁰

In 1941, Randolph revived the strategy of nonviolent, mass protest and led in the organizing of a March on Washington by blacks to protest the exclusion of black workers from jobs in the defense industries. Meeting with President Franklin Roosevelt, he refused to call off the demonstration until after the president issued an executive order banning discrimination in defense industries and government and established the nation's first committee on Fair Employment Practices. Randolph's March on Washington Movement, which included Eartha White and several other Jacksonville blacks, held mass meetings in various cities and pressed for further desegregation. In 1948, Randolph threatened President Harry S. Truman that, if segregation in the armed forces was not abolished, masses of blacks would refuse induction. Truman then issued Executive Order 9981

⁸⁰Benjamin Quarles, "Philip Randolph: Labor Leader at Large," in Black Leaders the Twentieth Century, ed. John Hope Franklin and August Meier (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982), pp. 140, 153; Harper, "Negro Labor in Jacksonville," pp. 13, 18; Anderson, pp. 32-52, 225; Interview with Edward Viera by Paul Weaver, October 29, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. (Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.); FTU, May 17, 1979, p. A-1.

which abolished segregation in the U. S. Armed Forces.

Visiting Jacksonville every year, Randolph spoke at Stanton High School, churches, and meetings of the local Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.⁸¹

Jacksonville N.A.A.C.P. members helped with an anti-segregation court suit in 1946. It began in Jacksonville when Berta Mae Watkins was taken off a train in Jacksonville and arrested for not moving to the Jim Crow car while in Washington, D. C. A redcap phoned Theodore Redding, president of the Jacksonville N.A.A.C.P. from 1943 to 1952. Redding persuaded a white lawyer to pay her bond, and a suit against the railroad was filed with the help of the N.A.A.C.P., which was successful.⁸²

Other N.A.A.C.P. activities in the 1940s included mass meetings, marches and the writing of letters, such as commending people for helping blacks. As elsewhere,

⁸¹Quarles, p. 159; Meier and Rudwick, eds., From Plantation, pp. 272-273; Schafer, "Eartha White," Notable, p. 727; Brooks interview; FTU, "colored" pages, February 15, 1964, p. 39; FTU, "colored" pages, March 8, 1964, p. 1; FTU, January 6, 1983, p. A-13; Florida Tattler, August 19, 1944; Daniel Davis, pp. 104, 109, 115, 117.

⁸²Redding interview; Viera interview; Duval County, Florida, Office of Clerk of Court, General Index to Court Files, 1927-1958 (5 vols.) 5, citing Berta Mae Watkins v. City of Jacksonville, March 1946 (Box 3941, File 1855 AP). See also Morgan v. Virginia, 66 S.Ct. 1050 (June 1946), cited by Meier and Rudwick, From Plantation, p. 274; FTU, June 4, 1946, pp. 1, 2; New York Times, September 24, 1946, p. 25; Matthews et al. v. Southern Railway System, CA D.C. 157 Fed. Rep. 2nd Ser. 609 (1946); Sarah M. Lemmon, "Transportation Segregation in Federal Courts Since 1865," Journal of Negro History 38 (January 1953): 174-195.

N.A.A.C.P pressure for better school facilities led to some new schools for blacks and other improvements by whites officials who wanted to avoid integration. N.A.A.C.P. youth activities helped prepare future leaders.⁸³

Thus black men and women in Jacksonville had a history of creating their own community life and developing organizations and activities to meet their needs in the face of white racism and segregation. They practiced and taught values of hard work, mutual help, education, personal morality, black pride, and the determination to build a positive community life in spite of problems. To the limited extent possible, they participated in political activities, and occasionally used non-violent, direct-action protest to try to win equal rights. Some black leaders were able to develop ties with influential whites to gain support for black programs and to cooperate on activities of benefit to both races. Black women had a significant part in these activities--at times in visible roles. Jacksonville blacks were also in contact with other black leaders in Florida and the rest of the nation. Several Jacksonville blacks took leadership in national organizations and protest activities. Many ordinary and well-known men and women in Jacksonville thus became role models to contemporary and future

⁸³Redding interview; The Crisis 49 (January 1942); Photo of Eartha White and others at mass meeting of N.A.A.C.P., January 1952, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Eartha White Collection, folder H-5); Arthur White, p. 176; Council of Social Agencies, "Jacksonville Looks," p. 49.

generations because of their positive efforts and achievements. Many blacks also felt a sense of responsibility to guide and encourage not only their own children but all in the community. Younger blacks grew up knowing them as neighbors and leaders and were highly influenced by their ideas. It was in this active black community that Sallye Brooks (Mathis) and Mary Littlejohn (Singleton) were raised. They were trained in its institutions by family and friends they could admire. They were challenged by the difficulties faced by blacks and were aware of many of the achievements of several generations of blacks in their community and elsewhere.

CHAPTER III
EARLY YEARS OF SALLYE BROOKS AND MARY LITTLEJOHN

Sallye Marilyn Brooks

Sallye Brooks (Mathis) and Mary Littlejohn (Singleton) each grew up as an integral part of the black community in Jacksonville. Henry Pickens Brooks and Sallie Adams Brooks, who were the parents of Sallye Marilyn Brooks, came to Jacksonville in the first years of the century from Greenwood, South Carolina. They had both attended Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina, from which Sallie Adams graduated. Sallie Adams' mother, Sophie Crowley, was born into slavery and was still a child at the time of emancipation.¹

In Jacksonville, the Brooks family lived first on Davis Street and then on Sixth Street, where they stayed the rest of their lives. Henry Brooks was a furniture store salesman. Having taught school in Columbia, Sallie A. Brooks ran a private school where she taught kindergarten through third grade. She was known for her success in teaching children who had had difficulty learning elsewhere.²

¹Interview with Grace Brooks Solomon, May 15, 1985; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Richmond, Va.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1905), p. 86.

²Solomon interview.

Sallye Marilyn Brooks was born on May 18, 1912, in the Davis Street home. The fifth of eight children, four of whom died as babies, she grew up with an older sister, Nellie, an older brother, Ralph, and a younger sister, Grace. The Brooks family was not rich but was law-abiding and respected. Living nearby were an uncle, Willis Brooks, his two daughters, Ella and Ida, and a cousin of Sallye's father--Josephine Boyd--with her son, Alexander Rice.³

After attending her mother's school through the third grade, young Sallye attended the Davis Street School. One of her teachers there was Amy Stewart Currie, who remembered Sallye Brooks as a normal, quiet student who did her work. Sallye's sixth grade teacher was Mary White Blocker, who took leadership in getting black women to vote and later sued the school system to get equal pay for black teachers. Sallye's eighth grade teacher was Wilhemina Rutledge, also a prominent teacher and community organizer. Another neighbor of Sallye's was Eartha Mary Magdalene White, who later received help from Sallye Brooks Mathis with many of her projects.⁴

The Brooks family was very active at Central Baptist Church, then at State and Laura Streets. "Every time the doors opened, Sallye was there," remembered her sister Grace. Each week their father walked with the children to

³Ibid.

⁴Solomon interview; Currie interview; Bateman interview.

Sunday School, while their mother started dinner and then came to the church service and sang in the choir. On Sunday afternoons, Sallye's mother led programs at the church, and for years she was president of the church's Missionary Society and teacher of the women's Bible class. Dr. Charles D. Brooks (not a relative) commented that Sallie Adams Brooks was "quite a woman around town--a great religious worker, who was a much sought-after speaker." In 1920, when Sallye was eight years old, her mother was one of the first black women who stood in line for hours to register to vote. Henry Brooks died when Sallye was fifteen years old.⁵

Sallye Brooks continued her education at Stanton High School at Ashley and Broad Streets, the only public high school for blacks in Duval County. Another Stanton graduate, teacher Coatsie Jones, remembered that black history and culture were taught at the school--with visits by poets Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen and the daily singing of "The Negro National Anthem" by James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson. Lillian G. Smalls, who was with Sallye's brother Ralph in the class ahead of Sallye, remembered that Sallye was active enough at Stanton to be known around the school by the older students.⁶

⁵Solomon interview; Caesar interview; Brooks interview.

⁶Solomon interview; Interview with Lillian G. Smalls, October 29, 1985; FTU, July 18, 1982, p. B-1.

Around age sixteen, Sallye Brooks began many years of teaching Sunday School at Central Baptist Church, sang in the choir for a number of years, and was organist for the Sunday School for several years. The various ministers of the black churches in Jacksonville were all active in community activities and urged the church members to be active also, recalled her sister.⁷

As a teen-ager, "Sallye wasn't ever wild," said her sister Grace.

She was a smart worker at home and helped Mamma a lot. She was always very helpful, although she didn't like cooking and sewing. She had a high temper. She didn't take any foolishness off you. She wouldn't bother you but don't you bother her. Once she hit her brother in the head with a pan and knocked some of the porcelain off it. But she was a kind person.⁸

After graduating from Stanton High School in 1930, Sallye Brooks went to Benedict College, the small Baptist college in Columbia, South Carolina, which her parents had attended and completed a two-year teacher-training program. "I always wanted to be a school teacher from the time I was in fifth grade," Sallye Mathis said later. "I always saw myself as helping other people. According to teacher Coatsie Jones,

teaching was the logical career choice for a young black woman who looked up to her teacher with a respect so strong that she chose to model herself after them. They all had singleness of purpose to

⁷Solomon interview; Caesar interview.

⁸Solomon interview.

see that we were enriched and strengthened in our desire to be successful.⁹

Sallye Brooks lived at first with her mother's sister in the city of Columbia, but the second semester she was able to live in the campus dormitory, where she roomed with Annette McDonald (later Espy) from Fort Pierce, Florida.

Dr. Espy later remembered that

Sallye was very friendly, lovable, kind-hearted, and adorable. She was loved by all the students . . . and teachers. . . . She was very conscientious about her school work, and studied very hard to make the best grades possible.¹⁰

The two friends also took part in the few social activities which the college provided. Sallye was active in the Y.W.C.A. activities, Annette sang in the college choir, and both attended silent movies on Saturday evenings and all the football games held on the campus field.¹¹

Sallye Mathis remembered a trip to college in South Carolina when she did not have the nickel needed for the restroom and had to crawl up under the door to get in. She decided then if ever she could do something about the problem of locked restroom doors she would. Later, as a member of the Jacksonville City Council, she got a bill

⁹FTU, May 10, 1982, pp. B-1, 2; FTU, July 18, 1982, p. B-1, 2.

¹⁰Annette McDonald Espy to author, January 25, 1985, West Palm Beach, Fla.

¹¹Espy to author; Solomon interview; South Carolina Second Grade Teaching Certificate, July 1, 1932, for completion of training at Benedict College, Columbia, S.C. (in personal files of Grace B. Solomon, Jacksonville, Fla.).

passed to make all public places with restrooms provide a free toilet.¹² Sallye Brooks completed her associate of arts degree at Bethune Cookman College at Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1934 and received a ninth grade teaching certificate.¹³

Mary Eleanor Littlejohn

Mary Eleanor Littlejohn was also influenced by her family, church, school and other community activities. She was born into an old "pioneer" family of Jacksonville. Her maternal grandfather, Charles Frank Crowl, came from Boston to Jacksonville in 1872 and started a successful barbershop on Bay Street where he made long-lasting friendships with many of his white customers. He also ran the Bijou Theatre in 1909 and built and operated the Globe Theatre in 1912 and 1914. In 1887 Crowl married Mary E. Wilson of Jacksonville and eventually settled in a home on Florida Avenue on the "Eastside" of Jacksonville, then considered "one of Jacksonville's most stable black neighborhoods, with shopping areas, restaurants and churches not far from tidy homes."¹⁴

¹²Solomon interview.

¹³Graduation certificate, Bethune Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Fla., May 22, 1934; Florida ninth grade teaching certificate, June 12, 1934 (in Solomon files).

¹⁴Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Jacksonville, Fla.: Wanton S. Webb, 1887), p. 76; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (1903), p. 164; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (1912), p. 377; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Jacksonville, Fla.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1914), p. 333; Federal Writers Project, Florida, Duval County Marriage Records, part 1, 4 vols (Jacksonville, Fla.: Statewide Rare

Raiford Brown, another successful black barbershop owner, said that Frank Crowd was "a brilliant man" and that "Mary got her articulation from her grandfather." The Crowd's were active in Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church on Union Street and in other community activities. Frank Crowd was on the committee for the local Emancipation Proclamation celebration in 1913.¹⁵

Mary Littlejohn's mother, Laura, was one of Frank Crowd's nine children and grew up in the home on Florida Avenue. She attended Boylan Haven Industrial Training School for Girls which was run by the (northern) Methodist Episcopal Church, along with other girls from lower-middle- and upper-income families.¹⁶ "Attendance at Boylan-Haven meant status in the black community, as well as a long-lasting sisterhood." Laura Crowd taught at Boylan-Haven school in 1925 before her marriage to Harry Littlejohn.¹⁷

Harry C. Littlejohn, Mary's father, was also from a respected Jacksonville family--that of Davis and Hannah

Books Project, Florida Works Project Administration, 1940) 4:84; FTU, April 1, 1985, B-1. See also FTU, July 16, 1979, A-1.

¹⁵Raiford Brown interview, 1985; Lincoln Memorial Association.

¹⁶Interview with Harry Littlejohn, June 24, 1984; Brooks interview; Interview with Louise Singletary Brown, May 21, 1985.

¹⁷FTU, April 1, 1985, pp. B-1, 2; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Jacksonville, Fla.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1925), p. 159; Interview with Louise Singletary Brown, May 21, 1985.

Littlejohn. Harry Littlejohn was born in Gaffney, in Cherokee County, South Carolina, and came to Jacksonville in 1910 at the age of seven with his parents. His father was a laborer. One of six children, Harry Littlejohn went to Catholic schools, and sold newspapers--the old Florida Metropolis--for ten cents a paper, six days a week. As an adult he worked for the U. S. Postal Service as a mail carrier for thirty-seven years, from 1923 until 1960. After his retirement, he worked as an investigator for the state attorney and bailiff and a program to solve problems before court hearings. Harry and his brother Gabunion (Gay) Littlejohn were charter members of the Imperial Dragons Club, a social organization of letter carriers. Harry Littlejohn was also a member of the Fraternal Order of the Police and of Letter Carriers' Association Branch No. Fifty-three, which was started by blacks and by 1941 had integrated membership and leadership. He was also a member of the Fla.-Jax. Club, a social-civic club. He taught Hettie Mills to play the violin well enough so that she won a music scholarship to Florida A. and M. University.¹⁸

Mary Eleanor Littlejohn was born on September 20, 1926, and grew up with her only sibling, Hannah, who was fifteen months younger. Their neighbors on Florida Avenue were

¹⁸Interview with Mary L. Singleton by Daniel L. Schafer, February 2, 1977, Tallahassee, Fla.; Harry Littlejohn interview; Mills interview; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, May 6, 1985, p. B-2; The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 2.

middle-class teachers, nurses, and postal service, railroad and insurance employees. Most were educated beyond high school. Besides being close to the Crowd relatives, Mary and Hannah were "like sisters" with the Littlejohn cousins--the three daughters of Leo and Blanche Littlejohn and especially the son of Gabunion (Gay) and Elinor B. Littlejohn, Francis X. Littlejohn, who was five years younger than Mary and lived nearby. The cousins spent summers with their Littlejohn grandmother in the country--in Greenland, southeast of Jacksonville. Francis Littlejohn thought that being in the country influenced Mary, as well as himself, to be "a person of Nature" who "loved to grow" plants. She majored in horticulture in college, as he did later, and both taught science in the Duval County schools.¹⁹

In addition to her extended family, young Mary Littlejohn developed school, church, and other roots in her community. Her early schooling was at the Franklin Street School, which was at the site of the former Florida Baptist Academy and was later called the Matthew W. Gilbert Junior-Senior High School. Harry Littlejohn took his girls every week to St. Pious the Fifth Catholic Church, where Mary was an active member all her life. Laura Littlejohn remained active in Mt. Zion A.M.E Church with the Crowd family. Mary Littlejohn also participated in the Girl Scouts around the

¹⁹Harry Littlejohn interview; Interview with Francis X. Littlejohn, May 27, 1985.

ages of eleven to thirteen, along with Elizabeth Butler Jones.²⁰

Mary Littlejohn was also influenced by community leaders and the interest of her family in helping needy people. When prominent citizens were paying tribute to Miss Eartha Mary Magdalene White at the age of ninety-seven in 1974, Mary L. Singleton said, "I've known her since I was a little girl. My grandfather was one of her main contributors in the days when she was forming soup kitchens." Mary's aunt, Mary E. (Mamie) Crowd, who managed Frank Crowd's barbershop from his death in 1927 until her death in 1963, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Clara White Mission for many years and took leadership in activities at the mission, such as the yearly Christmas parties. After she died in 1963, the drinking fountain at the mission was dedicated in her memory.²¹

From seventh to twelfth grades, Mary Littlejohn went with her sister Hannah to Boylan Haven Industrial Training School, since there was no Catholic high school for blacks in Jacksonville at the time. She explained:

We were Catholic, but the Catholic schools were segregated. My mother went to that school and taught there. It was [mostly] a boarding school with students from all over the country and more white than black teachers. The teachers had to

²⁰Harry Littlejohn interview; Telephone interview with Elizabeth Butler Jones, May 22, 1985,

²¹FTU, January 20, 1974; FTU, January 5, 1948; FTU, April 24, 1973; Harry Littlejohn interview; Bateman interview.

stay at the school and they had fantastic relationships. It was a tough school, with grammar and Latin. You had to dot the I's and cross the T's. If we had more of that today we wouldn't have so many dropouts.²²

Another student at Boylan-Haven at the time was Gwendolyn Sawyer (later Cherry) from Miami who became the first black woman in the Florida House of Representatives in 1970.²³

Louise Singletary Brown, a student at Boylan-Haven from 1922 to 1931, returned as one of the first black teachers there, from 1935 to 1944, to teach English, Latin, grammar and black history. Offering a college-preparatory education, the school adhered to state standards and stressed academics and homework. Besides daily worship, there were also classes in Bible, music, sewing and cooking. There was no corporal punishment; sending for parents was enough to deal with problems. Much more black history and culture was included than in the public schools, Louise Brown said, and students were encouraged to attend all the cultural events in the community, such as programs by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the Morehouse College Glee Club, Roland Hayes, and black authors Zora Neale Hurston and Jesse Faucett. The "Negro National Anthem" by James Weldon and James Rosamond Johnson was sung frequently at the school. The 1946 report, "Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community," by the local

²²Mary Singleton interview, 1977.

²³Raiford Brown interview, 1985; Interview with Louise Singletary Brown, May 21, 1985.

Council of Social Agencies, commented that Boylan-Haven School, which had a Southern white woman as superintendent and a "bi-racial faculty [which] has functioned here harmoniously for sixty years, . . . is a bright spot in the local educational picture."²⁴

Louise Brown said that while at Boylan-Haven, Mary's sister, who later led a more traditional life as the wife of a doctor in Chicago, was very, very bright, while Mary Littlejohn seemed rather dull at the time. Her grades were poor and once she almost didn't get promoted. After that, "Mary kept up all right, although it seemed to require a great deal of effort," Mrs. Brown said.²⁵

Hattie Daniels Stewart, who was also in Mary's class of seventeen at Boylan-Haven, remembered that "Mary was well-liked--always gregarious, out-going and likeable." She loved knitting in the sewing class, but was bored with laying out sewing patterns.²⁶ Mrs. Stewart recalled that Mary Littlejohn was always laughing, joking, and sometimes "a little devilish" and distracting in class. When she put her mind to her studying, she could do it. "She was always instigating something" such as a party or a field trip. She got her humor from her mother, who was also "a

²⁴Louise Brown interview; Louise S. Brown, quoted in FTU, April 1, 1985, pp. B-1, 2; Council of Social Agencies, "Jacksonville Looks," p. 51.

²⁵Louise Brown interview.

²⁶Interview with Hattie Daniels Stewart, May 22, 1985.

talker," Hattie Stewart said. "We were surprised when she went into politics." Mary Littlejohn was very good at sports, such as kickball, acrobatics, and soccer. "A big and hardy girl, about five feet, nine inches," she was healthy and robust like her father, said Mrs. Stewart. In public speaking debates in school, "Mary would hate to get up and speak, since she always felt she was too big, too tall and gawky," with many of the boys shorter than she during high school. Later she became "a very natural speaker."²⁷

During high school, Mary Littlejohn had many admiring boy friends, and was demanding and hard to please, Hattie Stewart remembered.

When we started dating, we would meet at Mary's house. We would catch a cab to one of the two theatres, the 'Strand' or the 'Frolic'. We had parties at each others' houses . . . or had a big Saturday-night date. We would go early and get back early. In those days you could ride all over the city for twenty-five cents.²⁸

When Mary Littlejohn was fifteen, her picture was in a special Jacksonville issue of The Crisis of the N.A.A.C.P. for being third, with 307 votes, in a contest for "Miss Jacksonville".²⁹

After her high school graduation in 1943, Mary Littlejohn went to Hampton Institute in Virginia, for two years. Her father paid the fees and she majored in horticulture--

²⁷Stewart interview.

²⁸Stewart interview.

²⁹The Crisis 49 (January, 1942).

expressing her interest in growing plants. Both she and Hannah, who joined her there the next year, were members of the Phyllis Wheatley Society, which involved mostly social activities, joint studying and some community service. Mary Littlejohn was chosen as "Miss Agriculture" for Homecoming one year.³⁰

Mary Littlejohn left Hampton Institute at the end of her second year because her grades were then poor. She took a sales job at a local store, but soon entered Florida A. and M. University in Tallahassee where she received her B.S. degree in May 1949.³¹

Thus, Mary Littlejohn and Sallye Brooks grew up in comfortable, proud families and neighborhoods in Jacksonville, with numerous relatives, neighbors, churches and schools that gave support and seemed to agree in teaching middle-class values. As Harry Littlejohn noted, "in those days everybody knew everybody and when anybody did anything (good or bad) it was known. We never had any trouble." The two young women of course experienced racial prejudice and were aware of the poverty around them, but they were

³⁰Harry Littlejohn interview; Francis Littlejohn interview; Stewart interview; Fritz J. Malval (archivist at Hampton University) to author, March 13, 1986, Hampton, Va.

³¹Interview with Mary L. Singleton by Dr. James Button, October 7, 1975, Tallahassee, Fla. (Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.); Stewart interview; Francis Littlejohn interview; Samuel Washington, Jr. (Registrar, Florida A. & M. University) to author, March 8, 1988, Tallahassee, Fla.

fortunate in being able to complete high school and college. While Mary L. Singleton later acknowledged "that she had never personally experienced poverty, she said she had been 'surrounded by poverty all my life. That's why I do a lot of giving.'"³²

The Rev. Charles B. Dailey, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oakland on the "Eastside" of Jacksonville, commented that

Mary's family was one of the fine families--somewhat definitive of the contributions of this community--hardworking, godfearing people, believing in the educational process and motivated to make sacrifices for the advantages of education of their children. She is a product of that kind of background, which is not often believed about this community. Mary represents the kind of potential existing in a lot of people. I'm thankful that she had the opportunity to develop it.³³

Trained to be teachers, the two young women were ready to assume adult roles.

³²Harry Littlejohn interview; FTU, December 9, 1980, p. A-8.

³³Interview with Rev. Charles B. Dailey, September 12, 1985.

CHAPTER IV
ADULTHOOD AND MARRIAGE

Sallye Brooks (Mathis)

As adults, Sallye Brooks (Mathis) and Mary Littlejohn (Singleton) continued to gain experience, exposure and respect for their participation in community life.

After working as a clerk in the office of the Works Project Administration for several years, Sallye Brooks (Mathis) began her twenty-eight-year career in the public schools in 1934. Her first assignment was in a little church building on Kings Road called Lincoln Park School, with about four teachers. When the wind blew the school down, it was relocated in a building on the Edward Waters College campus and called the College Park School. She taught there from 1943 to 1948. She taught all the elementary grades at various times. By taking courses in the summer, she received her B.S. degree in Education from Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1945.¹

¹Interview with Sallye B. Mathis, August 20, 1975, Jacksonville, Fla. ("Button Project," Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.); Solomon interview; Williams to author; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Jacksonville, Fla.: R. L. Polk & Co., Publ., 1934), p. 134; Graduation certificate, Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Ala., August 8, 1941 (in Solomon files); Interview with Beatrice Vaught, September 18, 1987.

Sallye Mathis taught history and civics from 1948 to 1953 at the Davis Street School she had attended as a child, which in 1952 was named Isaiah Blocker Junior High School after her former school principal there. From 1953 to 1955 she taught at Stanton High School from which she had graduated. In 1954 and 1955 she received plaques from the Daughters of the American Revolution for outstanding performance as a teacher of American History.² Horace T. Small, Sr., who was in Mrs. Mathis' history class and homeroom at the Davis Street School, remembered her "kind-hearted manner. . . . When she saw students cutting class, she went after them [and talked with them]; she wouldn't give up on people."³

She paid for the first music lessons for another student of hers, Roscoe Speed, who later became music and choral director at American Senior High School in Miami. That action probably influenced his life more than any other single thing, said Speed.⁴

²Martha Williams (employee of Duval County School Board) to author, November 23, 1986, Jacksonville, Fla.; Plaques from Daughters of the American Revolution, 1954, 1955, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); FTU, May 20, 1954, June 10, 1955.

³Horace T. Small, Sr. (Athletic Director and Head Football Coach, Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N. C.) to Minority Women's Coalition, June 1985, Charlotte, N. C.

⁴Interview with Patricia Small, May 23, 1985; Solomon interview; JJ, February 28, 1983, p. 3A.

Active in the Duval County Teachers' Association during her years as an educator, Sallye Mathis was one of the teachers who worked secretly on a court suit in 1941 by Mary White Blocker to get equal pay for black educators. Black teachers and principals were paid roughly half the salaries of whites with similar qualifications--in a four-step schedule of descending payments for white males, black males, white females and black females. Blacks with master's degrees were paid less than whites with bachelor's degrees.⁵ Also, since public schools continued to underfund the staff, buildings and equipment of black schools, teachers such as Lillian Smalls, who taught first grade from 1933 to 1976, purchased their own appropriately lined paper and other supplies for students from their own meager pay. Parents in Florida were expected to purchase the textbooks for their children until 1925, and after that black students used books discarded from the white schools. Amy Stewart Currie, who taught at Stanton High school from 1925 to 1967, said that teachers personally knew the students and their families and would tutor children who needed help on their own time, free of charge.⁶

⁵Brooks interview; Interview with Dr. Andrew A. Robinson, January 28, 1986; Edward Davis, p. 181; J. I. E. Scott, p. 64; Interview with Lillian Smalls, October 29, 1985; Currie interview.

⁶Noah W. Griffin, "Education," The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 17-18; Interview with Lillian Smalls, October 29, 1985; Interview with Amy S. Currie, September 6, 1985; Brooks interview; FTU, July 18, 1982, p. B-1; FTU, April 1, 1985,

In 1937, the Florida State Teachers' Association encouraged John Gilbert, a principal in Brevard County, Florida, to enter a suit to equalize the teachers' pay there. Despite the help of black attorney S. D. McGill of Jacksonville, Gilbert lost his suit and his job as a result, and many other black educators were harrassed and lost their jobs in similar struggles. Before the Gilbert case could be appealed, a suit filed early in 1941 in Escambia County was decided in the black teachers' favor in the U. S. District Court on July 3, 1941, and upheld by the U. S. Supreme Court. After this victory, black teachers in eight Florida counties filed separate equalization suits in U. S. District courts. Mary Blocker, age sixty-nine, volunteered as the plaintiff in the suit in Duval County in November 1941. Although she was fired, as were the plaintiffs in the other seven Florida suits, her suit was successful in the Federal Court of Appeals on June 20, 1942. The inequities between the salaries of black and white educators were substantially lessened.⁷ The disparities were not eliminated right away due to a rating system based not only on training and

p. B-1; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 42; Arthur White, p. 171. Edward D. Davis noted that school expenditures per child in Florida, 1937-38, were \$55.44 per white child and \$21.64 per black child. Davis, p. 182.

⁷Edward Davis, pp. 132-137; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 72-77; Brooks interview; FTU, February 22, 1982, pp. C-1, 2; Pittsburgh Courier, September 19, 1959; McDaniel v. Escambia County, Fla. Bd. of Public Instruction, D.C. Fla. 39 F Supp 638 (1941); Arthur White, pp. 174-175; Council of Social Agencies, "Jacksonville Looks," pp. 44-45.

experience, but also on the size of the school and other factors.⁸

The (black) Duval County Teachers' Association had been working on the teacher pay problem, in cognito, in order to avoid being fired. They had to work through a committee of non-teaching citizens, chaired by Dr. C. F. Duncan, for the work that was visible to the public. The black teachers appreciated Mary Blocker's courage so much that the Duval County Teachers' Association decided to give her a monthly payment for the rest of her life.⁹

Dr. Charles Brooks commented that he thought it was "a result of this suit that Sallye Brooks Mathis and other teachers who had secretly worked on the suit became aware of what could be done by being politically active." "She played a key role in these activities," he added. "She was always on some committee to get something done. You wouldn't have to ask her--she'd come right up and volunteer. She liked to do research on things."¹⁰

She was also a member of the association's Dramatics Committee, which put on plays performed by the teachers. As

⁸In 1946 the Council of Social Agencies noted "a substantial difference in the pay of Negro and white teachers [and principals] having the same rating [training] and experience," but said that the situation represented "a substantial improvement over 1942." Council of Social Agencies, "Jacksonville Looks," pp. 43-44.

⁹Brooks interview; J. I. E. Scott, pp. 72-77.

¹⁰Brooks interview.

chairman of the Welfare Committee, she helped administer the Ducote Federal Credit Union which teacher W. D. Sweet had started so that teachers could put money in and then borrow money for emergencies without paying the exorbitant interest rates that white banks were charging them. "We needed people like Sallye, to be fair with all," said Sweet.¹¹

Mrs. Mathis went to Columbia University in New York City one summer to work on her master's degree, but transferred to the summer program at Florida A. & M. University so that she could come home on weekends. In 1955 she received her master's degree in education.¹²

From 1955 to 1957 Sallye Mathis was a counsellor at the Isaiah Blocker Junior-Senior High School, and from 1957 to 1962 she was the first dean of girls at Matthew W. Gilbert Junior-Senior High School. Thelma Dougan Jackson, one of the eight hundred female students at the school, remembered Mrs. Mathis as

a stern dean, but fair--very concerned about girls becoming young ladies--spiritually, educationally, and socially. No matter what one's socio-economic situation, she was concerned with young ladies

¹¹Telephone interview with W. D. Sweet, November 26, 1985; Smalls interview; Duval County Teachers' Association, "Directory of the Duval County Teachers' Association" (Jacksonville, Fla.: Duval County Teachers' Association, 1952), pp. 7, 10 (in Eartha White collection, folder J-1).

¹²Sallye Mathis interview; Graduation certificate, "Master of Education, with special training in guidance, supervision and administration," Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, August 13, 1955 (in Solomon files).

becoming the best that they could be. She always had time to talk to you and assist you and your parents if need be.

Dr. Annette McDonald Espy commented that, with "her strong belief in the dignity of finer womanhood," Sallye Mathis "helped shape the lives of many girls."¹³

Mrs. Mathis worked quietly and encouraged the students. When parents could not afford new clothes, she would see that her husband gave them shoes and other things, and students noticed that. "She was the type of person students would want to emulate," said Clarice Bradwell. She secretly paid the tuition for some young women to attend nursing school, and encouraged young people to save part of their wages.¹⁴

In 1938, Sallye Brooks married (Oscar) Earl Mathis, owner of a family shoe business on Florida Avenue. He had been born in Americus, Georgia, and came to Jacksonville as a boy with his parents and baby brother, Robert. Twice a widower, Mathis had a child by each wife. His children lived with his mother and sometimes with his aunts in "one big happy family," according to Mrs. Mayme (Robert) Mathis. "When Earl opened his shoe store on the Eastside [in 1918], he was about the only black in the shoe business," she said,

¹³Martha Williams to author; Interview with Thelma Dougan Jackson, September 17, 1985; Espy to author; FTU, February 28, 1983, p. 3A.

¹⁴Telephone interview with Clarice Bradwell, October 14, 1985; Interview with Gene Miller, January 8, 1986.

"and he helped out a lot of others who wanted to go into the shoe business." He also sold men's clothes, hats and other merchandise. "Sallye used to help him some in the business," said Grace Solomon. The Earl Mathis' were "middle-class people and lived well," noted Lillian Smalls; "Earl bought up a lot of property all around Jacksonville."¹⁵

Earl Mathis was active in the community. He and his brother Robert were deacons for many years at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, where the extended Mathis family was active. He did volunteer work for the James Weldon Johnson branch of the Y.M.C.A. and the Boy Scouts and was also active in the Knights of Pythians and the Masons. He received a placque of honor from the High School and Principals' council for twenty-five years of "outstanding support to the schools of Duval County." Sallye Mathis said later that her husband "was an inspiration to her. 'He was always supportive, especially while I was teaching.'"¹⁶

During her years as an educator, Sallye Mathis gained additional leadership experience, knowledge of the community

¹⁵Marriage license, 1938, Ware County, Georgia (in Solomon collection); Telephone interview with Mayme E. Mathis, May 28, 1985; Solomon interview; Smalls interview; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Jacksonville, Fla.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1919), p. 781; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (Richmond, Va.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1951), p. 384.

¹⁶"Oscar Earl Mathis," funeral program, Jacksonville, Fla., November, 1961 (in Solomon files); Mayme Mathis interview; Interview with Rev. Rudolph W. McKissick (pastor of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church), May 24, 1985; FTU, July 26, 1982, pp. A-1, 2.

and recognition as she participated in various other community activities. Continuing her work at Central Baptist Church, she taught classes, became superintendent of the Sunday School there and worked closely with Ola Mae Caesar to obtain new Sunday School teaching materials and equipment for the church. She was chairman of the "Lighted Cross" group at the church, which aided missionary and social service work.¹⁷

Patricia Small, who grew up knowing Sallye Mathis as family friend, neighbor and Sunday School teacher at Central Baptist Church, commented that Sallye Mathis, even though very busy,

would teach special courses at church--on the Bible, on prayer, and, for the youth, a weekday course on current events and how we could be helpful. She encouraged involvement--as voters, and as citizens involved in the life of the community whether as volunteers or in whatever ways would be helpful. She would help youth find jobs, deal with special problems, and establish careers; like an employment agency, she would help them find the right spot. She would always find time for the young people and the church and sit down with individuals on a personal basis.¹⁸

In 1950, Sallye Mathis was also influenced by joining the Jacksonville Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, which had been founded as a public service organization of professional black women at Howard University in 1913. One of the founders, Winona Alexander, who

¹⁷Caesar interview; Interview with Roxie Smith, May 22, 1985; Sallye Mathis interview, 1975, p. 20; Solomon interview.

¹⁸Small interview.

moved to Jacksonville in 1919, said, "We wanted to pass on the high ideals and principles we had been taught. . . . It was as if we were to lift the whole of our race. We knew we couldn't do it alone."¹⁹ First grade teacher Lillian Smalls, who joined the sorority at the same time, remembers that Sallye Mathis participated whole-heartedly in the various activities of the sorority--yearly events to raise hundreds of dollars for scholarships for deserving students and numerous other projects to help the community.²⁰

During these years, Sallye Mathis found time to be involved in additional community service activities. She served the on the leadership board of the A. L. Lewis branch of the Jacksonville Y.W.C.A. from the early 1940s until she was elected to the newly integrated Board of Directors in 1962. She helped with many of Eartha M. M. White's charity projects. In 1958 she was also president of the Book Lovers Guild which met at the black library. She assisted Mrs. J. L. Terry in organizing a children's group of the Durkee Drive Community Guild to provide fun activities for the children in their neighborhood in addition to what their parents did.²¹

¹⁹FTU, February 7, 1973, p. B-8.

²⁰Smalls interview; Mills interview.

²¹Telephone interview with Frances Alexander, April 30, 1985; Bateman interview; Eartha M. M. White, comp., "Who is Who in Jacksonville, Florida," Jacksonville, Fla., n.p., 1958 (in Eartha White collection, Folder I-5); Florida Star March 12, 1955.

A number of people remembered Sallye Mathis' concern for other people. Roxie Smith remembered seeing her give some new shoes from the Mathis store to a needy family, saying, "Earl, these people need these shoes. You won't miss them." She would get some people together and help clean for sick and elderly people. She visited and encouraged friends who were sick.²² Mrs. Mathis wrote later to her close friend Willye Dennis about a "message" that was "given" to her in 1952:

Learn to understand people's reactions. Always treat them with love and respect and patience. Always keep in mind the realization that no one who is normal acts contentious, antagonistic or hostile. People like that are sick; something is eating them; there is some kind of pressure; there is inner pain. Maybe by love, understanding and sympathy you may be able to find the cause and change them. Don't give up easily, and above all, don't get mad. Use God's love to help them.²³

Thus, between 1934 and her husband's death in 1961, Sallye Brooks Mathis led a productive life of service to the Jacksonville community through which she grew in understanding and experience. She became more widely known in these mainly black activities, especially for encouraging youth and showing concern for individuals. She married a man who was supportive of her and was active himself in various community activities.

²²Roxie Smith interview.

²³Interview with Willie D. Dennis, May 27, 1985; Sallye Mathis to Willye Dennis, 1952, Jacksonville, Fla. (in personal files of Willye Dennis, Jacksonville, Fla.).

Mary Littlejohn (Singleton)

While a student at Florida A. and M. University, Mary Littlejohn had married David Paschal, a young music student. Their daughter Carol was born July 28, 1949. Following graduation, the Paschal's moved to Jacksonville where they lived in an apartment in the Afro-American Life Insurance Building while David Paschal taught band at Matthew W. Gilbert Junior-Senior High School. When the couple separated, Mary Paschal moved with her baby to her parents' house, began teaching, and got a divorce in June 1951.²⁴

From 1951 until December 1955 she taught at Matthew W. Gilbert Junior-Senior High School--the school building she had attended during her elementary school years. Doris Avery Jones, who taught with Mary Paschal at Matthew W. Gilbert during part of that time, recalled that she was well-liked by the students and the faculty, and was "a very easy-going, likeable person--always a part of after-school events." She was "always willing to help anybody," and known for often bringing good refreshments, such as a special crab "shelot"--a kind of stew.²⁵

While teaching, Mary Paschal met Isadore Singleton and married him in 1955. Isadore and his twin brother Theodore

²⁴Stewart interview; Duval County, Fla., Office of Clerk of Court, Chancery Progress Docket, vol. 95, (Jacksonville, Fla.: Duval County), case # 78867-E, 1951.

²⁵Harry Littlejohn interview; Martha Williams to author; Harry Littlejohn interview; Telephone interview with Doris Avery Jones, May 16, 1985.

were born in 1921 near Greenwood, Mississippi--the youngest of nine children--and they graduated from high school in Greenwood. While serving in the U. S. Navy from 1939 to 1945, Isadore Singleton studied business procedures and public speaking and starred on football teams. He was also middle-weight boxing champion of several ships and bases, including the cruiser, USS Atlanta, President Roosevelt's flag-ship. According to his older brother, Earnest Singleton, "one of Isadore's favorite keepsakes was a picture of himself being congratulated by President Roosevelt after winning a state championship." He later claimed that this incident, "his first contact with anyone in political life, was the basis of his lifetime interest in and love of politics." His son, Isadore Singleton (Jr.), explained also that his father had seen a lot of prejudice and segregation while in the Navy, such as segregated basketball teams, and he was sure that the desire to end segregation influenced his father more than anything else to get into politics.²⁶

Isadore Singleton's home port for two years was Mayport, Florida, in the northeast corner of Duval County. As a "Steward, First Class," the top rating for blacks in the war years, he supervised the purchase of foods for his ship and had the weekends free to make many friends in Jacksonville, including Charles E. Lott and other local

²⁶Marriage license, 1955, Camden County, Georgia; Ernest Singleton to author, March 4, 1986, Detroit, Mich.; Interview with Isadore Singleton (Jr.), June 10, 1985.

black politicians, and to work at a local barbeque restaurant.²⁷

After his discharge in 1945, Isadore Singleton joined his sister and several brothers in Detroit, where he worked briefly as circulation promoter for the Detroit office of the Pittsburgh Courier, a weekly black newspaper sold nationally. Then he opened a small advertising copier printing office of his own. In 1946 he became active in the campaign of a candidate for governor of Michigan.²⁸

"The late forties were not conducive to the success of a young black man with little money trying to make it as an entrepreneur," wrote Ernest Singleton, and so, "still nurturing his fondness for Jacksonville, Isadore returned there in 1948." He was hired again in the barbeque cafe where he had worked earlier, and within a short time he opened his own place, "Superior Barbeque," at Thirty-third Street and Moncrief Avenue. He developed a sauce of his own and did so well that by 1955 he opened two more barbeque establishments--on Broad Street and on Florida Avenue. In 1958 he opened another on on West Ashley Street and in 1961 a fifth one on Edgewood Avenue. For the well-publicized opening of his fifth place, he advertised barbeque ribs and chicken, beef and pig on-the-bun, French fries and sandwiches, from 11 A.M. to 2 A.M., as well as "distinctive

²⁷Ernest Singleton to author; Lott interview.

²⁸Ibid.

catering for parties." Through his business, including catering, Isadore Singleton and his family made friends around Jacksonville.²⁹

Don Trednick, president of Jax Liquors, was Isadore Singleton's main financial backer and also a good friend. He was a regular customer of Singleton's businesses--often hiring him to cater at his parties--and the two gave each other advice and support in their respective businesses in the black areas. Trednick called him "a first-class man--honorable, decent, honest human being, who could be trusted to stick by his word." Some blacks did not favor Singleton's helping Trednick buy land in the black community for his liquor business.³⁰

After their marriage, Isadore Singleton asked his wife not to work outside the family, since he wanted her to help him at home and with the barbeque business. He adopted Carol, and their son, Isadore, Jr., was born in 1956. Ernest Singleton noted that

Mary kept the books, paid the bills, did the banking and ran the home while rearing two children, while Isadore did the buying, supervised the help and kept promoting the business, . . . as well as investing in local land in various parts

²⁹Ernest Singleton to author; Lott interview; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory (1951), p. 538; Jacksonville, Florida City Directory (Richmond, Va.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1961), p. 920; Florida Star, December 16, 1961.

³⁰Interview with Don Trednick, August 23, 1985; Solomon interview.

of the city. . . . A very successful and happy marriage it was!³¹

Isadore Singleton became active in various community activities during his years in Jacksonville. He was a president of the Jacksonville Negro Chamber of Commerce, a president of the Mary M. McCleod Bethune Elementary School, chairman of the 1959 March of Dimes drive in the black community, area coordinator for the Peace Corps, and a member of the board of directors of Brewster Hospital. He was also a member of the James Weldon Johnson branch of the Y.M.C.A., the Fla.-Jax. Club, and Mt. Ararat Baptist Church.³²

However, next to his family and business, it was politics that Isadore Singleton loved. Charles E. Lott, who was active in local politics for many years, had gotten acquainted with Singleton during his years at Mayport Naval station. After Singleton established his business, said Lott,

he said he would like to get into politics here. Since I had a job where I couldn't do much [publicly], I pushed him--and introduced him to people. He became a committeeman in the adjoining precinct next to mine and we worked together. We would all go to the Democratic meetings together

³¹Ernest Singleton to author. See also Harry Littlejohn interview; Francis Littlejohn interview.

³²Florida Star, May 16, 1959; JJ, February 5, 1964, p. 3; FTU, "colored" pages, February 6, 1964; Raiford Brown interview; Ernest Singleton to author.

and have a beer afterwards while we talked about the meeting.³³

An important court victory in Jacksonville had been won in 1945 by Rev. Dallas J. Graham, pastor of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church from 1926 to 1976, with his suit to challenge the Democratic party's white-only primary. The suit was suggested by Theodore Redding, president of the Jacksonville branch of the N.A.A.C.P. from 1943 to 1952, who had returned to his native Jacksonville after getting a teaching certificate at Northwestern University. He said that the local N.A.A.C.P. had been "reluctant to upset the power structure," since "lynching was prevalent" at the time. "We selected Rev. Graham," Redding related, "because he was not employed by whites and because he had received a letter from the Attorney General saying that he should seek relief through the courts" for being denied the opportunity to register as a Democrat in Jacksonville. Graham had been a Democrat in New York when he came to Jacksonville. The suit was supported by other black leaders and the N.A.A.C.P. raised the money to pay all the expenses. After Graham's attempt to register was refused on March 1, 1945, his right to be a Democrat was affirmed by Circuit Court Judge Bayard B. Shields on March 16, 1945. Shields' ruling was based on a 1944 U. S. Supreme Court decision in a similar case, *Smith v. Allwright*, which ruled it was a violation of the

³³Lott interview; Ernest Singleton to author.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U. S. Constitution to exclude blacks from the Democratic primary, which could not be considered a "private" activity.³⁴

Jacksonville blacks were then able to help draw the first boundary lines for black precincts and become precinct chairmen for the Democratic party. With their previous experience in registration, voting and political leadership in the Republican party, they had 12,247 blacks registered to vote in Jacksonville by 1946--20.9 percent of the registered voters. Black were now visited by white politicians vying for the black vote at big political rallies. Blacks were able to get some promises that way from candidates who sometimes followed through with specific improvements such as opening up Hemming Park to blacks waiting for buses. Luvenia Robinson, long active in Jacksonville politics, recalled: "We were happy and proud of ourselves as Democrats, and I think had a good turnout. We wanted to be considered as human beings."³⁵

After being allowed to join the Democratic party, many of the black leaders in Florida "thought it wiser to avoid running Negro candidates until opposition to Negro voting

³⁴Judge Shield's decision was upheld by U.S. Circuit Court Judge Miles W. Lewis on April 3, 1945. Redding interview; Interview with Frank Hampton, May 14, 1985; FTU, April 4, 1944; FTU, March 16, 1945, p. 13; FTU, April 4, 1945, p. 13; Smith v. Allwright, 321 U.S. 6449, 664 (April 3, 1944); Price, p. 115; Ladd, p. 18.

³⁵Hampton interview; Redding interview; Luvenia Robinson interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

had died down. A few blacks did run for office during the 1940s, however, in Jacksonville, Tampa and Miami, but without success.³⁶

In the 1947 city elections, when blacks in Jacksonville had their first chance to try to get a black elected, Wilson Armstrong, a brick masonry laborer from the "Eastside" of Jacksonville ran for the Fifth Ward seat on the City Council. Although candidates ran in single-member districts, and blacks were 53 percent of the registered voters in his district, Armstrong lost to the white incumbent councilman, Claude Smith.³⁷

During the next legislative session, State Senator John Matthews (Sr.) persuaded the Florida legislature to change the Jacksonville charter to require at-large voting in Jacksonville and Duval County elections, although candidates had to live in certain districts, called wards, to run for office. This system, which remained until the fall of 1967, enabled whites to maintain full control of elected office in Duval County for another eighteen years.³⁸

³⁶Price, p. 78.

³⁷Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Price, p. 79; Hampton interview; Interview with Elcee R. Lucas, June 10, 1985; FTU-JJ, November 25, 1978.

³⁸SB 836 which became Chapter 28614 (No. 1000): Florida, The Legislation of Florida, 1947, 2 vols., vol. 2: Special Acts, part 1 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1947), p. 1520; Price, p. 79; Duval County Supervisor of Elections. Richard L. Engstrom and Michael D. McDonald, "The Election of Blacks to City Councils: Clarifying the Impact of Electoral Arrangements on the Seats/Population Relationship," American Political

However, that system did make black votes important to white candidates, who tried to woo the growing numbers of black voters.

One method used to influence the political system was the continual effort to increase black registration and voting through precinct and other organizations, in spite of long lines and fear of reprisals by whites. John F. Lanahan commented that blacks have taken the role of precinct chairman much more seriously than the whites, who have considered it an honorary post. Black registered voters in Jacksonville numbered 25,839 or 22 percent of the electorate in 1950, 24,438 or 27.2 percent of the electorate in 1955, and 26,5919 or 19 percent in 1960. With a strong statewide Florida Voters League, blacks gave heavy support to Democratic candidates President Harry S. Truman in 1948, Senator Claude Pepper in 1950, and Governor Leroy Collins in 1956.³⁹ Isadore Singleton helped organize the statewide Florida Voters League and was its president at the time of his death in 1964. The league, which usually met in Jacksonville, was said in 1959 to represent 95 percent of the organized colored voters of Florida. Ethel Powell commented that

Science Review 75 (June 1981): 344-359, and Clinton B. Jones, "The Impact of Local Election Systems on Black Political Representation," Urban Affairs Quarterly 11 (March 1976): 345-356, also concluded that at-large districts make it very difficult for blacks to be elected.

³⁹Interview with John F. Lanahan, August 27, 1985; Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Edward Davis, pp. 146-148.

black women did much of the registration and voting for blacks, although it was often done quietly.⁴⁰

Blacks in Jacksonville also tried to influence politics through participation in the Democratic party at the precinct level and in the Duval County Democratic Executive Committee, although not without difficulties. Being in politics and on the Democratic Executive Committee was "sort of tense," said Raiford Brown, a barber with mainly white clients. "People were always afraid--they were so vulnerable. Someone might tell, or they might make some mistake" and face retaliation by whites. In 1956, the main speaker at the January meeting of the Duval County Executive Committee meeting was Sumter Lowry, called "Florida's leading race-baiter" by H. D. Price. Only after sitting through the long, anti-black speech, did the leader of the black delegation on the committee, Isadore Singleton, request the chairman's permission for the black members to leave; they had not walked out during the speech, lest their exit provide "some excuse for removing them from the committee." On the whole, however, the Democratic party was accepting of black participation after the first years, according to Charles Lott. In 1960, Isadore Singleton was very active statewide in the election of President John F.

⁴⁰Ernest Singleton to author; Price, pp. 55, 117; Pittsburgh Courier, September 19, 1959; Powell interview.

Kennedy and was invited to attend the inauguration of Kennedy in January 1961.⁴¹

A third method used to influence the political system was the voting ticket, which was a list of candidates recommended by a group or individual. Often candidates paid fees, not for the votes but for the expenses of organizing and distributing the tickets to influence black voters, many of whom were illiterate or not knowledgeable about politics. Florida Senator Arnett Girardeau later explained the ticket system:

In the days when Rex Sweat was sheriff of Duval County [1932-1956], he built a big political machine. I was away at school, but I understand he controlled the politics of the county and the city in such a manner that blacks were just there to be used at election time voting. There were a few blacks who refused to accept that: Elcee Lucas, Ernest Jackson, Isadore Singleton, Gardner (Nip) Sams, Frank Hampton, Otis Speights, Roosevelt Daniels, Rev. Dallas Graham, J. B. F. Williams, Rev. J. S. Johnson, Lee Haines. These prominent people were on the cutting edge of black equality and human rights. It was in the late forties and fifties, when anti-black feeling was at its peak. . . . It took a lot of courage. The above-named people refused to let the white community run their politics and were determined to re-control politics in the black community.

That's how they got started, and they did a good job. They stopped white politicians from coming into the black community, getting the support they needed and then leaving and never coming back until time to run again. The way they

⁴¹Raiford Brown interview; Lucas interview; Lott interview; Tampa (Florida) Daily Times, January 13, 1956, noted in Price, pp. 84-86; Invitation to inauguration of John F. Kennedy, 1960 (in personal files of Isadore Singleton (Jr.), Jacksonville, Fla.); Isadore Singleton interview; Ernest Singleton to author.

did it was by starting the ticket, which meant that someone who wanted the support would get on somebody's ticket. The whole group started this around the same time.⁴²

Elcee R. Lucas, a local printer, said that he started the ticket system in Jacksonville in 1950 when the Congress of Industrial Organizations gave him money to increase the black vote in Northeast Florida for the re-election of U. S. Senator Claude Pepper.⁴¹

In one of the voting leagues, the Duval County Democratic Alliance, precinct workers met together to endorse candidates for each office. Then ward, precinct and block workers distributed their endorsement cards, talked to people individually, and offered transportation to the polls. White politicians sometimes were afraid to let it be known that they made promises to blacks or were on black tickets, for fear of losing white support. After the elections, the black committeemen and other campaigners could serve as go-betweens for their neighborhoods and the city officials they had helped to elect, in order to get jobs for blacks and the promised improvements for streets, recreational facilities and fire stations--sometimes from the city councilman's contingency fund. Since blacks in Florida generally registered and voted in greater numbers

⁴²Girardeau interview. See also Price, pp. 55-56, 69-77, and Edward Davis, p. 126.

⁴¹Lucas interview; FTU, May 7, 1977, p. B-1; Price, pp. 60-61.

when there were contests of special importance to them, the voting leagues helped to increase black interest and participation.⁴²

Senator Arnett Girardeau said that Isadore Singleton was one of these "power-brokers" among the blacks for a long time and that he "was entirely respected in both the black community and in the white community" for not over-charging the candidates and for printing a name "only if he thought the candidate the best for blacks." As Singleton became widely recognized as a respected political leader in the black community, white politicians were advised to seek his support during this period when voting for candidates was city-wide. Lewis B. Brantley, who represented Duval County in the Florida House of Representatives and Senate between 1966 and 1978, remembered that Isadore Singleton was a political power in Jacksonville--one of the "kingpins" in politics. "It was my firm belief that if Isadore was against you, you couldn't win," he said.⁴³

Charles E. Lott said that Singleton was well-suited for this role, since he was known as having "the best barbeque in town and made friends from all over." He and his wife, Mary, would host political gatherings in their spacious home on Thirty-third Street, and would sponsor other large

⁴²Price, pp. 55-56, 71, 77; Raiford Brown interview; Lott interview.

⁴³Girardeau interview; Interview with Lewis B. Brantley, October 8, 1985.

gatherings where candidates could meet black voters. "Mary was always in the background--very gracious. She was such a dear person," said one white politician's wife.⁴⁴

A fourth way that blacks in Jacksonville tried to influence the political system was through the running of black candidates for political office, even though the system of voting city-wide for each candidate from 1949 to 1967 made black victories unlikely. The system of having second primaries for the two top vote getters in each race also hindered blacks since whites who had been divided among various white candidates tended to unite their votes against any black candidate in a second primary. In 1951, two blacks ran for the Jacksonville City Council. Printer Elcee Lucas in Ward Three lost to incumbent Judge James M. Peeler in the second primary, and Porcher L. Taylor, Sr., publisher of The Florida Tattler, in Ward Five, also lost in the second primary contest. In 1952, Porcher Taylor had another defeat in his bid to be justice of the peace.⁴⁵

Although a relative newcomer to Jacksonville politics, Isadore Singleton ran in April 1955 for the Ward Two city council seat and came in third with 6,094 votes against the 11,378 votes for Lemuel Sharp, a past council president, and

⁴⁴Lott interview; Interview with Walter Smith, September 4, 1985; Trednick interview; Interview with Pat Ashworth, October 2, 1985.

⁴⁵Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Price, pp. 74, 79, 83, 121; FTU, March 18, 1951; FTU, April 7, 1951.

8,422 for Bill Thompson. Attorney Ernest D. Jackson, Sr., in Ward Three and Porcher Taylor in Ward Five also ran but lost in the second primary.⁴⁶

In 1956, Ernest D. Jackson, a "respected" black attorney, actually won the first primary Democratic election for justice of the peace in District Two of Duval County, with 52.5 percent of the votes--7,716 votes compares to 6,013 votes for the incumbent Sarah Bryan. To nullify this vote, a local judge agreed with whites that the existing justice of the peace district lines were unconstitutional, although they had been used satisfactorily for four years. The districts were changed, and the Democratic Executive Committee chose Bryan, but not Jackson, as one of the Democratic candidates for the new districts--sure to win in the general election, since most voters were registered Democrats. Even so, some blacks noted that Jackson really got more votes than Bryan as a write-in candidate in the general election, except that the courts had ruled that a write-in candidate's full name had to be written out and spelled exactly right, in a certain place on the ballot, and one to two hundred ballots for Jackson were thrown out because they did not conform to these requirements. In that year, 45.6 percent of the adult blacks in Duval County were registered to vote, compared with 37.5 percent of adult whites. Jackson's district was then gerrymandered so that

⁴⁶Duval County Supervisor of Elections; FTU, April 16, 1963.

instead of having one thousand more black than white voters, it had two thousand more white voters.⁴⁷

Yet, this event had a stimulating effect on some whites. Walter Smith, who later became chairman of the Duval County Democratic Executive Committee three times, remembered being upset at the "gerrymandering" of the justice of the peace districts in order to keep out Jackson in 1956. "It was just such an injustice," Smith said later.

I thought: 'How far can we go and still say we have a democratic society?' Since the Democratic party was about the only party here, I thought it had to take the responsibility for whatever happened at that time."⁴⁸

1956 was also the year that the Jacksonville Urban League lost its funding from the local Community Chest, because of its support of the National Urban League. However, some sympathetic whites remained on the Jacksonville Urban League Board or secretly made contributions so that the local league could keep going--until 1968 when it was readmitted to the Community Chest. The bi-racial Human Relations Council which also met in the 1950s and 1960s had interracial religious services and discussions on how to make democracy work. "It was a bridge of communication, with some activism," said Rabbi Sidney Lefkovitz, who

⁴⁷Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Interview with Harry Nearing (Supervisor of Elections, Duval County, Fla.), February 27, 1985; Hampton interview; Raiford Brown interview; Price, pp. 79-80; FTU, May 2, 1959, pp. 19, 36; Pittsburg Courier, June 4, 1960, p. 8.

⁴⁸Walter Smith interview.

participated in the group. "It tried to stop rumors and it helped to change public opinion," as did the Jacksonville Urban League.⁴⁹

Isadore Singleton did not run in the April 1959 city council election, but two other blacks again came in second in the first primary but were defeated in the second primary: Ernest Jackson in Ward Five and Samuel Bruce, Sr. in Ward Three. Before the first primary, Hayden Burns and Emory Price, candidates for mayor of Jacksonville, were accusing each other of sympathy toward blacks.⁵⁰

When Ernest Jackson ran again for justice of the peace in May, 1960, he was hindered by endless telephone calls and the choosing of polling places in locations hard for black voters to reach. Yet he still got more votes (5488 or 44 percent of the total vote) than Sarah Bryan (who got 4764 votes) and two white male opponents, but he lost to her in the second primary by 746 votes. Also in May, 1960, Eric Oscar Simpson, publisher of the Florida Star of Jacksonville and the Miami Star, ran for the county Civil Service Board in District Two and came in third with fifteen thousand

⁴⁹Raiford Brown interview; Pearson interview; Lefkovitz interview; Jacksonville Urban League, Inc., A Comprehensive Look at the Jacksonville Urban League, 1956-1957 (Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Urban League, Inc., 1957).

⁵⁰Duval County Supervisor of Elections; FTU, April 18, 59, pp. B-21, 24; FTU, May 2, 1959, pp. B-19, 36.

votes (27.9 percent of the votes).⁵¹ In November 1961, Attorney Leander J. Shaw, Jr., received 3067 votes in the first black bid for a seat on the board of school trustees in Duval County, but he lost in the second primary.⁵²

In April 1963 Isadore Singleton again ran for the Jacksonville City Council in Ward Two and received 15,219 votes (43.4 percent of the vote) against incumbent Lemuel Sharp who was re-elected with 19,864 votes. Singleton's six-year-old son, Isadore, later remembered his father "running around with a loud speaker on his car to campaign" and having a "parade." Singleton received help in the campaign from his brother Ernest, who was in Jacksonville at the time. As Ernest Singleton remembered, "You can be sure that going into all-white areas to campaign and speak at all-white gatherings was a spine-tingling sensation for both of us." With the Civil Rights Movement by then active in Jacksonville, the city had closed its largest swimming pool rather than admit Blacks. Isadore Singleton ran "at a very inopportune time--a little ahead," said Don Trednick. "In a district of many more white than black voters, he didn't

⁵¹Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Pittsburgh Courier, June 4, 1960, p. 8.

⁵²Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

have too much of a chance. He would have won hands down in an all-black district."⁵³

After the election, Isadore Singleton "then worked on strengthening his political base since he planned to run again for local office or the state legislature," said his brother. "Mary, of course, knew all of his contacts and had discussed his plans for the future." Ernest Singleton said that Medgar Evers, from their home state of Mississippi, visited his brother in June 1963 in Jacksonville and asked him to come to Mississippi to aid "the cause." Medgar Evers was killed the following week in Mississippi (June 12, 1963).⁵⁴

Isadore Singleton also worked with Frank Hampton and other blacks to get blacks hired in government positions and to intercede at City Hall when someone had difficulty. He supported Hampton's legal attacks on segregation through court suits, as well. On July 4, 1958, Frank Hampton and three other blacks refused to accept any longer their being kept out of the local tax-supported Brentwood and Hyde Park golf courses (except for a a single day for black use at each course). They filed suit against the city of Jacksonville, with the help of attorney Ernest Jackson, who argued

⁵³Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Isadore Singleton interview; Ernest Singleton to author; FTU April 16, 1963, pp. 3, 5.

⁵⁴Ernest Singleton to author; Joanne Grant, Black Protest: History, Documents and Analyses--1619 to the Present, 2nd ed. (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1974), p. 257.

that segregation of the golf courses was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. The blacks won the suit in April 1959 when U. S. District Judge Bryan Simpson ruled that the city golf courses must be desegregated⁵⁵

However, the city then closed the courses within a week and made plans to sell them to private corporations to avoid integration. Isadore Singleton, a golfer, was one of several black leaders who urged the Jacksonville City Commission not to close them. As president of the Jacksonville Negro Chamber of Commerce, he "asked the commission not to put politics before principle and urged them to apply the golden rule."⁵⁶ After Brentwood and Hyde Park golf courses were finally sold to private owners in January and February, 1960, Frank Hampton and others filed several additional suits until blacks were allowed to play on them in 1963, after agreement by the U. S. Supreme Court.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Hampton interview; Thelma Jackson, interview; Interview with Ernest D. Jackson by Paul Weaver, October 30, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla., (Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.); FTU, July 4, 1958, p. 15; FTU, April 3, 1959, p. 1; FTU, December 4, 1960; Truth in Politics (Jacksonville, Fla.), July, 1984.

⁵⁶FTU, April 3, 1959, p. 1.

⁵⁷Hampton v. City of Jacksonville, Florida, CA Fl., 304 F.2d 320 (4th cir., 1962); Ghioto v. Hampton, 83 S.Ct. 256, 371, U.S. 911 (1962), 9 L.Ed.2d 170, p. 1029; FTU January 27, 1960; February 10, 1960; FTU, June 17, 1960; FTU, June 17, 1961, p. 19; FTU, May 18, 1962, p. 25; FTU, November 20, 1962, p. 21; FTU, January 26, 1963; FTU, June 9, 1963; Modern Federal Practice Digest, vol. 10 (St. Paul, Mn.: West

In October 1959, as it became clear that the city was going to sell the two golf courses to avoid discrimination, Hampton filed, again at his own expense, what was called an "omnibus suit" against all public facilities owned and operated or leased by the city of Jacksonville, in October 1959. "We felt that if we brought one suit against each facility, the city of Jacksonville would sell each facility as it became desegregated," and endless suits would have to be filed," said attorney Jackson in 1976. In December 1960, U. S. District Judge Simpson ruled that the facilities were to be integrated, and the city of Jacksonville gave up its futile legal fight.⁵⁸ Jacksonville's public swimming pools were then closed, however, to avoid integration.⁵⁹

The politically active Isadore Singleton was remembered by his son as a hard worker who did all he could to keep the five barbeque restaurants going. "I'd go around to the restaurants and help him make the sauce or do whatever was needed. They were closed only on Sundays, when we went fishing occasionally, and things like that," he said. "He was always doing something for kids. One time he came to

Publishing Co., 1969), p. 859.

⁵⁸Hampton interview; Ernest Jackson interview, 1976; Thelma Jackson interview; FTU, April 3, 1959, p. 1; FTU, December 2, 1960, p. 1; FTU, December 14, 1960; FTU, December 28, 1972, p. B-1; Truth in Politics, June 1982.

⁵⁹See FTU, June 7, 1961, p. 31; FTU, June 9, 1961, p. 21; FTU, June 13, 1961, p. 19; FTU, June 14, 1961, p. 29; FTU, July 1, 1961.

school and released pigeons. Another time he went to the park nearby and gave away a box full of baseball gloves he had bought for the kids."⁶⁰

Speaking later about this period in her life, Mary Singleton said:

Somebody had to play the fiddle while Rome burned, and I ran the businesses. I could run them my way, you know. I did most of the book work. I could stay home and do this, and I did. My husband was the activist at that time. I supported [the civil rights movement in Jacksonville] but I was never out there. I was a member of the N.A.A.C.P., but not active. I worked with the Catholic women's groups and stuff like that.⁶¹

She would often accompany her husband as he went to see about his money at his stores, until midnight or one A.M. She also did a considerable amount of entertaining related to her husband's political activities and did not always get paid for barbequed ribs and chicken ordered by politicians. She did have a housekeeper to help her.⁶²

Mrs. Singleton went regularly with her children to St. Pious the Fifth Catholic Church where she was a member of the Altar and Rosary Society, the Welcome and Outreach Committee, and the Catholic Women's Professional Club. "She was always a good worker and supported all the activities,"

⁶⁰Isadore Singleton interview.

⁶¹Mary Singleton interview, 1977.

⁶²Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Harry Littlejohn interview.

although she did not take leadership, said Elizabeth Jasmin.⁶³

Evelyn Walker remembered Mary Singleton as also being a fellow member of a social club, the "Cotillians." According to her cousin, Francis Littlejohn,

Mary was not a leader then, and not much of a socialite anyway. . . . She hated to dress up, and said that nothing was accomplished at social events. She did read a lot and stayed abreast of the news.⁶⁴

Carol Singleton was in Girl Scouts, as her mother had been, and later helped with swimming classes as a life guard at a day camp.⁶⁵ She was also the first black student at Bishop Kenney Catholic High School in 1962 and she graduated cum laude in 1966. She was a home room representative and a member of various school organizations. Mary and Isadore Singleton were active in the school as parents and got to know other people involved with the school.⁶⁶

However, the Singletons did experience prejudice. Mary Singleton later told Walter Smith about a time when she purchased tickets for a game at a ball park, but she and her out-of-town guests were refused admittance because of race.

⁶³Powell interview; Jasmin interview.

⁶⁴Telephone interview with Evelyn Walker, May 30, 1985; Francis Littlejohn interview.

⁶⁵Elizabeth Jones interview.

⁶⁶Telephone interview with Vassie Anderson (Bishop Kenney High School), April 15, 1985; Bishop Kenney High School, The Crusader, 1966 (yearbook), Jacksonville, Fla., 1966.

Yet Johnny D. Sanders, city councilman from June 1967 to 1979, reported that during the early 1960s Mary and Isadore Singleton were the first blacks to buy and sit in a box for viewing a game on the white side of the stadium, since only the white side had boxes.⁶⁷

Thus, during her adult years between 1949 and 1964, Mary Littlejohn (Singleton) led a productive life involving service to the community and growth in understanding and experience, as did Sallye Mathis, although their arenas were somewhat different. After teaching school for over four years, Mary Singleton helped her family as housewife and mother, handled the financial details of her husband's business, and took part in church activities. As a quiet supporter of her husband's participation in the black political life of Jacksonville, she gained an interest in and knowledge of local politics, as well as friendships with blacks and whites on the political scene. Both women had many experiences and skills which prepared them for the next stages of life that were thrust upon them.

⁶⁷Walter Smith interview; Telephone interview with Johnny D. Sanders, May 23, 1985.

CHAPTER V
NEW CAREERS

Sallye Mathis

After the deaths of their husbands in the early 1960s, the loneliness and the disruption of their former roles gave Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton the incentive and time to become further involved in community activities. They each developed several new careers.

Sallye Mathis' husband Earl was sick about a year until he died of cancer in November 1961. That was an exhausting year for her, since she had to combine taking her husband for treatments after school with her duties as dean of girls. After her husband's death, Mrs. Mathis decided to retire from the school system in June 1962, since she had put in more than the twenty years required for retirement. At age fifty Sallye Mathis was free for other things she wanted to do.¹

Besides the death of her husband, the segregation issue contributed to her decision to retire from teaching. She commented later on how sad it was that young children had to leave home in the predawn hours to take long bus rides to the black schools.

¹Solomon interview; Martha Williams to author.

I just lost my enthusiasm for teaching. It was not a matter of wanting to go to school with the whites. It was just that 'separate' was never 'equal.'²

After a period of mourning, Sallye Mathis devoted herself to leadership in community organizations and civil rights efforts. Willye Dennis said she "used her resources--her time, her money, her house for meetings, her influence on others--to further the cause of justice and freedom." She also helped her husband's son, David Mathis, run the shoe store for several years.³

The Y.W.C.A. was one of the city's first organizations to integrate its staff and membership. Staff member Frances Alexander, who worked hard to make that change in 1962 and 1963, said the new policy came when teacher Jean Fliess agreed to become the new Y.W.C.A. executive director only if the board and staff would integrate. White and black members had been at odds in the early 1960s when black women were barred from the downtown building. The first integrated activity at the downtown Y.W.C.A. was the 1962 World Fellowship Assembly, "when black and white women celebrated both their oneness and differences."⁴ When someone at a Y.W.C.A. meeting objected to integration, Sallye Mathis

²FTU, February 28, 1983, p. 3A.

³Dennis interview; Interview with James S. Genwright, May 29, 1987; Mayme Mathis interview.

⁴Alexander interview; JJ, March 10, 1983, p. 10A.

said, "Why do you call yourself a Christian?"⁵ Yet the black women were hesitant about integrating the board," said Francis Alexander.

They had been responsible for their own programs at the [black] branch, and when we began to talk about combining the groups, they feared they would be a minority where they had been a majority. The majority of the all-white board of directors voted for it and the few who disagreed had resigned.⁶

A member of the governing body of the Y.W.C.A.'s black branch much of the time since the 1940s, Sallye Mathis had "a very positive impact, in a very strong way," during integration time, said Mrs. Alexander. "She helped lead us in understanding--to stand up and be counted, even as a minority."⁷

Sue Nell Spiro, who was on the Y.W.C.A. Board of Directors for seven years, commented that

Sallye Mathis did not talk a lot at the board meetings, but would reflect and give her opinion, which was always a very fair one, and people listened to her--both black and white. She was very good at that. She helped people communicate and get along. She didn't compromise but was as objective as possible--never hostile. She reminded people to live up to the 'Christian' in the 'Young Women's Christian Association.' She was also good at raising money, which was needed since many were opposed to integration.⁸

Another board member, Delores Shaw, said that

⁵Solomon interview.

⁶JJ, March 10, 1983, p. 10A.

⁷Alexander interview.

⁸Interview with Sue Nell Spiro, April 3, 1985.

Sallye could break any barriers down, so you hated nothing. She could point out flaws and things that needed improvement, but said that blacks should not blame themselves or be embarrassed by the situation. Perhaps it was the school teacher in her. She could offer possible solutions to problems or cause you to think, 'What are we going to do about it?' She did not yell, try to let you know how brilliant she was, or build herself up. She would ask questions if needed, or say, 'I'll find out.' She was deeply religious yet did not try to convert the world.⁹

Sallye Mathis was also influential in integrating the League of Women Voters of Jacksonville in 1962. Teacher Vera Davis said that their joining was an outgrowth of some inter-racial meetings held by members of the American Friends' Society. They met in the home of Pat Barnes, who was on the League's membership committee. "Blacks were not being sought in the League of Women Voters," said Vera Davis, but the dues that she, Sallye Mathis and Wilhemina Rutledge sent were accepted. The black members attended unit meetings in Arlington for several months before many League members knew about it. Some white women resigned from the Board of Directors, but others welcomed the blacks.¹⁰

In 1963 Sallye Mathis and Wilhemina Rutledge began going to state and later national meetings of the League of

⁹Interview with Delores Shaw, May 9, 1985.

¹⁰Interview with Vera Davis, May 7, 1985; Interview with Carolyn B. Vernier, January 3, 1986; League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, Board of Directors, Minutes of Meetings, November 27 and December 13, 1962 (in files of the League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.).

Women Voters, and Mrs. Mathis was a member of the local League's Board of Directors by its April 7, 1964 meeting. At that meeting, the League president, Carolyn Vernier, reported that she had testified before the HOPE subcommittee of the Citizens' Biracial Committee about the League's experience in integrating, including the difficulty in arranging luncheon meetings and in securing homes for integrated meetings. She further testified that "we found our negro members make a valuable contribution to our discussions and that we had found it very easy to associate with them."¹¹ With the Board's willingness, Carolyn Vernier then appeared on a panel television show on the subject. A local judge told her later that her testimony changed his mind about the need to integrate public facilities. Mrs. Vernier said later that the black members helped the white members learn about the problems of the black schools.¹²

By October 1964, Sallye Mathis had persuaded other black women, such as Grace Solomon, Florida Rutledge Cave, Anne McIntosh, Hettie Mille, Delores Shaw and Arnolta Williams, to join the League of Women Voters. "Sallye

¹¹Vernier interview; League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, Board of Directors, Minutes of Meeting, April 7, 1964 (in files of League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida).

¹²(Judge William H. Maness) Vernier interview.

explained to me the benefits of joining and how we could contribute," said Hettie Mills.¹³

By May 1964, Sallye Mathis was discussion leader for the League of Women Voters' Northside unit and also head of the League's International Relations Committee. Mrs. Gene Miller remembered many pleasant social occasions at the Mathis home where they planned for the committee.¹⁴

Sallye Mathis said later that her interest in city government started through the League of Women Voters' observer program, initiated in June 1964 for members to attend government meetings and to arrange "Look--See" trips to see government in action. A former civics teacher, Sallye Mathis regularly observed the city council meetings and began to learn what was going on. Louis H. Ritter, Sr., who was mayor of Jacksonville from 1965 to 1967, said that Mrs. Mathis, as an observer for the League of Women Voters, had probably the best attendance record at council meetings while he was mayor. Sallye Mathis was angry that the officials would go into "executive sessions" to talk privately, since there was no "Sunshine Law" then, remembered Gene Miller. Things were so bad on the council that

¹³League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, Membership List, October, 1964 (in files of the League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Fla.); Mills interview.

¹⁴Miller interview; Telephone interview with Barbara Jean Bald, November 26, 1984.

she may have said, "What can I lose?" when she later decided to run for the council.¹⁵

In 1964 and 1965 the studies of the League of Women Voters of Jacksonville also included the Florida legislation, the Duval County schools, and the proposed consolidation of Jacksonville and Duval County. Sallye Mathis, as a League member, contributed to the discussions and thus had numerous white friends who were informed about and in favor of consolidation.¹⁶

From 1962 to 1971, Sallye Mathis was also on the Board of Directors of the local Y.M.C.A. Lawrence V. Jones, director of the James Weldon Johnson branch (for blacks) since 1964, said that Mrs. Mathis "was a very conscientious board member [who gave] untiring service. . . . She was very instrumental in bringing in funds. Any time you called on her, she was willing to do whatever she could to help."¹⁷

Mrs. Mathis was also "a great help in the planning" of some of the first anti-poverty programs in Jacksonville in

¹⁵League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, Board of Directors, Minutes of Meetings, June 9, 1964 (in files of League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Fla.); Mrs. Lyle Vernier (president of League of Women Voters of Jacksonville) to Mayor Hayden Burns, June 11, 1964, Jacksonville, Fla. (in files of the League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Fla.); Telephone interview with Louis H. Ritter, Sr., February 16, 1986; Miller interview; Vernier interview; Bald interview.

¹⁶League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, Minutes of Meetings, 1964-1965 (in files of League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Fla.).

¹⁷Telephone interview with Lawrence V. Jones, April 3, 1985.

1965, noted former mayor Louis Ritter, especially in the setting up of the first neighborhood centers in the East Jacksonville area. She was a leading organizer of the Jacksonville Opportunities Industrialization Center (J.O.I.C.). In 1966 she, Wendell Holmes and others went to Philadelphia to get information on the program for job training and placement. "She was very sincere about helping people to help themselves," commented Alfred Bennefield, director of the center, and she served on its board of directors from then until her death.¹⁸

In the mid-1960s, Sallye Mathis had more time than earlier to devote to the projects of Delta Sigma Theta, "a public service sorority." She served as vice-president and Dean of Pledges for several terms and attended several national Delta conventions. Among the various local Delta activities she participated in were the library project for teen-agers and the voter registration project. The group also brought students to McClenny State Hospital to entertain the patients. Students, parents and the public were also invited to programs at the library on such topics as the facts and dangers of drugs. The Deltas' Job Opportunities Project gave programs for students on how to interview for jobs and employment prospects.¹⁹

¹⁸Ritter interview; Telephone interview with Alfred Bennefield, April 15, 1985.

¹⁹Smalls interview; Mills interview.

Sallye Mathis was also president of the Volunteer Auxiliary of Brewster Hospital (later called Methodist Hospital). Made up of mostly Deltas, the auxiliary operated the hospitality cart at the hospital on certain days. She and Lillian Smalls were also on the Advisory Board of Directors of Brewster Hospital in the mid-1960s. Mrs. Mathis was later given an award for one hundred hours of service to patients at the hospital.²⁰

As chairman of her sorority's Social Action Committee, Sallye Mathis helped organize and run one of the first two Headstart programs in Jacksonville in 1965, when the Delta chapters in Jacksonville and Los Angeles were given grants for the projects. Their Headstart was held that summer at First Baptist Church in Oakland, on the Eastside. Later other agencies took over the program.²¹ Also, as a member of the Human Relations Council of Greater Jacksonville, Sallye Mathis directed its Summer Enrichment Program for twenty disadvantaged children in 1966. She was also elected to the Board of the Jacksonville Urban League. Still an

²⁰Smalls interview; Sallye Mathis to Jack Whittington, April 11, 1962, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); Jacksonville League of Women Voters Asks the Questions: The Candidates Reply (Jacksonville, Fla.: League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, [Spring] 1967), p. 9; Who's Who of American Women, 8th ed. (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1974), p. 616; Sallye B. Mathis, "Resume: Mrs. Sallye Brooks Mathis," Jacksonville, Fla., ca. 1972 (in Solomon files).

²¹Mills interview; Dennis interview; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Jacksonville chapter, "1964-1965 Committee List," Jacksonville, Fla., 1964 (in Solomon files); FTU, May 19, 1965; League of Women Voters Asks, p. 9.

active member of Central Baptist Church, she took over her mother's Bible class for women after her mother died in 1963.²²

After her retirement from teaching in 1962, Sallye Mathis also had more time to participate in the civil rights activities of the N.A.A.C.P. in Jacksonville. She now had the time and freedom to do things her husband would have considered too dangerous for her. "I'm retired now, so they can't harrass me or jeopardize my job," she said.²³

The Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, Supreme Court decision of 1954, which had ruled that segregated schools were neither "equal" nor in line with the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, was the culmination of many years of mostly successful litigation by the N.A.A.C.P. However, since the decision and the directive in 1955 for desegregation "with all deliberate speed" gave no timetable for compliance, it "brought a simmering discontent to angry boil" among blacks, according to historian Paula Giddings, and blacks turned to other tactics. The refusal of Rosa Parks to give up her bus seat to a white person on December 1, 1955, was no accident. Secretary for the N.A.A.C.P. in Montgomery, Alabama, for the previous twelve years, she, the N.A.A.C.P. and the Women's

²²Mills interview; Dennis interview; Solomon interview; FTU, May 19, 1965; JJ, May 18, 1967; Jacksonville League of Women Voters Asks, p. 9.

²³Girardeau interview.

Political Council there, were angry about past racial humiliations. They were looking for a test case, and ready to support it with an organized boycott.²⁴ The vision of A. Philip Randolph and other earlier black leaders of non-violent direct action to protest segregation was thus revived and spread around the nation, including Florida. Martin Luther King, Jr., often came to Randolph for advice and received support from him.²⁵

Before the Montgomery case was won by the blacks (in 1956), two black female students in Tallahassee, Florida, were arrested for refusing to move to the back of a city bus on May 26, 1956, and a boycott of city buses was begun there by students of Florida A. and M. University and some black and white community adults. Marches and other demonstrations were held by the students in Tallahassee, in spite of jailings and other tactics by whites.²⁶

The use of the sit-in as a direct tactic was first used in the South in Miami, Florida, on April 1, 1959, by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and then at some other places, including Jacksonville, that year. It grew into a widespread southern movement in 1960 after black college

²⁴Giddings, pp. 161-167; *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), 349 U.S. 294 (1955), cited in Milton Morris, p. 215; Levine, "The Concept," p. 131; The Gainesville (Fla.) Voice, January 22, 1999, p. A4.

²⁵Meier and Rudwick, From Plantation, p. 272; Daniel Davis, pp. 142, 143.

²⁶Rabby, p. 10.

students in Greensboro, S. C., refused to leave lunch counters where they were refused service. One of the students in the Greensboro sit-in was Sallye Mathis' niece, Marilyn Solomon, a student at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. On March 18, 1960, eight Florida A. and M. University students in Tallahassee, led by student Patricia Stephens "became the first sit-in demonstrators in the country to accept a jail sentence rather than pay their fines," and CORE and other groups planned regional campaigns for action.²⁷

The reaction to the Brown decision in Florida was considered "moderate compared to that in other Deep South states," but the Florida legislature enacted various pieces of legislation to oppose school integration, and white "citizens" councils were organized. In spite of intense feeling against integration, on March 20, 1960, Florida's Governor Leroy Collins urged moderation in solving the racial problems, based on a "Christian, democratic and realistic" point of view. In April there was a sit-in victory in Miami when some downtown department stores agreed to serve blacks. However, until the civil rights bill was signed in 1964, the law was generally on the side of

²⁷Rabby, pp. 113, 137; Solomon interview; Telephone interview with Leonard Atwater, January 27, 1988; Milton Morris, p. 221.

segregation, and the demonstrators were considered by white officials as agitators who were disturbing the peace.²⁸

Sallye Mathis was an active member of the Jacksonville branch of the N.A.A.C.P. as it coordinated sit-ins, picketing, marches and economic boycotts from 1959 to 1966-- primarily in order to be "allowed" to eat in restaurants, get better jobs, use the restrooms of stores they patronized, and sit in Heming Park and other places. Like most school employees, she had to help secretly at first, for fear of losing her job. The front-line participants of this daring and sometimes bloody phase of the movement were mainly young, black men and women and at times ministers who had the courage and were less dependent economically on whites than were most blacks. The local leader of this movement was Rutledge Pearson, who taught social studies for fourteen years in the Duval County Public Schools and served as head of the Social Studies Department at Darnell-Cookman Junior High School and as vice-president of the Social Studies Teachers Council of Duval County. Sallye Mathis noted later that she and Rutledge Pearson had taught Civics together for about five years at Isaiah Blocker Junior High School--"teaching young people the principles of city government. In recent years we have worked together

²⁸Button p. 289; Shofner, pp. 294-298; Edward Davis, p. 158; FTU, March 20, 1960; FTU, March 21, 1960; Pittsburgh Courier, April 23, 1960, p. 3; Rabby, pp. 102, 324.

attempting to see that these principles are put into practice in our city."²⁹

Pearson also inspired his former classmate, Arnett Girardeau, to help lead the movement during the summer of 1960 and after Girardeau returned to Jacksonville in 1962 to begin his dental practice. Sit-ins were held at downtown stores, while pickets walked outside, and there were some arrests.³⁰ After gathering statistical data on black patronage and employment patterns at the downtown stores, Rodney Hurst, a young student of Pearson's, and others in the 450-member Youth Council, talked with store managers about desegregating their lunch counters and hiring more blacks.³¹

The peaceful sit-in movement met with violence on August 24, 1960, known as "Ax-handle Saturday," when non-violent N.A.A.C.P. picketers were attacked by Ku Klux Klan members armed with ax-handles and baseball bats. Then "a

²⁹Girardeau interview; Pearson, 1985; Atwater interview; Raiford Brown interview, 1976; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Florida State Conference, "Historical Sketch of Our State President," program (Tallahassee, Fla.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Florida State Conference, November 12, 1964); National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jacksonville Branch, "Ten Year Memorial to Rutledge H. Pearson, Sr., 1929-1967," program (Jacksonville, Fla.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jacksonville Branch, December 16, 1977) (in Solomon files).

³⁰Girardeau interview.

³¹FTU, August 30, 1960; Pittsburgh Courier, September 10, 1960, p. 2.

group of little tough kids out of Blodget Homes, called 'the Boomerangs,'" and other blacks not under N.A.A.C.P. discipline, fought back. Some blacks used violent tactics against stores and private property owned by whites. There was bloodshed and one black was killed.³²

At the next meeting of the N.A.A.C.P. Youth Council, attended by an estimated fourteen hundred blacks, an economic boycott of downtown stores was planned instead of further demonstrations. On August 30, the Jacksonville Ministerial Association made plans to establish a bi-racial committee to work on the problems. Like the Chambers of Commerce in various other Florida cities, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce was interested in minimizing conflict and bringing business and industry to the city, and in December 1960, set up a Jacksonville Community Advisory Committee with seven sub-committees to work on the various racial problems. In May 1961, this committee announced with the approval of the Chamber of Commerce that some stores had desegregated their lunch counters "after thorough investigation and discussion by leaders of all segments of community life." However, Mayor Burns' refusal to appoint an official

³²Girardeau interview; Pearson interview, 1985; Caesar interview; Genwright interview; FTU, August 28, 1960, pp. 15, 20; FTU, August 29, 1960, pp. 19, 23; FTU, August 30, 1960; Pittsburgh Courier, September 10, 1960, p. 2; William K. Williams (Executive director of the Florida Council on Human Relations), "Jacksonville Experience is Another Costly Lesson," New South (Atlanta, Ga.: Southern Regional Council) 15 (December 1960): 3-8; Edward Davis, p. 159.

bi-racial committee until 1964 "added fuel to the fire rather than dissuading people from the movement," said Senator Girardeau.³³

Following the 1960 riot, Rutledge Pearson kept his job teaching social studies but lost his additional job coaching high school baseball because of his N.A.A.C.P. involvement, according to Senator Girardeau. Pearson was elected president of the adult local branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1961 and in 1963 he was elected president of the state branch. Most teachers did not dare to participate openly in the demonstrations or even in regular politics, for fear of losing their jobs, but Pearson was a rare exception. Amie Currie, another teacher who marched, explained: "Something stuck us in the side and woke us up. I think Martin Luther King did a great deal to stir people up to what they could do and not sit still."³⁴

Senator Girardeau remarked that "between 1962 and the beginning of 1965, as a result of our actions and demonstrations, desegregation of the restaurants, stores and hotels became just a matter of the course of time." It was mostly a movement of young blacks between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. Senator Girardeau said that the young black women

³³ FTU, August 29, 1960, pp. 19, 23; FTU, August 30, 1960; FTU, December 8, 1960; FTU, December 9, 1960; FTU, May 18, 1961, p. 21; Edward Davis, p. 159; Girardeau interview.

³⁴Girardeau interview; Currie interview; N.A.A.C.P., "Ten Year Memorial."

were much more prone to non-violence and accepting abuse than were young black men.³⁵

In Jacksonville the N.A.A.C.P. directed most of the civil rights demonstrations, while in other Southern cities other groups usually led them. Lloyd Pearson stated that the demonstrations were carefully planned in advance with lawyers and ministers involved, and had local and national N.A.A.C.P. lawyers to help afterwards, so that there were fewer jailings and smaller fines than in some other places. Rev. Charles Dailey noted that, in challenging the public accomodation law, Jacksonville blacks had more local ministers arrested than in other places. "We had a thing," he explained, "that the problems we were dealing with were local ones and local people ought to handle them." Dailey said that he always felt that Martin Luther King, Jr., really wanted to come to Jacksonville rather than St. Augustine, "but there was an unwritten law that he would not come without an invitation from the active civil rights leaders."³⁶

Lloyd Pearson thought that the Jacksonville marches were "very effective" in that

they sensitized a lot of good people, white and black, who were sort of asleep, because the

³⁵Girardeau interview.

³⁶Pearson interview, 1985; Dailey interview. Re. demonstrations by clergy, see FTU, February 15, 1964; FTU, February 21, 1964; FTU, February 28, 1964, p. 34; FTU, March 25, 1964, p. 21; FTU, April 19, 1964, p. 18; FTU, May 6, 1964.

marches were embarrassing to many people. It took courage on the part of those who marched. . . . The marches disproved many saying that we were happy under this system. . . . It made some angry, but out of their anger, after they cooled off from their anger, I believe some of them went off into their closets and had a chance to think with their real minds. Some of them had a big change of heart.³⁷

Black leaders continued to meet with managers of various businesses, who were being hurt by organized economic boycotts by blacks and by the fear people had of shopping downtown while stores were being picketed. As in other parts of the South, some of the managers spoke up to urge the opening of doors, rather than fighting desegregation, said Lloyd Pearson.³⁸

The civil rights protesters were supported by many others in the black community--either openly or secretly, for fear of losing their jobs. Black professionals gave contributions and some leadership. Numerous black sororities, fraternities, churches and other organizations helped with contributions, publicity and members who participated. Women worked along with the men. Andrew Young noted in a eulogy for civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer of Mississippi in 1977 that

³⁷Pearson interview, 1985.

³⁸Pearson interview, 1985; "N.A.A.C.P.--Please Do Not Shop Downtown Until Our Grievances Are Met," flier, Jacksonville, Fla.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jacksonville Branch, n.d. (in Solomon files); Bartley and Graham, p.17.

women were the spine of our [civil rights] movement. It was women going door to door . . . meeting in voter-registration classes together, organizing through their churches, that gave . . . energy to the movement, that made it a mass movement. Mrs. Hamer was special but she was also representative. Hundreds of women spoke up and took leadership.³⁹

Besides money and workers, church ministers and lay leaders also offered space for meetings, gave talks and had speakers to inspire their members and others in the community. With their "solid, large following," the church leaders in the movement could demand the attention of the white community," said Rev. Charles Dailey, who also noted that much of the black leadership came out of the churches, which channeled the black outrage and tempered its potential violence. The fact that the protest marches started from the churches "helped maintain the dignity of the marches. If it had not been for the discipline of the prayer vigils that preceded some marches, there could have been bloody situations," he added.⁴⁰

Many whites helped the movement secretly--being afraid of being hurt by other whites. They gave money, made phone calls of encouragement, or did things to open doors, anonymously. Ola Mae Caesar commented that "it was beautiful how some white women brought soda water to us in the

³⁹Ms. Magazine (New York) 16 (September 1987): 30.

⁴⁰Pearson interview, 1985; Rev. Charles S. Dailey, quoted in FTU-JJ, August 3, 1980, p. E-4.

picket lines and told us to continue. Some had been involved in interracial efforts for a long time."⁴¹

The Jacksonville N.A.A.C.P. had visits for advice and help from national and regional N.A.A.C.P. leaders. In speaking at mass meetings, Mrs. Ruby Hurley, N.A.A.C.P. regional director, was "quite a speaker--a great help in inspiring people to want to participate," commented Lloyd Pearson. "We were reminded to stay within the N.A.A.C.P.'s national policies and to keep sending half our money to the national "freedom fund" to help chapters (like ours) in need of help."⁴²

The Jacksonville N.A.A.C.P. also had frequent contacts with N.A.A.C.P. leaders in Miami, Tampa and Savannah, Georgia, and with other leaders of the black movements in St. Augustine, Tallahassee and elsewhere. In 1961, Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Jacksonville, where he urged blacks to continue the non-violent struggle for a just, equal society; he also met with black leaders at the home of Isadore and Mary Singleton.⁴³ Among the Jacksonville blacks active in the St. Augustine

⁴¹Pearson interview, 1985; Caesar interview; Raiford Brown interview, 1976.

⁴²Interview with Lloyd Pearson, Jr., by Paul Weaver, October 5, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. (Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.); FTU, "Colored" pages, March 29, 1963.

⁴³Pearson interview, 1985; Hampton interview; Isadore Singleton interview; FTU, August 21, 1983;

movement, Earl M. Johnson and Leander J. Shaw began work in 1963 as attorneys for the N.A.A.C.P. in St. Augustine. When Martin Luther King, Jr., was confined by St. Augustine authorities in 1964, he was brought to the jail in Jacksonville, probably for his protection.⁴⁴ Arnolta Williams said that during the 1964 riots in St. Augustine, one hundred copies of the Pittsburg Courier, with articles in it by her, disappeared en route to Jacksonville. Edward D. Davis noted that Dr. Mary McCleod Bethune encouraged the graduates of Bethune-Cookman College "to come forth as plaintiffs in the all-important struggle."⁴⁵

In August, 1963, about thirty-six black and white residents of Jacksonville rode by train to participate in the famous March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" which had been proposed and directed by the seventy-four-year-old A. Philip Randolph for the one hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. Frank Hampton, who worked actively on the march of over two hundred thousand minorities and other civil rights advocates, said it was a "turning point . . . that brought the nation's attention to

⁴⁴Pearson interview, 1985; FTU, June 13, 1964, p. 24; Atwater interview. See also FTU, January 18, 1988, p. B-3; FTU, January 19, 1988, p. B-1; Colburn, pp. 39, 41, 45.

⁴⁵Arnolta Williams interview; Edward Davis, p. 162.

the push for civil rights" and the need for federal legislation.⁴⁶

By September, 1963, there was a new mood of increasing militance among blacks around the country, who "now demanded immediate and fundamental social, political and economic change." In October, over a thousand blacks marched through the streets of downtown Jacksonville to urge "better jobs, freedom and dignity."⁴⁷

In 1964, tensions increased in Jacksonville when the home of a black child was bombed on February 6 and five Ku Klux Klan members were charged for the bombing. The Chamber of Commerce committee, the Jacksonville Ministerial Alliance and the N.A.A.C.P. urged city officials to appoint an official bi-racial committee to deal with the tensions, without success. There was "orderly picketing" by the N.A.A.C.P. at Jacksonville City Hall to protest unfair employment practices in city government and "the failure of the city government to act towards bringing down racial barriers."⁴⁸

When Mayor Burns deputized the fire department to be able to make arrests, blacks were angry and afraid that

⁴⁶Quarles, pp. 159-162; Hampton interview; FTU-JJ August 21, 1983, p. A-1, 2.

⁴⁷Rabby, p. 205; FTU October 6, 1963.

⁴⁸FTU February 15, 1964; FTU, February 18, 1964; FTU, February 22, 1964, FTU, February 27, 1964, p. 25; FTU, March 7, 1964, p. 24; FTU, April 19, 1964, p. 18; FTU, July 6, 1964.

their demonstrators might be attacked, as in other parts of the country. Some local civil rights demonstrators were arrested and convicted, and then a shot fired from a passing car killed a black woman. When a bomb threat forced evacuation of Stanton High School, the students stoned policemen and firemen and burned cars of newsmen. Some blacks used Molotov cocktails for the first time. The people who reacted violently "were people who didn't have anything to lose and were trying to accentuate their resentment over some things that were going on," explained Raiford Brown. The N.A.A.C.P. branch leaders then requested state and federal officials to intervene, in hopes of getting their attention and bringing some pressure on the city.⁴⁹

After the riot, Mayor Burns finally appointed an official bi-racial Community Relations Committee which held hearings and recommended desegregation. However, Lloyd Pearson thought that the committee "was not very effective, since it had little power." The local N.A.A.C.P. continued leading marches through downtown Jacksonville.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Pearson interview, 1976, p. 41; Raiford Brown interview, 1976; FTU March 21 to March 26, 1964; FTU, April 20, 1964, p. 21; The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report (known as the Kerner Report) (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p.35-36.

⁵⁰Pearson interview, 1985; Raiford Brown interview, 1976; Community Relations Committee, "First Report of the Hearing of Public Expression Subcommittee of the Community Relations Committee, April 8, 1964, Jacksonville, Florida" (Jacksonville, Fla.: Community Relations Committee, 1964); FTU March

Because of "the cumulative effect of civil rights struggles in local communities," Congress finally was persuaded to pass new civil rights legislation which was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 4, 1964. After the turbulence of the previous few years, Dr. Girardeau and other civil rights activists were surprised that the legislation passed.⁵¹

Sallye Mathis, who participated in these exciting struggles of the early 1960s and was influenced by them, said later:

We knew we were living in the dark ages of Jacksonville [in the 1960s]. . . . What really gave us hope was the passing of the Civil Rights Acts [in 1964] and the Voting Rights Act [in 1965]. These acts outlawed segregation in accomodation in any public place such as hotels, restaurants. The day the bill was signed we tried out several places to see if they would throw us out. But they had to let us stay. The news and everything has been different. Black people began to feel a sense of wanting to be in there, wanting to move into the mainstream. This bill did more for the boosting of the morale and the spirits of black people . . . [although] there still is much to be accomplished.⁵²

However, the struggle for equal rights was not over. Although federal law was now on the side of the integration of most public and private facilities, there was opposition

27, 1964, FTU, April 2, 1964; FTU, April 23, 1964, p. 15; FTU, April 30, 1964, pp. 17, 26; FTU, June 11, 1964, p. 19.

⁵¹Rabby, pp. 4, 5; FTU July 4, 1964; Girardeau, "Blacks and the Democratic Party," p. 9; Atwater interview.

⁵²Sallye B. Mathis, "Jacksonville's 1960 Black History," speech at Jacksonville University, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files).

by whites to desegregation in various parts of the country.

As Glenda Rabby wrote about Tallahassee,

the civil rights movement was more than just a legal revolution; it transformed relations between blacks and whites on every level of human activity. . . . The actions of individuals in the large and small contexts of life determined how and at what level the city adjusted to an integrated society.⁵³

By 1964, Sallye Mathis became visible as a leader in an additional concern of blacks in Jacksonville--the quality of education and the desegregation of the public school system, which they felt to be necessary to improve the education of their children. In December, 1960, the suit to desegregate the Duval County schools had been filed in the U. S. District Court by Sadie Braxton for her children. Because of her suit, Mrs. Braxton lost her job with the county school system and had to move to Miami to seek employment. Attorney for the case was Earl M. Johnson, who filed school desegregation suits all around Florida. On August 21, 1962, District Judge Bryan Simpson ruled against the segregation of schools in Duval County, and partial integration based on freedom of choice began with the first and second grades in 1964. However, school integration in the county was very limited until 1972. In 1971, Eddie Mae Steward allowed her children to be named as plaintiffs in the lawsuit.⁵⁴

⁵³Rabby, pp. 4, 5.

⁵⁴Janet Johnson interview; Truth in Politics June, 1982; FTU, December 7, 1960; FTU, August 22, 1962; FTU, July 10, 1965, p. 21; FTU, May 19, 1979; FTU, October 7, 1985, p. B-

Although by the end of 1964 "desegregation of businesses seemed a matter of time," explained Senator Girardeau, Jacksonville blacks "were having problems with how to desegregate the schools, which had not improved much since the 1955 Supreme Court directive for them to desegregate 'with all deliberate speed.'" Girardeau and the N.A.A.C.P. treasurer Ulysses Baety visited a program in Nashville, Tennessee, and then started the Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County. Wendell P. Holmes, Jr., was asked to be chairman, since Girardeau was actively involved in direct action.⁵⁵

Sallye Mathis, who served as secretary for the group, "was there, about every second, to lend her comments, support, and expertise as a former teacher; she knew the school system," said chairman Holmes. She was the only woman on the committee, the other members being black clergymen or other professionals who were also not dependent on white employment. Holmes added that

it was essentially the same thing as an N.A.A.C.P. Education Committee. Rutledge Pearson, president of the N.A.A.C.P., was an ex-officio member and very involved, as well as some other teachers who participated secretly, such as Solomon (Chuck)

1; FTU, January 19, 1987, p. D-1; FTU, April 20, 1987; FTU-JJ July 2, 1987, Section VII, p. 2.

⁵⁵Girardeau interview.

Badger III. Some whites were supportive also, although not really on the committee.⁵⁶

Why did they form the committee? Wendell Holmes explained:

We had two school systems--different standards for white schools, buildings, funding, equipment, and textbooks (or the lack of these). All of the things one would normally find to provide for access to equal opportunity for education were simply not there. . . . So, we organized the committee. The thrust was to desegregate, the theory being that once the schools were integrated, then other things would change. The concern was justified because once the schools began to integrate, they began to change the quality and quantity of these items."⁵⁷

In December, 1964, local blacks held a three-day pupil boycott of the public schools, in order "to spotlight dissatisfaction in the Negro community with . . . inequities here," said boycott spokesman Wendell Holmes. School officials reported a total of approximately forty-one thousand black pupil absences on December 7, 8 and 9, with a loss to the school system of around seventy-five thousand dollars in state aid, which was based on attendance. Rutledge Pearson was "investigated by the school system in regard to the appropriateness of a public school teacher calling for a pupil boycott," but with legal help from the national N.A.A.C.P. it was proven that the boycott was called, not by the N.A.A.C.P, but by Rev. Charles Dailey for

⁵⁶Interview with Wendell P. Holmes, Jr., July 12, 1985. See also, Telephone interview with Dr. Solomon L. Badger III, June 6, 1985.

⁵⁷Holmes interview.

the Ministers' Interdenominational Alliance, and so the case was dropped. Lloyd Pearson said that it was impressive to see competent and confident black lawyers from the national N.A.A.C.P argue and win their cases. Rutledge Pearson was not fired then but he was threatened many times with the loss of his job by the school superintendent, Ish Brant. "It is to Brant's credit that he did not actually fire him," commented Senator Girardeau. However, Dr. William Muldrow was forced to resign from his junior high school job when it was alleged that he encouraged his students to participate in the school boycott.⁵⁸

The blacks weren't the only ones dissatisfied with the Duval County public schools. Rev. Charles Dailey noted that the committee got many calls from whites who recognized the same problems of unfair promotions and lack of equipment in the white schools. He added:

What a lot of whites didn't understand was that in working hard to develop a system to oppress some, they also oppressed themselves--in wasting time, money, energy and human potential. We were fighting to free and clean the whole system. We didn't necessarily believe that in order to have quality education you had to have so many white or black children, [although] in a multi-ethnic culture the mix is good.⁵⁹

The (black) Citizen's Committee for Better Education worked with white citizen's groups which included prominent

⁵⁸FTU, December 10, 1964; Pearson interview, 1985; Girardeau interview.

⁵⁹Dailey interview.

white citizens, to change the tax structure so that the schools would at last have the money needed. In order to shock the community into improving the schools, several of these black and white reform groups pushed for disaccreditation of the fifteen Duval County secondary schools by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which occurred, after years of warning, on December 3, 1964. "The school system had failed repeatedly to correct numerous deficiencies because of the lack of local financial support," explained the immediate past chairman of SACS, Dr. Herman Frick. Sallye Mathis played a key role in getting the schools disaccredited, said Dr. Charles Brooks.⁶⁰

In January 1965, the Duval County Taxpayers Association won a court victory which forced changes in the system of taxation. A report on the school problems by George Peabody College, which was released in March 1965, blamed the inadequacies of the school system on inadequate financing, undue political influence and poor administration. In his study of the later consolidation of Duval County, Damon C. Miller noted that the school issue was important because "it was the beginning of a 'spirit of reform' cited by many

⁶⁰Miller, p. 52; FTU, November 26, 1964, p. 2; FTU, December 10, 1964, p. 21; FTU-JJ, July 2, 1987, Section VIII, p. 2; Brooks interview.

local leaders which culminated in the success of [the vote for] consolidation in August 1967."⁶¹

The N.A.A.C.P. committee's report, "Still Separate - Still Unequal - A Study Specifically Related to Discrimination and Inequities in the Duval County Public School System by the Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County," was presented in May 1965. Being the only ex-school teacher on the committee and the only member not busy with paid employment at the time, Sallye Mathis was very influential. The report expressed the committee's concern for the scholastic problems of the total community but specifically with those of the black children. After a detailed survey of black teachers and administrators and other research since November 1964, the committee concurred with the conclusions of the report by George Peabody College. Problems noted in the black schools were poor morale, overcrowding of classes compounded by the gerrymandering of school districts to keep the dual system, combining of grades, the outdated and inadequate condition of the buildings, books and basic equipment so that teachers had to buy paper and other supplies out of their own salaries, the need for better vocational education, the political and unfair appointments of principals and

⁶¹FTU JJ, July 2, 1987, Section VII, p. 2; George Peabody College For Teachers, Division of Field Services, Duval County, Florida, Public Schools: A Survey Report (Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1965), pp. 12-14, 307, 321, cited in Miller, pp. 50, 51; Miller, p. 52.

teachers, including job-selling, and the hiring of qualified teachers at substitute teacher pay and terms. The report concluded that "nothing less than the complete integration of all facets of this school system will remedy its plight" of clearly unequal "access to educational advantages for Negroes."⁶²

Members of the committee went to almost every school board meeting to try to present these concerns and exchange ideas. Often the delegation was ignored; Sallye Mathis later told of accompanying Wendell Holmes to a school board meeting where he was scheduled to speak at two P.M. but at five P.M. the meeting was adjourned without letting him speak. "But we didn't give up," she added, "If what you believe is right, its worth fighting for." Their efforts soon led to hearings regarding job selling for black teachers.⁶³

The Citizen's Committee often met until two or three o'clock in the morning to study school reports, usually at St. Stephen's A. M. E. Church or Wendell Holmes' funeral

⁶²Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County, "Still Separate--Still Unequal--A Study Specifically Related to Discrimination and Inequities in the Duval County Public School System by the Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County" (Jacksonville, Fla.: Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County, 1965), pp. 10, 19; Citizen's Committee For Better Education in Duval County, "Questionnaire," sent to black teachers and administrators, Jacksonville, Fla., February 5, 1965 (in Solomon files); Holmes interview.

⁶³FTU, June 30, 1965, p.25; FTU, October 8, 1965, pp. 25, 32; Mathis, "Jacksonville's 1960 Black History" (1976).

home. Willye Dennis, who was on the committee secretly (for fear of losing her job in the library system), said:

It was real scary. Sometimes we had to hide Rutledge Pearson's family. We were afraid to use the telephone or take notes. There were really the same [N.A.A.C.P.] people planning the education efforts and the marches downtown; some could come out openly and some not.⁶⁴

However, there was also "a sense of camaraderie, a sense of unity" among blacks in those days, Mrs. Dennis noted.⁶⁵

After a state merger of black and white teacher associations was voted in 1964, teachers from the two black and two white local teachers' associations united to form the integrated Duval Teachers Association in 1965, with a 97 percent vote of approval. The new group brought an end to the practice of all black teachers but not white teachers having to have personal interviews with the superintendent of schools to get hired (with the implication of job-selling), said Connie Cason, who was president of the Duval Teachers Association, 1965-67.⁶⁶

Early in 1966, Sallye Mathis was the only female in a delegation from the Citizen's Committee for Better Education to Washington, D. C., to talk with officials in the

⁶⁴Dennis interview.

⁶⁵Willye Dennis quoted in FTU-JJ, August 21, 1983, pp. A-1, 2.

⁶⁶Telephone interview with Connie Cason, May 28, 1987; Interview with Johnnie Mae Bennett, June 18, 1985; Janet Johnson interview; FTU, April 26, 1964; FTU, March 19, 1965, p. 13.

Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Department of Commerce about the possibility of curtailing some of the funding to Duval County Schools on the basis that the schools were misusing it to perpetuate segregation. Rev. Charles Dailey remembered that during the discussion over a dozen individuals from Jacksonville were marching outside the building. "Rutledge [Pearson] was a tremendous strategist," he said. "We got some attention and then they sent someone to Jacksonville to talk with community leaders. We accomplished some notoriety here in the papers. We tried everything."⁶⁷

On March 7 and 8, 59 percent of the black students in Duval County boycotted their schools again in order to focus attention on the problems in the schools. Then, on March 11, two federal authorities met in Jacksonville with representatives of the school board, the Florida Department of Education, the Citizen's Committee for Better Education, Mayor Louis H. Ritter and other black and white community leaders. Wendell Holmes commented that "there will be no lessening in the pressures we intend to apply . . . based on the reaction of the administration and the board." Mayor Ritter said he would urge the city council to establish a new community relations commission to work on the complaints

⁶⁷Dailey interview; Holmes interview; JJ, February 28, 1983, p. 3-A.

of blacks in Jacksonville.⁶⁸ However, the partial integration plan adopted by the school board in late March was considered too ambiguous to be very hopeful to blacks. Sallye Mathis and others also lobbied at meetings of the Florida Superintendent of Education in Tallahassee and of the Duval County school board for the building of a high school in the largely-black "Eastside" area. The school had been promised during a bond issue campaign in 1961.⁶⁹

Around 19,700 black students participated in another school boycott in October, 1966. Sallye Mathis was one of fifteen defendants in a suit by the Duval County school board to get a court order barring black leaders from promoting school boycotts. On April 13, 1967, Mrs. Mathis and all but four of the defendants were released from the case, and on April 17, all the charges were dismissed by Judge Roger J. Waybright who said that school attendance laws were unconstitutional. Over thirteen hundred black students boycotted Matthew W. Gilbert Junior-Senior High School which they charged was so inadequate and crowded that seventh graders had to have classes in the nineteenth-century Boylan-Haven school building.⁷⁰

⁶⁸Holmes interview; FTU, March 4, 1966, pp.29, 35; FTU, March 12, 1966, p. 25.

⁶⁹FTU, March 30, 1966, p. 28; FTU, February 4, 1967; JJ, February 8, 1983, p. 3A; Mathis, "Resume," 1972; Sallye Mathis interview.

⁷⁰FTU, April 13, 1967, pp. B-1, 2; FTU, April 17, 1967, p. B-1; JJ, April 14, 1967.

The Citizen's Committee for Better Education, which functioned until 1974, "had a great influence on blacks, especially," said Willye Dennis. Through Sallye Mathis' involvement on the committee, she was able

to use her knowledge of the school system and her concern for social justice to impact the school system in Duval County. In the process she learned much about the political process which prepared her for her later involvement.⁷¹

Sallye Mathis also took leadership during the mid-1960s as chairman of the N.A.A.C.P. political action committee, which included lobbying for legislation and elaborate voter registration drives. With the program financed some years by the Southern Regional Council of Atlanta, she coordinated large numbers of volunteers who checked the registration lists against the city directory listings for each precinct and block, visited people in the neighborhoods and gave them transportation to the courthouse so that they could register to vote. Lloyd Pearson, who was one of those assigned by her to work in a certain district, said that she was "best at research on getting past records of candidates, which often did influence the voting when they showed actions for or against segregation."⁷² "She

⁷¹Dennis interview. See also, FTU, September 5, 1974, p. B-4. These activities also helped prepare Wendell Holmes to be elected to the Duval County School Board in 1968.

⁷²Pearson interview, 1985; Sallye Mathis interview; Delta Sigma Theta, "1964-65 Committee List," listing Sallye Mathis as chairman of Social Action, including "assisting the voter registration drive of the N.A.A.C.P." (in Solomon files.)

mastered the art of leadership," he added. "She led the way and was an organizer. She would recite from memory the words of the N.A.A.C.P. creed from the hymn, 'Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide. . . .'"⁷³

By April, 1964, there were 28,469 blacks registered for voting in Jacksonville (38.8 percent of the electorate), and 37,020 in all of Duval County. For the May Democratic primaries for governor that year, blacks in Duval County and the rest of Florida worked hard to support Miami mayor Robert King High, whom they considered more helpful to blacks than Jacksonville Mayor Hayden Burns, although Burns won the election. Lloyd Pearson believed that "locally, the whites sort of resented" the black support of High in 1964 and that their political activity helped white politicians to realize the importance of blacks turning out in larger numbers to vote. Lloyd Pearson thought that this may have influenced the move to single-member districts for city council seats in 1967 when blacks were coming close to having a majority of voters in Jacksonville.⁷⁴ In 1965, Governor Burns "openly courted" the 450,000 black voters in Florida. At a voter registration march and rally in downtown Jacksonville in July, 1965, Sallye Mathis asked the

⁷³Lloyd Pearson, Jr., tape-recorded speech at Minority Women's Coalition program, May 18, 1986, St. Joseph's Missionary Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

⁷⁴Duval County Supervisor of Elections; FTU, May 18, 1964, p. 22; FTU, May 25, 1964; Pearson interview, 1976; Raiford Brown interview, 1976; Button, p. 290.

close to four hundred blacks who took part: "Why can't we turn the tide in Jacksonville and put some of our people in office?"⁷⁵

In the May 1966 elections, four Jacksonville blacks ran for the Florida Legislature from Duval County. Civil rights attorney Earl M. Johnson, came in as a strong second in the first primary for the House of Representatives Group Eight seat with 28,652 votes against Gifford Grange who received 30,527 votes and two other candidates. Johnson's loss in the second primary with 46,666 votes against Grange's 61,886 indicated that about thirteen hundred electors who had voted for the other candidates in the first primary joined in voting for the white candidate in the second primary. Johnson's wife, Janet Johnson, who ran all of her husband's political campaigns, commented in a television interview that he lost "because he's black," since he was obviously "the best qualified" candidate. Mrs. Johnson said later that she got a lot of mail from white people who said that she was right and offered to "help next time." Senator Arnett Girardeau believed that such a clear exposure of voting along racial lines against a very qualified candidate "pricked the conscience of the community," so that whites

⁷⁵FTU, February 22, 1965, p. 34; FTU, July 30, 1965, p. 24.

were more willing to vote for black candidates a year later.⁷⁶

In the November 1966 general elections, Eric Simpson, editor of the Florida Star and the Miami Star, ran unsuccessfully as a write-in candidate for the Florida Senate seat against Claude Smith. Also in November, Sam Jones and Alice Conway filed a petition to ask for a hearing before the U. S. Supreme Court on the reapportionment plan adopted in February by the Florida legislature. They maintained that their rights had "been violated under the U. S. Constitution since the plan was drawn to exclude Negroes from the legislature" by the at-large, county-wide voting system. In the petition Mrs. Conway, who indicated that she intended to run for mayor of Jacksonville in the city election in 1967, said she was afraid "that a malapportioned legislature [would] change the boundaries of the City of Jacksonville to nullify her prospects of being elected mayor." Blacks were indeed anticipating the elections of 1967.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Other Jacksonville blacks who ran and lost in the 1966 first primary were Sarah Kennedy, who received 14,835 votes, and Alice Conway, who received 11,963 votes, for House of Representatives seats, while Sam Jones, won 5,984 votes in his bid for a Florida Senate seat. Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Janet Johnson interview; Girardeau interview; FTU, May 4, 1966, pp. A-1, 8.

⁷⁷Duval County Supervisor of Elections; FTU, November 7, 1966, p. B-1; FTU, November 12, 1966, p. B-1.

Although, by the mid-sixties, blacks in the South had won at least the legal rights to political participation and the desegregation of most public and private facilities, the difficult problems of economic injustice and other forms of discrimination remained. Therefore, Sallye Mathis also took leadership during the mid-sixties in the numerous N.A.A.C.P. marches and meetings with city officials to protest against various forms of discrimination. "Sallye was always right there--often the only woman," said Janet Johnson; "Sallye, the darling of the N.A.A.C.P., became vocal as she marched in the protest lines."⁷⁸

Rev. Charles Dailey explained:

The marches against City Hall, or the sheriff's department, were a technique to get the attention of good-thinking people in our city. It was like a cry for help--to stir the conscience of the community. So many people said, 'That's not so,' 'It's not my problem,' or 'There are other ways to deal with it.' We tried to show that this was not just the problem of the black neighborhoods. It was a community problem and it would take all of us to resolve it satisfactorily.

In the protest marches, Sallye Mathis was always the cut-off person. We always anticipated arrest. Rutledge Pearson was to be the first person arrested; I as a vice-president was to continue as leader and then be arrested; the secretary was to be third, and Mrs. Mathis the fourth person, except that we understood that she was to call off the march before being arrested. It wasn't funny; it was frightening.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Bass and DeVries, p. 56; Meier and Rudwick, From Plantation, p. 301; Janet Johnson interview; FTU, July 30, 1965, p. 24; FTU, November 12, 1965, p. 45; FTU, November 19, 1965, p. 60.

⁷⁹Dailey interview.

Some sympathetic whites joined the demonstrators and gave speeches in favor of the marches. However, the marchers were harrassed by some people, such as Warren H. Folks, a white barber shop owner who would come "with a baseball bat and a sign saying, 'Niggers stink.' He's converted now," said Grace Solomon later; "He ended up calling Sallye 'sister.'"⁸⁰

James Genright remembered that

many times Sallye was the only woman in the marches and the late-night meetings. Later she brought other women to help. . . . I will never forget how Sallye Mathis went downtown with the ministers and dared the whites to strike another blow, which they were doing. She came back on this side of town and told blacks . . . not to do anything to retaliate. She followed the path of Martin Luther King, Jr., to turn the other cheek. She did a magnificent job in this area. We were all proud of her tenure in the civil rights days--days of bloodshed, many, many meetings, many threats, and having to have bodyguards outside the meetings. Once dynamite was found outside of St. Stephen's Church after a meeting, but it had fallen into the azaleas [and did not explode]. . . . She also went to state and national N.A.A.C.P. meetings and helped to keep the communication lines open to get help from the national office.⁸¹

Sallye Mathis herself said later:

During July, 1966, we picketed City Hall for three and a half weeks [since] no blacks were hired there. I kept the signs in my car; I led the picket line, so that meant I was here every day. I never had any dreams of being elected, but our signs said, 'We're going to put them out in '67.' It didn't accomplish anything. They didn't pay us any mind. They just stood up in their windows and laughed at us. And the next month,

⁸⁰Solomon interview.

⁸¹Genwright interview.

these indictments started. I think they gave the people new hope. . . . We picketed, we had sit-ins, we had everything imaginable, and that is really what brought about the changes.⁸²

In August, 1966, Rutledge Pearson resigned from the school system because of pressures relating to the school boycott the previous March. He took a job as International Representative of the Laundry, Dry-Cleaners and Dye-House Workers Union, Local 218, and continued to be an active state and local N.A.A.C.P. president.⁸³

In September, 1966, the N.A.A.C.P. "led a march of about 125 well-disciplined marchers, mostly young, with a sprinkling of white youths," through downtown Jacksonville and ended with a rally near the New York Laundry on Liberty Street, where workers were striking. Rutledge Pearson and Wendell Holmes warned against the "starvation wages" of \$5.80 a day which the County Commission allowed. Sallye Mathis, as N.A.A.C.P. chairperson for voter education and registration, urged people to register and vote--saying: "Let's put out of office some people who need to be put out." Wendell Holmes, objecting to the "too long" wait for the new high school promised in East Jacksonville, noted that in Duval County only 2 percent of the thirty-one

⁸²Sallye Mathis interview, 1975; FTU, July 19, 1966, p. 21; FTU, July 20, p. 25.

⁸³Duval County School Board, Missing Pages in the Jacksonville Story: Multi-Ethnic Studies Project (Jacksonville, Fla.: Duval County School Board, 1972-1973): s.v. "Rutledge Pearson;" FTU, August 19, 1966.

thousand black children were attending integrated schools and only two black teachers were teaching in integrated schools.⁸⁴

During these various protests, Sallye Mathis "always maintained that calmness of spirit and serenity of soul based on strength from her faith in Jesus Christ and her commitment," said Rev. Dailey.

In our meetings, she seldom lost her balance. Being in the N.A.A.C.P. was a tremendous experience for her in that it gave her a kind of exposure to people from a wide variety of backgrounds that she had not previously had. It was wonderful to see how she made the adjustment [to the world outside of teaching]. Her husband's death and her retirement opened up new avenues of endeavor and she was ready to accept them.⁸⁵

Some improvements for blacks were being made during these years. After Louis H. Ritter became mayor of Jacksonville on January 6, 1965, he initiated some positive changes such as the opening of the public swimming pool on July 4, 1965. He worked to desegregate the police force and ordered law enforcement to support the integration of the public schools. Blacks were welcome in Mayor Ritter's office. The first Minimum Housing Standard Code in Jacksonville was passed and the first new public housing starts in fifteen years were made. Mayor Ritter cooperated with Dr. W. W. Schell, chairman of the Jacksonville Urban League Board of Directors, and other black and white leaders in the

⁸⁴FTU, September 9, 1966, p. C-6.

⁸⁵Dailey interview.

organization of the Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity, Inc., program (G.J.E.O., later called the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency), to administer U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity anti-poverty programs such as Head Start and to oversee delegated agencies such as the Jacksonville Opportunities Industrialization Center. As noted above, Sallye Mathis helped start several of these programs. For Mayor Ritter's efforts, a cross was burned on his lawn.⁸⁶

Some gains were made in getting blacks into city positions in 1966. The first blacks employed in the Duval County Courthouse above the lowest level were temporary workers in the office of the Supervisor of Elections.⁸⁷ In June 1966, Mary L. Singleton and Joe Argrett were appointed to the Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals by Mayor Ritter.⁸⁸

Following the picketing and petitioning of City Hall by Sallye Mathis and other blacks for jobs and better housing, as well as some incidents of violence on the nights

⁸⁶Ritter interview; Andrew Robinson interview; Gene Miller interview; Interview with Dr. W. W. Schell, May 9, 1985; FTU, July 23, 1966, p. 27; FTU, June 23, 1967, B-1,9; Florida Star, June 6, 1967, p. 2.

⁸⁷These were Edith Nixon, hired on March 23, 1966, and Mabel Morse, on October 17, 1966. Interview with Tommie Bell (Assistant Duval County Supervisor of Elections), March 1, 1985.

⁸⁸Walter Smith interview; FTU, June 1, 1966; FTU, June 18, 1966; FTU, July 17, 1966, A-1.

of July 18 and 19, there were further efforts by black leaders and city officials to deal with eight earlier "demands" by the N.A.A.C.P., especially for more job training and opportunities in city government. In late July, I. H. Burney, a vice-president of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company, was appointed to the city recreation board, and Dr. Andrew A. Robinson, principal of Raines High School, was appointed to the Jacksonville Housing Authority.⁸⁹

In November, 1966, Mayor Ritter and the Jacksonville City Commission nominated Charles E. Simmons, Jr., who had a master's degree in business administration and was a vice-president of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company, to a vacancy on the county Civil Service Board. There were objections to Simons' appointment from the city council, especially from councilman Barney Cobb, primarily because of his race. The local N.A.A.C.P. threatened mass demonstrations and boycotts unless Simmons was appointed, and support for him also came from some white clergy, writers of media editorials, and many other whites. After thirty days the city council approved the appointment. Simmons was elected to his position on the Civil Service Board in June 1967, re-elected in November 1967, and became chairman of the

⁸⁹FTU, July 13, 1966, p. 27; FTU, July 19, 1966, p. 21; FTU, July 20, 1966, p. 25; FTU, July 21, 1966, p. 19; FTU, July 23, 1966, pp. 23, 27; FTU, July 24, 1966; FTU, July 27, 1966, pp. A-1, 25; FTU, August 10, 1966, p. B-7; FTU, June 23, 1967, pp. B-1, 9; Andrew Robinson interview.

board. Simmons said later that he liked to take credit for the fact that while he was on the Board he was able to get city and county laborers included under civil service protection.⁹⁰

Thus, between 1962 and early 1967, Sallye Mathis branched out into a full schedule of community service activities. She used her past training and experience to take leadership in the integration of the local Y.W.C.A. and League of Women Voters, the service programs of the Y.M.C.A. and her sorority, the establishment of several new, nationally-funded programs, and massive voter registration projects. She helped plan and lead the daring efforts of the N.A.A.C.P. to achieve integration of the public schools and other public facilities and the participation of blacks in leadership positions in city government. She was noted as being able to advocate firmly for black rights and yet cooperate rather than create antagonism among those who were willing to work on solutions to the problems. She received the "State Fight for Freedom" award from the state N.A.A.C.P. in 1965 and 1966 and by 1967 had traveled to most of the fifty states and several other countries.⁹¹

⁹⁰Simmons interview; FTU, November 9, 1966, p. C-6; FTU, November 26, 1966, p. B-1; FTU, December 8, 1966; FTU, December 9, 1966, p. B-1.

⁹¹Sallye B. Mathis, "Sallye Brooks Mathis," press release, July 25, 1967, Jacksonville, Fla.

Mary Singleton

The death of Isadore Singleton, Sr., on February 4, 1964, was a shock to many people. Overweight and plagued by serious heart trouble, Singleton died of influenza in the hospital within seven hours of suffering a mild heart attack.⁹²

Thus Mary Singleton was left alone at age forty-two to raise two children--Carol, age fifteen, and Isadore, age seven--and to run five barbeque businesses. Her school-teacher cousin, Francis Littlejohn, helped her when he could, but she had difficulties getting regular, reliable help and sold the businesses gradually--keeping the one on Edgewood Avenue until 1974.⁹³

Encouraged by friends, Mary Singleton soon became involved in outside activities. Frank Hampton said that she often looked sad when she bought gas from his station and he and others made sure she got included in social and political events. She became very active in Democratic politics and soon represented her precinct, as her husband had done, on the Duval County Democratic Executive Committee. She was also active in the Democratic Club. Shirley King remembered that Mary Singleton became very interested in leadership in

⁹²Trednick interview; Harry Littlejohn interview; Stewart interview.

⁹³Francis Littlejohn interview; Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory, 1974 (Richmond, Va.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1974), p. 773.

the party--"probably wanting to continue her husband's work, while being a good mother." "People wanted her to come out," said Thelma Jackson, "and be a part of the community--with her name recognition."⁹⁴

In January, 1965, Mary Singleton was known well enough in political circles to be appointed by Governor Farris Bryant to the Local Government Study Commission of Duval County as a result of recommendations by the Florida Legislature. She served on Task Force Five on "budgeting, the budget commission, fund custody and finances." Nancie Crabb, who was also on the Local Government Study Commission and later on the Jacksonville City Council from 1975 to 1982, thought that the Duval County delegation "generally had the highest goals in mind" in recommending these appointments. "For the first time ever, they tried to get a good cross-section of people," including women, blacks, affluent leaders and poor people of Jacksonville.⁹⁵

Mary was very intelligent, and so was her husband. They were well-liked as well and respected and feared for their influence. They wanted a woman as well as a black, so they asked Mary. She knew politics inside out--from the bottom up. I think [being on the commission] educated her on the

⁹⁴Hampton interview; Johnny Sanders interview; Interview with Shirley King, August 27, 1985; Thelma Jackson interview.

⁹⁵FTU, January 16, 1965, p. 10; Local Government Study Commission of Duval County, Blueprint for Improvement (Jacksonville, Fla.: Local Government Study Commission of Duval County, 1966), p. 173; Nancie Crabb, tape recorded response to author's written questions, June, 1985, from Aspen, Col.

technical aspects of government, but she already knew the politics of government.⁹⁶

In June, 1966, Mary Singleton was also appointed to the Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals by Mayor Louis Ritter, and served as vice-chairman, with Walter D. Smith as chairman. The housing board functioned under the city's new minimum standard housing law, which became effective in August, 1966, to allow property owners to appeal orders issued by the city supervisor of buildings regarding compliance with the new law. "Mary got along beautifully with the people who came with complaints," Smith commented. "She could reach them. . . . We tried to make both sides happy--with a compromise. She was good at that kind of mediation."⁹⁷

Meanwhile, Mary Singleton was trying to be a good mother. She attended programs at the James Weldon Johnson branch of the Y.M.C.A. where Carol was a member of the Co-Ed Club and programs at Bishop Kenney High School where Carol was the first black graduate in 1966.⁹⁸

Isadore Singleton (Jr.) recalled that one of his mother's favorite types of recreation was going fishing with

⁹⁶Crabb taped response.

⁹⁷FTU, June 1, 1966; FTU, June 18, 1966, p. 25; Walter Smith interview; Mayor Louis B. Ritter, Jr., to Mary L. Singleton, July 15, 1966, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Mary L. Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department, Jacksonville, Fla.).

⁹⁸FTU, February 12, 1966; Anderson interview.

him. She kept fishing rods in the car so that she would be ready for it (and missed fishing when she lived in Tallahassee later). He also said that once he finally got her to go to a wrestling match with him she loved it and they went every Thursday--getting to know people in the wrestling business (such as Don Curtis), and working with them. He also mentioned that "she was crazy about cooking" and "could cook anything." Having to raise her children as a single parent, she tried hard to be a good parent, her son said. "She was a very strict parent. She really meant her discipline. I guess that's one reason I've never been in any trouble."⁹⁹

During this period, Mary Singleton was developing close friendships with city councilman Johnny Sanders and his wife, Bobbie Sanders. They had children about the same ages and the two families would visit back and forth. Sometimes Mary would take the Sanders children fishing along with her own children, and once the Sanders family went to Christmas dinner at Mary's house to enjoy a beautifully-set table, her good cooking and good humor. "She was extremely intelligent and lovable to everybody," said Mrs. Sanders.¹⁰⁰

Mary Singleton also knew loneliness. She explained later that one reason for devoting a lot of her time to public service work was to compensate for being lonely. "I

⁹⁹Isadore Singleton interview.

¹⁰⁰Telephone interview with Bobbie Sanders, May 23, 1985.

had about three years to find out what it's like just being by yourself. I can't live like that. I enjoy being with people."¹⁰¹

Thus, during the three years, between her husband's death and the spring of 1967, Mary Singleton added to her responsibilities as mother and business woman a growing participation in political affairs. She built on the interest in government, knowledge and friendships begun by her political husband and began to be known as a politically active person in her own right. In their various activities, she and Sallye Mathis gained in knowledge of government and the community, in leadership experience and in name recognition and friendships among whites and blacks. They were ready for further developments in their careers.

¹⁰¹Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

CHAPTER VI
ELECTION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Deciding to Run for Office

This chapter will consider why Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton decided to run for positions on the Jacksonville City Council and why they were elected. Both of them were encouraged to run by separate clusters of influential black men with whom they had worked in politics or civil rights activities. One of the major issues for blacks in Jacksonville in the 1967 summer elections was the strong concern they felt to get blacks in public office to correct problems of blacks and as other low-income people.¹ In 1967 blacks in Jacksonville had more hope than ever for getting a candidate elected. "For the first time we felt we had a chance," said Senator Arnett Girardeau, "since the city population had grown to the point where the black population was 46 percent." As Amie Currie said later, Jacksonville blacks in 1967 had probably determined: "Now is the time for

¹Howard N. Lee, "The Black Elected Official in Southern Politics," in The Black Politician: His Struggle for Power, comp. Mervyn M. Dymally (Belmont, Ca.: Duxbury Press, 1979), p. 75.

us to show our strength. We've sat in the corner long enough. We need to get in somebody who will represent us."²

Both Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were asked to run by influential black men who thought, since black men had been unable to get elected in the at-large voting, that their being women might be assets in getting white votes. According to Senator Arnett Girardeau,

in the South, at the peak of discrimination, black females were not treated as harshly as black males. I think that had something to do with their acceptability in the white community. White people could better explain their vote for a black female. They were not aggressive, intolerant or hard and all the things associated [by whites] with black males.³

Black women had long shared leadership in the black community, and some, such as Eartha Mary Magdelene White, had been visible to the general public in Jacksonville. Mary Singleton pointed out in 1968 that black women had often been able to get jobs more easily than untrained black men and therefore shared "more responsibilities, including political ones" than white women.⁴ "Black women worked as

²Girardeau interview; Janet Johnson interview; Currie interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

³Girardeau interview. Similar views were expressed in the Dailey interview; Holmes interview; Janet Johnson interview; Pearson interview; Hampton interview. Paula Giddings noted that some slave women "such as mammies on large plantations were able to extend their domain [of authority within their own households] to the master's house [and] they often became the 'broker' between the slave community and whites." Giddings, p. 58.

⁴JJ November 4, 1968, p. 17.

hard as men," and "have been big leaders" in various fields, said Janet Johnson. "During the fifties and sixties they worked shoulder to shoulder" with the men.⁵

Sallye Mathis

Sallye Mathis' main support was from the N.A.A.C.P. and its allies. A group of people, including Rutledge Pearson, Rev. Charles Dailey, Wendell Holmes, Jr., Rev. J. C. Johnson, Dr. James Downing and Leonard Atwater from the N.A.A.C.P., Rev. Landon L. Williams from the Longshoremen's Association, and Clanzel Brown from the Jacksonville Urban League, formed a separate organization to influence the 1967 city council elections. Rutledge Pearson couldn't run for office because of his position as head of the N.A.A.C.P. When the men invited Sallye Mathis to a meeting and asked her to run for the Ward Three seat, she said, "Who me? Wow! I haven't given this a thought."⁶

Most of those associated with the Citizens' Committee for Better Schools knew they needed representation, explained Wendell Holmes, Jr.

We thought Sallye a good choice; she was female, well-educated, active in the movement. . . . She had demonstrated that she had interesting leadership qualities. She was the kind of person we could comfortably put before the public. She

⁵Janet Johnson interview.

⁶Girardeau interview; Dailey interview; Pearson interview; Atwater interview.

really had no plans to run for public office. We talked her into doing it.⁷

Rev. Charles Dailey remembered that

Sallye Mathis was very reluctant. She just didn't see herself participating in that council. 'I will not play politics,' she said. Rutledge [Pearson] said that was why she was being selected--because we felt she would be fair and represent the whole community.⁸

She called her sister Grace Solomon, who encouraged her and offered help. The group collected a filing fee among themselves and she agreed to run if no other blacks were running for the seat. She qualified on the afternoon of the last day of the week-long qualification period (April 21), and, to her surprise, two black men also qualified for that seat by 5:00 P.M.⁹

Why did Sallye Mathis agree to run? As a regular observer of city government meetings for the League of Women Voters for several years and a leader in trying to improve the schools, her conviction that the city government was poorly managed made her think she could probably do as well.¹⁰ "I don't know anything about politics," she said during the campaign, "but things were so bad on the council in that they were running it like a private business" that

⁷Holmes interview; FTU, May 10, 1982, p. B-1.

⁸Dailey interview.

⁹Dailey interview; Solomon interview; JJ April 22, 1967; Southern Courier (Montgomery, Ala.), August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

¹⁰Mathis interview, 1975; Solomon interview.

she was encouraged to run. She and her supporters felt that her district had had poor representation for a long time.

"I knew the area, and I know the people there had been mistreated for so long," she said. "We didn't know who our city councilman was or how he looked."¹¹

Mary Singleton

Mary Singleton was approached by Frank Hampton and others who encouraged her to run for the Jacksonville City Council from Ward Two in the April, 1967, elections, because people knew her, being the wife of a respected politician and businessman. Hampton said that he persuaded Mrs. Singleton to run because of a "philosophy that we had run men all the while and none were able to win. I felt like I had to run a woman to see if she would be acceptable to the white community." She was encouraged to run by white friends as well.¹²

Why did Mary Singleton decide to run, even though she had recently had a cyst removed from her breast? Her son, Isadore, Jr., who remembered "the hard work when she ran for the council," said:

Being into it with my father, she realized what he wanted to do with politics, and I guess that she realised it was something that needed to be done, and he had already made a name for himself. Basically she wanted to run because there needed to be a black voice in government [to do] things

¹¹FTU May 10, 1967, p. B-1.

¹²Hampton interview; Trednick interview.

that he wanted to do but wasn't able to. . . . She wanted to get in and do the best she could.¹³

In 1975, Mary Singleton explained,

I never had any illusions of running for public office. It never occurred to me that I could even, well, even lean that way. . . . But I tried to find somebody. . . . It was quite obvious that the other side of the tracks got a little more than we got. And every man I asked [said] oh no, they didn't want to do it--they couldn't. So a group came to me and asked me, 'Well, tell you what--you run.' I thought that was awful. I said, 'Oh, no, I can't do that. I wouldn't know what I was doing.'

I didn't know I was sick, but I had to go in the hospital just for a little something and found out it was serious. I had major surgery. And that was a shock to me, because I was fine when I went in. And while I was lying up in that hospital bed, believe it or not, I said, 'you know, that may not be a bad idea. Here I had cancer and didn't know it, and maybe the good Lord spared me [because he] wants me to do something.'

I was out of the hospital [a few weeks] prior to qualifying, and I went down one day and qualified. I . . . shouldn't have been out. But I had to go for cobalt treatments every day during the campaign. And I went. I won the thing.

Having cancer "made her want to live every day" (fully), said Hattie Stewart.¹⁴

Assured of the political support of influential people in their own community and potential networks of supporters, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were encouraged to run for office. They were also secure in the love and general support of their extended families and the community they

¹³FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1; Isadore Singleton (Jr.) interview; Trednick interview.

¹⁴Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Stewart interview.

had grown up in. They and other blacks were aware of the heritage of numerous black women as well as men in Jacksonville and elsewhere who had given models of service as they founded organizations and sometimes spoke out in efforts to aid the black community.

As widows, Mrs. Mathis and Mrs. Singleton knew loneliness and also were released from most traditional household responsibilities and free to make their own decisions. They knew they had at least as much education as the current councilmen, had demonstrated capability in certain areas and could probably equal the performance of the present city councilmen who were facing charges of corruption and incompetence. They knew they had integrity, with a strong commitment to representation for all the people and improving opportunities for blacks and other needy people. Although both women were hesitant to venture into the political arena as candidates--a new experience for most blacks and/or women--they decided to accept the challenge and dedicated themselves to a hard-working campaign.

A Spirit of Reform

Besides the eagerness of Jacksonville blacks for representation in city government, the major city-wide issue in the 1967 campaign was governmental reform. Because of general dissatisfaction with city and county services as whites moved to suburbs outside the city limits, the disaccreditation of the public high schools in 1964, the

overlapping of city and county government bodies, and charges of corruption, political appointments and incompetence, there was pressure for change in Duval County. In January 1965, at the request of a group of Jacksonville business and professional leaders, the Duval County legislators persuaded the state legislature to establish a Local Government Study Commission in the spring of 1965 to make recommendations for local government. The group included top-eschelon community leaders, including representatives of various community groups such as the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women and the Junior League, as well as attorney Earl Johnson, who served as secretary of the commission, and Mary Singleton from the black community. The two major local newspapers and WJXT-TV continued to expose local government conduct and abuses. Beginning in July 1966, eight city officials and two county officials were indicted by a Duval County Grand Jury on charges of bribery, grand larceny and perjury.¹⁵

The study commission's report, Blueprint for Improvement (called the "Blue Book"), which was released in November 1966, recommended comprehensive consolidation of city and county governments with a strong mayor and a non-

¹⁵Martin, Consolidation, pp. 71, 39; Miller, pp. 7, 31; Rosenbaum and Kammerer, pp. 53, 59, 62, 63; Walter Smith interview; Vernier interview; FTU, November 2, 1966, p. A-1; FTU, November 25, 1966, p. B-6; FTU, December 1, 1966, p. B-1; FTU-JJ, October 1, 1968, pp. B-6, 7; FTU-JJ, July 2, 1987, Section IX, pp. 1-8.

salariied legislative council elected by districts. Quickly endorsed by a number of civic groups and prominent individuals, the plan was approved by the Florida legislature in the spring of 1966 after some changes were made, such as direct election of tax collector, tax assessor, superintendent of elections and sheriff, in order to win over some of the opposition. After intensive campaigning by advocates and opponents, the plan passed in a county-wide referendum on August 8, 1967, getting 65 percent of the 77,261 total votes in the county that day, although the approval was from only 27.8 percent of the registered voters in the county, since some did not vote. Baldwin and several communities at the beaches remained independent. The new government officially took effect on October 1, 1968.¹⁶

Thus the campaigns of Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton came at a time when there was a growing spirit of governmental reform in the city. Many whites and blacks were willing to change the officials under indictment for corruption and even the form of government that had been so inadequate in meeting the many needs of the growing county.

For some whites, reform included giving blacks a fair share of representation in city government. As the civil rights movement led to federal legislation which reaffirmed

¹⁶Martin, Consolidation; Damon Miller; Rosenbaum and Kammerer, pp. 53, 59, 62, 63; Local Government Study Commission of Duval County; Walter Smith interview; Vernier interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

the principle of equal opportunity and equal participation in a democratic government, there were growing numbers of whites who felt guilty and embarrassed by previous defeats of qualified blacks on apparently race-oriented grounds and opposition to the appointment of qualified blacks to other city positions. Enough whites were ready to judge candidates on the basis of their qualifications rather than their race that election by single-member districts became part of the proposed plan for the consolidated government, with the assumption that some blacks would get elected in their home districts. Nancie Crabb, who was a council member from 1975 to 1982, thought that

there was a strong consciousness-raising going on in Jacksonville in the mid-to-late 60s . . . for several reasons--one maybe out of fear of [intimidation by] blacks and one out of a little guilt--that things had not been right and fair. I think with the oncoming consolidation, the people felt more inclined to elect blacks, and I think that it was easier to elect a black woman than a black man. . . . I think that there was such a strong feeling that we haven't been completely fair with them, and we need to do something. They felt very righteous in some respects in electing two black women and then Earl Johnson was soon on the scene [elected in the fall of 1967].¹⁷

White women, in contrast, have had to compete with politically powerful white men for elective positions, and did not usually have the backing of male power networks. Nancie Crabb noted that she thought that it was harder for a

¹⁷ Janet Johnson interview; Crabb taped response. See also FTU, June 24, 1967, p. A-4.

white woman to be elected at that time than a black woman.

She added that

there had been other white women through the years that ran for things in city and county government offices but they were always perceived as kooks or something like that, and it was very difficult for a white woman, because I don't think the men had a guilty conscience [towards white women] as they had towards the blacks.

Also, Crabb thought that whites feared intimidation by blacks, whereas white women were not intimidating.¹⁸

Zeb Shoemak also believed that

when Mrs. Singleton ran, with the new thrust that had gone through the country, Duval County felt that they should have some black representation, and Mary Singleton, with her attitude and personality, happened along at the right time. When Isadore [Singleton] ran, it was impossible for a black to get in. In 1967 the whites were trying to redeem, atone, for the past and this was true for Earl Johnson [who] also was easy to meet for white people.¹⁹

There was an element of practicality involved also.

Lewis B. Brantley, a Florida legislator from 1966 to 1978, said that in 1966 a new group of men from the West Jacksonville Jaycees and the Jacksonville Jaycees aspiring to be community leaders "were aggressively looking to include the whole community rather than exclude anybody. We knew we had to work with the black community." He said that the state

¹⁸Crabb taped response.

¹⁹Interview with Zeb Shoemak, August 23, 1985.

legislators newly elected in 1966 were determined to change their "cumbersome, unresponsive government."²⁰

Besides the issue of clean, efficient government in Duval County, it was clear that a motive for many whites in supporting consolidation was to dilute the growing black political strength from 40 percent in the city to around 22 percent in the county. Richard Martin, in his study of consolidation, wrote that "the specter of a Negro mayor and of a government dominated by Negroes became a subject of growing concern for all citizens whose thought ran in such directions, and there were many." Senator Arnett Girardeau agreed that "the growth of the black population to 46 percent of the city was what prompted consolidation." The consolidated government passed "because those active in politics did not want to see a black city here."²¹ Some people were aware that if blacks became over 50 percent of the electorate, an at-large voting system would even be to the blacks' advantage. Nancie Crabb, who worked many hours in the pro-consolidation office, remembered:

It was hard. It got nasty in parts. . . . A lot of people said, 'I'm going to vote for consolidation because I don't want niggers to run things.' We tried to appeal to their higher instincts by telling them that we could have a better government with consolidation, for less cost.²²

²⁰Brantley interview.

²¹Martin, Consolidation, p. 46; Girardeau interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

²²Pearson interview, 1976; Crabb taped response.

The campaigns for and against consolidation tried to lobby the 39,355 black registered voters in Duval County. Blacks were divided in their views on consolidation. Although they ended up with a 59 percent or 5920 to 4080 majority vote for it, although only 23 percent of the black electorate in the city voted at all, compared to the 42.6 percent of the total county electorate which voted. Many blacks were torn between wanting the growing black political strength in the city itself and fearing that a city with a black mayor without the financial tax-base of the growing white suburbs would lack an adequate economic base to provide needed services. Blacks were assured by white leaders that three of the fourteen new, single-member districts would be drawn with black majorities so that blacks would have at least three seats on the council as well as the possibility of winning one of the five at-large seats on the council.²³

A number of blacks who opposed consolidation stressed the lessening of black political strength in Jacksonville from a growing 40.5 percent in the city to about 22 percent in the county that would result from the new plan. Most of

²³Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Rosenbaum and Kammerer, p. 65; Parris N. Glendening and John Wesley White, "The Politics of Metropolitan Reorganization: The Black Vote," in Controversies of State and Local Political Systems, ed. Mavis Mann Reeves and Parris N. Glendening (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972), pp. 215-223; Lee Sloan and Robert M. French, "Race and Governmental Consolidation in Jacksonville," The Negro Educational Review 21 (1970): 74.

the opposition to consolidation in the black community came from old-line black politicians who had helped put many white candidates in office for years. Mary Singleton, who had the support of the Democratic political machine, had signed the report of the Local Government Study Commission, but later opposed it because of the power given to the appointive boards and department heads.²⁴

As secretary of the Local Government Study Commission, attorney Earl Johnson had been influential in writing the consolidation proposal. "He worked hard" on the commission, said Janet Johnson, "and I think he really enjoyed it. I think he was proud to be a part of the group. He felt like an architect." A lot of people tried to get Earl Johnson to run for mayor, but he said that he did "not want to be a mayor of a town that was bankrupt. Earl thought consolidation was healthy for the city of Jacksonville," said Mrs. Johnson. He argued that, with the wealth and the educated people in the suburbs, Jacksonville "couldn't really hope to attract industry or new business, or new blood, and that if that was the case, the black man obviously had more to lose than anybody else." She thought also that he wanted to

²⁴Hampton interview; Lott interview; Interview with Harold Gibson, May 22, 1985; Miller, p. 97; JJ July 18, 1967, p. 13; Mary Singleton, quoted in Jacksonville (Florida) Chronicle, September 6-12, 1973, p. 5.

continue to practice law--after winning a number of important civil rights victories.²⁵

Consolidation leaders tried to get the 1967 elections postponed until after the vote for consolidation, without success. Therefore, candidates for the at-large seats on the old city council were asked about their views on issues of good government and the consolidation plan itself. People on both sides of the consolidation issue supported candidates who expressed their views.²⁶

The Election Campaign

In their 1967 election campaigns, both Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton faced serious challenges and worked hard. Both were aided by the visibility and respect they had gained as individuals through previous community activities and contacts.

Sallye Mathis

A civil rights leader in Jacksonville, Sallye Mathis called the election "the biggest fight in my life. And I've been in many fights. The biggest struggle was the first Democratic primary. . . . I shudder to think about it now," she said afterwards.²⁷

²⁵Janet Johnson interview. See also Sloan and French, p. 74.

²⁶Lex Hester (Chief Administrative Officer, City of Orlando, who ran the consolidation campaign in Duval County) to author, May 31, 1985, Orlando, Fla.; League of Women Voters Asks.

²⁷Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

At age fifty-five, Sallye Mathis competed with three white men and two black men for the Ward Three city council seat in the Democratic primary on May 23. Her strongest opposition was Barney Cobb, age sixty, who had been elected to the council in 1963 after twenty-six unsuccessful attempts for public office. He was one of the few city councilmen who had not been indicted by the Grand Jury. Cobb was one of several councilmen who had strongly objected to the nomination of Charles E. Simmons, Jr., to the Civil Service Board the previous November because Simmons was "just the wrong color." In 1967 he campaigned on white supremacy and states rights, and he assumed he would get all the white votes.²⁸

Mrs. Mathis also faced two other white men in the Ward Three first primary: Marvin E. Wood, age fifty-six, a sales representative for a local lumber company, who had lost to Cobb in 1963 by less than six hundred votes, and Lee M. Fisher, age forty-seven and recently retired from the U. S. Army, who was in favor of consolidation of local government.²⁹

However, for the first time, there was competition among blacks for a seat on the Jacksonville City Council.

²⁸FTU, November 30, 1966, p. A-1; JJ, May 2, 1967, p. 11; JJ, May 18, 1967, p. 16; Jacksonville Advocate, June 11, 1967, p. 1.

²⁹League of Women Voters Asks, p. 9; JJ, May 18, 1967, p. 16.

One of Sallye Mathis' opponents was Sam Jones, age sixty-five, a retired employee of the Jacksonville Terminal Company who was president of the Third Congressional District Voters League of Florida and vice-president of the Florida Voters League. He had lobbied for urban renewal, had been the first black in the twentieth century to run for the Florida Senate from Duval County, in 1966, and had begun a court suit to secure "equal justice" in the arrangement of Florida's voting districts and jury selections. He was also a leader in the campaign against consolidation of local government at that time. The other opponent was John Thomas, Jr., a young investigator and probation officer for the Municipal Court and executive director of the Youth Council on Civic Affairs.³⁰

Sallye Mathis and her supporters worked hard in the thirty-one days between qualification and the first primary. As Rev. Charles Dailey recalled,

people from all over--non-professionals--gathered evening after evening, day after day, in that office in the back of the Pearl Street washomat, with dryers in the background, to map strategy. They made calls, sent letters, handed out literature. Churches gave nominal contributions. It seemed impossible. [Yet] Rutledge [Pearson] said, 'She's the kind of person that can do it. She has the image. Even the whites will see her. They won't see color as much as if the candidate was a black male.'³¹

³⁰League of Women Voters Asks, p. 9; JJ, May 18, 1967, p. 16.

³¹Dailey interview.

She was able to draw on friendships from a lifetime of growing up in a respected Jacksonville family, twenty-six years as an educator, marriage to a respected businessman, and a participant in many black and integrated community service groups. She had been especially visible as part of the daring N.A.A.C.P. efforts towards integration, in which she took courageous and forthright, yet dignified, leadership. Numerous people from these various contacts were willing to help her.

Wendell Holmes and Dailey were co-chairmen of the Mathis campaign and her sister, Grace Solomon, ran her campaign office, scheduling over one hundred black and white volunteers on four shifts a day, "just as if they were being paid," said Mrs. Solomon. Mrs. Mathis' young nephew, James Solomon (Jr.), who had marched in the picket lines with her earlier, drove his aunt around to her various meetings, and their cousin, Ella Brooks, worked in the campaign office about every day.³²

When asked later if she was handicapped by the lack of campaign funds, Mrs. Mathis said, "Yes, in a way. I have never gone out for a very extensive or elaborate campaign, and it didn't necessitate a great sum of money. All of my money came from volunteers." "If ever a campaign was run on a shoestring--not even that--no money, this was it," said

³²Solomon interview; FTU, May 4, 1967, p. B-12; JJ June 2, 1967, p. 10; Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

Dailey. "I don't think I've ever seen the democratic process function as effectively as in that campaign."³³

In the middle of the campaign, on May 1, Rutledge Pearson died in a tragic accident about seventy-five miles from Memphis, Tennessee, where he was scheduled to speak the next day to the Memphis garbage collectors. Dailey said that the death

was a tremendous blow to Sallye Mathis. 'My main source of strength is gone,' she said. We all wondered what would happen. Rutledge was the glue, the inspirational leader. But we decided this was something we had shared together--that what we were doing was bigger than the life or death of one person. We were going to follow through. Wendell [Holmes] did a tremendous job as he took over the leadership of the campaign. Mrs. Mathis, with the innate dignity she possessed, carried on.³⁴

Facing a city-wide vote, Sallye Mathis campaigned primarily on "better conditions in the inner city, especially for the black people, the low-income people and the elderly people, which I felt, up to this time, had been neglected."³⁵ "I went everywhere to get the vote," she said;

I spoke before Negro organizations and white organizations. Wherever there was a meeting, I asked for an invitation. I talked to insurance men, dock workers, beauticians, churches. I covered the blocks shaking hands. I talked to everybody I could. I would talk to them about our problems--jobs, education and things like that.

³³Sallye Mathis interview; Dailey interview.

³⁴FTU May 2, 1967, p. B-12; Dailey interview.

³⁵Sallye Mathis interview.

These are not only Negro problems. They are everybody's problems.³⁶

In a campaign letter before the second primary, Sallye Mathis appealed for votes based on her individual qualifications. She also appealed to the women in the community--reminding them that they outnumbered the men by eight thousand on the voter registration roles.³⁷ Her advocacy of the consolidation of city and county governments gained her the support of some who favored the plan and the opposition of some, particularly in the black community, who were opposed to it--at least in the first primary. Both Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were endorsed early in the campaign, along with seven other candidates, by the Central Labor Union representing thirty-five thousand (white) members.³⁸

While both Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton needed a large black turnout as well as some white votes in a time when racial attitudes were very obvious, only Mrs. Mathis was competing with other black candidates. Compared with Mary Singleton, who was not opposed by other blacks and who had long-time ties with the well-organized Democratic political organization in the black and white communities

³⁶Southern Courier August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

³⁷Campaign letter by Sallye B. Mathis, May 26, 1967, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); JJ June 7, 1967, p. 5.

³⁸Telephone interview with John F. Bowden (president of the Northeast Florida Building and Construction Trade Council), June 26, 1987; FTU, April 27, 1967.

and received their support, Sallye Mathis was "a newcomer and a loner," said Lex Hester, who was chairman of the consolidation campaign. Sallye Mathis said later that she expected to lose the first primary, since she thought the black vote would "probably be split and no Negro would get elected."³⁹

In her speeches, Sallye Mathis attacked the black voting tickets strongly and urged voters to make their own choices about candidates. When a man called her a couple of days before the election and told her he had put her name on his ticket, she insisted that he take her name off his ticket and even threatened a law suit if he didn't. "Don't you know I've been making speeches against the ticket?" she said. The morning before the election an old friend called and said tearfully, "Sallye. I got ten tickets on my doorstep, and not a one's got your name. How you going to win?" Mrs. Mathis said, "Don't worry about it. If I'm right, I'll win."⁴⁰ After her first primary victory, one of her campaign workers said her win showed that the black vote was "no longer bought and sold wholesale, since she received more votes in her race than any other candidates, in spite of having no endorsements by the voting tickets."⁴¹

³⁹Dailey interview; Hester to author; Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

⁴⁰FTU-JJ December 5, 1976, pp. I-1,2. See also FTU July 26, 1982, p. A-1,2.

⁴¹JJ, May 24, 1967, p. 11.

Sallye Mathis' work on desegregation probably made her unpopular with some people in a year when there was a lot of obvious racial prejudice, but it earned her the respect of some others. Wendell Holmes said that "the diehards are more vocal . . . [but] are lesser in number than the people who will accept change. There were people who felt Mary and Sallye were much more qualified." In fact, blatant racism had become distasteful to a number of whites. "The run-off was easy," said Mrs. Mathis after her second primary victory over Barney Cobb. "I knew I would defeat him because I had the Negro vote. . . . I guess a lot of people were fed up with him. We spoke at rallies together and he would talk about white supremacy. He used the word 'nigger' openly--for publication."⁴²

Sallye Mathis' reputation as "very religious" meant not only that she prayed a lot but also that she took strong stands for what she thought was right and was able to forgive and relate to white people. She was respected for these qualities. "It was her personality--that dignity so innately a part of her--more than anything else that put her over," said Rev. Dailey.⁴³

⁴²Holmes interview; Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

⁴³Dailey interview.

Mary Singleton

Unlike Sallye Mathis, Mary Singleton had no black opposition in the Democratic primary for the Ward Two seat, but she competed with a white woman and two white men. Mrs. Reba D. Sharp was the wife of Lemuel Sharp, council president, who been on the council from 1939 to 1951 and from 1955 to 1967 and had defeated Isadore Singleton in 1955 and 1963. Lemuel Sharp had been indicted by the Duval County Grand Jury and was not seeking re-election. Mrs. Sharp, former three-term president of the North Jacksonville Woman's Club, said in her campaign that a woman should be on the council and that "the desperate need" was relief for taxpayers.⁴⁴

Among the other opponents for the Ward Two race was George F. Knight, owner of a moving and hauling company, who was in favor of consolidation and was making his first try for the city council. The other candidate was William Elbert Thompson, who had a college degree in business administration and was a self-employed real estate broker and appraiser. He had worked for the county assessor's office and had previously campaigned for the position of county tax assessor.⁴⁵

⁴⁴FTU, April 16, 1963, p. 3; FTU, May 14, 1967.

⁴⁵FTU, May 18, 1967, p. 16; League of Women Voters Asks, p. 8.

Like Sallye Mathis, Mary Singleton worked hard for her victory. "I went from one side of town to the other to speak to groups," she said. "I used a lot of TV time. My TV spots were good. I knew what I wanted to say and didn't need any notes. I didn't make a lot of promises, just offered my services."⁴⁶

With long-time ties of friendship and political activity with many black political leaders, and with no other blacks competing in her race, Mary Singleton generally had the support of the old-line black politicians. "Mary did not need our help in 1967, but we helped her in 1972," said Rev. Charles Dailey of the N.A.A.C.P. network. Her daughter, Carol, helped her with phone calls, mailings and distributing literature. Her son Isadore remembered "the hard work" of the campaign.⁴⁷

Like Sallye Mathis, Mary Singleton drew on a lifetime of friendships while growing up in a respected family, teaching school for over four years, and serving as wife, mother, partner for her husband's business, and companion and hostess for her husband's widely known political activities. After his death she proved herself congenial and capable in her own right as an appointed member of the Local Government Study Commission and the Housing Board of

⁴⁶Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

⁴⁷FTU, May 7, 1977, B-1; Dailey interview; Isadore Singleton interview; JJ, June 2, 1967, p. 5.

Adjustments and Appeals. She was able to draw on all these contacts for help or at least votes.

Also like Sallye Mathis, Mary Singleton campaigned on the need for better representation in low-income areas and better services, streets and drainage--things which would help whites as well as blacks. Although she had the support of a number of former political workers, she stressed the need for change. "I am not a politician," she said at the beginning of the campaign, "but I know the basic thing we need is representation. . . . I know how the people feel and I am familiar with their needs and aspirations."⁴⁸ In May she stated: "It is my sincere belief that Jacksonville can be the most outstanding city in Florida. . . . But years of power structure control and machine politics have left our city far behind in the parade of progress."⁴⁹

Like a number of the long-time black politicians, Mary Singleton opposed consolidation because "it is taking the government from the people" by having certain positions--especially the independent authorities--appointed instead of elected, although she did favor certain aspects of combining city and county governments. She was later the only member of the Local Government Study Commission of Duval County to actively campaign against consolidation. She thus drew

⁴⁸Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Florida Star, April 22, 1967.

⁴⁹FTU, May 14, 1967.

support from many other blacks as well as whites who were opposed to consolidation. However she also drew votes from some pro-consolidation people who felt that competent black representation on the council was fair and necessary.⁵⁰

As the only black candidate for the Ward Two seat, Mary Singleton was competing against whites rather than against blacks. "I had three strikes against me, being black, being a woman and being Catholic," she said, and she met the problems head-on. Her campaign slogan was "Open your hearts, unlock your mind, and give me a chance."⁵¹ "Some people were never so shocked as when Mrs. Mathis and I were elected," she said after the election. Democratic party leader Walter Smith thought that she "was very concerned about being accepted by whites"--probably realizing that "to go further she would need white support." She told Smith that she "wasn't as bitter as some other black leaders," although she had also "had a hard time" from prejudice through the years.⁵²

With her long-time ties of friendship and political activity with a number of whites and blacks, some of whom she and/or her husband had helped put into office, Mary Singleton received financial help and other support from

⁵⁰League of Women Voters Asks, p. 8; Miller, p. 65; Walter Smith interview.

⁵¹JJ, June 27, 1972.

⁵²Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3; Walter Smith interview.

some white friends who thought she and her family were "first class." Former mayor Hans Tanzler said that Mary Singleton was "just such a dynamic, lovable person that she was one of those who could span the black-white gap then. She was at ease with everyone. . . . It was natural for her to step into the gap left by her husband."⁵³

Later Mary Singleton said that, besides much of the black vote, she usually got "the Jewish vote, the Catholic vote, and the labor vote," and thus serious candidates hesitated to run against her. In 1967, big signs for her campaign and a newspaper ad reading, "Let's Elect our Good Friend Mrs. Mary L. Singleton," were placed by her "loyal Jewish Friends." She had also made friends with many Catholics at church events and at the Catholic school her daughter attended. Walter Smith, who was one of the first whites to support her campaign, remembered attending an all-white, Catholic, baptism party where he felt ill at ease since he didn't know the people. When Mary Singleton came in and hugged and kissed people, he realized that she was not anti-white and was at ease with a lot of white people.⁵⁴

John F. Bowden, an officer in the Ironworkers Union who was a long-time family friend of hers and of her family and

⁵³Trednick interview; Dailey interview; Janet Johnson interview; Telephone interview with Hans Tanzler (mayor of Jacksonville, Florida, 1967-1979), May 28, 1985.

⁵⁴Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Newspaper clipping, (Spring) 1967; Luvenia Robinson interview; Lanahan interview; Walter Smith interview; Hampton interview.

had worked with Mrs. Singleton on the city's Housing Appeals Board in 1966 and 1967, proposed the endorsement of her and Sallye Mathis by the thirty-five thousand member (white) Central Labor Union. He persuaded the coalition to unanimously support the two women--the first black candidates they had endorsed. A strong supporter of consolidation, Bowden said later that "It was time to have blacks on the council."⁵⁵

Mrs. Singleton commented after her victory that there was only one rally that she was "sort of afraid to go to. There were no Negroes present other than those that were with me. I was speaking to lower class whites, [but] it was the best reception I ever got. In fact, it was my biggest rally in the whole city." She thought people liked the idea of having someone who would listen to them.⁵⁶

Election Results

At the time of the Democratic first primary contest for city council seats on May 23, 1967, about 40.5 percent of the 28,294 registered Democrats in Jacksonville were blacks. The high interest of black women in the election is shown by the 57.6 percent of the registered blacks that were female, compared to the around 54 percent of the registered whites

⁵⁵Bowden interview; Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, June 27, 1966, Jacksonville, Fla.; FTU, April 27, 1967; Cason interview.

⁵⁶Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

that were female. About 56 percent of both eligible blacks and eligible whites voted. Both Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton earned spots on the second primary ballot. Mrs. Mathis received 7911 votes--more than any other candidate in Ward Three (25 percent of the vote) and prepared to enter the second primary against Barney Cobb, who had polled 7835 votes. The black candidates running from Ward Three altogether received 44.7 percent of the vote. In the Ward Two contest, Mary Singleton received 14,293 votes (48 percent of the total vote) and prepared to compete in the second primary against William Elbert Thompson who had won 22 percent of the vote. Also in this first primary, Charles E. Simmons, Jr., was easily elected to continue his Group Two seat on the Civil Service Board.⁵⁷

In the second primary on June 6, with her black competition eliminated, Sallye Mathis defeated Barney Cobb with 54 percent of the vote (17,126 votes) and became the Democratic candidate to face Republican C. Theodore Forsyth, Jr., in the general election two weeks later. Since she had no Republican opponent, Mary Singleton won her election to the council on June 6, with 56.9 percent of the vote (21,654 votes) against William E. Thompson. On that day, she received five more votes than did mayoral candidate Hans

⁵⁷Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

Tanzler, Jr., although he totaled more votes than she when the absentee ballots were counted.⁵⁸

In the June 20 general election, Sallye Mathis easily defeated Republican C. Theodore Forsyth, Jr. with 57 percent of the vote (19,638 votes), even though her final vote was still far less than the almost two-to-one margin of the other Democrats in council races. This time, Hans Tanzler, Jr., had heavy black support against Republican William Hembree and became mayor of Jacksonville. All of the Republican candidates were defeated that day and the Mathis-Forsyth contest was considered the only significant contest "because of the race factor," although Mrs. Mathis did carry four of the majority-white precincts.⁵⁹ That about 43 percent of the registered black voters cast ballots on June 20, while only about 39 percent of the white voters did, indicates that blacks were very concerned about getting a second black on the council. Writers of an Associated Press article and a Florida Times Union editorial praised the improved racial climate in Jacksonville as shown in the election of two black women who were "fully prepared by education, training and long constructive public service."⁶⁰

⁵⁸Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3; Jacksonville Advocate, June 10, 1967.

⁵⁹Duval County Supervisor of Elections; JJ, June 21, 1967, p. 11.

⁶⁰Duval County Supervisor of Elections; FTU, June 24, 1967, p. A-4.

The big increase in the total number of votes from 31,419 in the first primary to 37,351 in the second primary revealed the growing interest in the election as the choice of candidates was narrowed down. In all three elections, most of the votes were along racial lines, but there were exceptions and other factors involved. The victory of only one of the five incumbents seeking re-election, Lavern Reynolds, revealed "public displeasure with the old council," according to the Jacksonville Journal.⁶¹

Not surprisingly, the twenty-eight majority-black precincts gave overwhelming support for both women (93.9 percent of their votes for Sallye Mathis and 95.2 percent for Mary Singleton in the second primary, and 96 percent for Mrs. Mathis in the general election). In these precincts together, Mary Singleton received 1496 more second primary votes than did Sallye Mathis in her race. These differences may have been due to the opposition on the part of many blacks to consolidation, which Mrs. Mathis supported and Mrs. Singleton opposed.⁶²

In the fifty-one majority-white precincts in the city, there was some support for the two black women in all areas. However, they received greater support in the more affluent neighborhoods--areas that favored consolidation--than in

⁶¹Duval County Supervisor of Elections; JJ, June 7, 1967, p. 5.

⁶²Duval County Supervisor of Elections; JJ, June 7, 1967, p. 5; Miller, p. 116 (map of precincts).

Ward One, which was known as a less affluent white area. Both women received around 30 percent of the second primary vote in the second primary. Both did best in Ward Eight, especially in the "Ortega" area, and Ward Nine, especially in the "San Marco" area--both considered affluent areas where a high percentage of residents had college degrees. Only 2.9 percent (312) of the registered Democrats in these two wards were black. As in most of the city's precincts, the majority of registered voters in Wards Eight and Nine were women. Many were active in civic organizations such as the League of Women Voters, which was working hard for consolidation. Even in 1963, these two wards had given 23 percent of their first primary votes to Isadore Singleton who was running for a city council seat against incumbent Lemuel Sharp. In the first primary in May 1967, precincts 8-A and 9-F (as well as 7-C, another majority-white precinct) had given Mary Singleton more votes than any other candidate, and the rest of the precincts in Wards Eight and Nine had given more of their votes to William Thompson than to the other candidates for Ward Two. In the second primary, all the precincts in Wards Eight and Nine continued their heavy support for Thompson, giving him at least a slight edge over Mary Singleton in all precincts, but her 42 percent of their overall vote was significant. In contrast, Ward One, on the north end of the city, where the registered

Democrats were 99 percent white, gave Mary Singleton 17.8 percent of their vote in the second primary.⁶³

In the contest for the Ward Three council seat, nearly half of the Ward Eight and Nine precincts gave their highest support in the first primary to Marvin E. Wood, who had lost to Barney Cobb in the Ward Three race in 1963 by less than six hundred votes. When Wood was defeated in the May 1967, first primary, much of the support for him and for the two losing blacks went in the second primary to Sallye Mathis, who received a majority of votes in precincts 8-E (Ortega) and 9-D (San Marco) and received 43.7 percent of the vote in Wards Eight and Nine as a whole. These wards were also areas of heavy support for Hans Tanzler, Jr., the mayoral candidate in favor of consolidation, and, two months later, Wards Eight and Nine voted heavy support for consolidation. In the general election, Wards Eight and Nine gave Sallye Mathis 40 percent of their vote. In comparison, Ward One gave Mrs. Mathis .05 percent of their vote in the first primary, 19.8 percent in the second primary and 21 percent in the General Election. This was an area that voted mildly in favor of consolidation on August 8 (mostly 50-60 percent) The greater support for the two women in certain white areas

⁶³Duval County Supervisor of Elections; JJ, June 7, 1967, p. 5.

was probably due both to more moderate racial attitudes and to greater support for the consolidation plan.⁶⁴

While both women received 30 percent of their votes in the majority-white precincts in the second primary, for Sallye Mathis that meant seventy-six more votes city-wide than for Mary Singleton--in their respective races. In Wards Eight and Nine, Mrs. Mathis received 137 more votes than did Mrs. Singleton. Also, although both Mrs. Mathis and Mrs. Singleton lost in the majority-white precincts north of the downtown business section, in nearly all of them Mrs. Mathis received more votes than did Mrs. Singleton (eighty more in Ward One). This difference may be due to Mrs. Mathis' support for consolidation, which was opposed by Mrs. Singleton, as well as to the dissatisfaction of some whites to the blatant appeals to racism by Mrs. Mathis' opponent.⁶⁵

Conclusions

Thus, various factors combined in the spring of 1967 to enable Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton to win their unprecedented elections to the Jacksonville City Council. They received not only heavy black support but also around 30 percent of the majority-white precinct vote. The long-time efforts of blacks in Jacksonville to get black

⁶⁴Duval County Supervisor of Elections; JJ, June 7, 1967, p. 5.

⁶⁵Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

representation in city government were aided in 1967 by the growing black percentage of the population. Since black men had been unsuccessful in winning an election, they felt that supporting a black woman candidate was worth trying. The two women shared the concerns of blacks generally. When urged by influential friends, they accepted the challenge of running for office.

In addition to a partial softening of negative racial attitudes generally, there were many whites as well as blacks in Duval County who were ready for new leaders and the proposed consolidation of the city and county governments. Although some whites supported consolidation largely to prevent Jacksonville from becoming a majority-black city, some of these were willing to accept black representation on the city council. That these two candidates were women instead of black men may have made it easier for some whites to accept them as political candidates.

In addition, as individuals, these two women were perceived by many as more qualified for public office than their opponents, once the racial and sexual barriers were dropped. They were known, respected and trusted by white and black voters who had worked and socialized with these two women in various settings. Both women were articulate and had shown a willingness to speak out.

The political support for the two women differed somewhat. Besides her personal friends, Sallye Mathis had

especially the support of whites (and many blacks) who had worked hard with her in integrated civil rights and women's organizations, many of whom were in favor of the coming consolidation plan. In the majority-white precincts, the two women received their highest vote count in the same upper-income precincts where support for consolidation was highest, where racial views were apt to be more moderate, and where Sally Mathis may have made friends in voluntary organizations. Mary Singleton had especially the support of white and black political contacts of her husband and herself as his supporter, who not only owed her some political favors but also generally enjoyed her easy-going personality and friendship. Also, those who opposed consolidation were glad to have a candidate who agreed with their opposition. However, she seems to have benefited from the reform movement in receiving support from some pro-consolidation people who accepted black participation in government. Thus Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were "discovered" as political leaders, accepted the challenge of new involvement in the community and were elected as the first blacks in sixty years and the first women to serve on the Jacksonville City Council.

CHAPTER VII
CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES, 1967-1972

Symbolic Presence as Black Women

As members of the Jacksonville City Council, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton opened the doors for blacks and women in city government. They were sources of pride and role models for both groups as they brought the symbolic contribution of their unique presence there as black women and their emphasis on the needs of low-income people in general. They spoke up for fair treatment and encouraged the involvement of other people, especially blacks and women, in public affairs.

A Sign of Growing Power

The election of Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton marked an increase in the political participation of blacks--and women--in Jacksonville. Not everyone in Florida was happy with their election. Mary Singleton received an anonymous letter, dated August 20, 1968, from farther south in Florida, beginning, "You negroes don't want to be equal. You want to take over. Why do you people just push yourselves trying to act like white people? . . . This world is just doomed now until the end of time. . . ." Sallye Mathis received a similar, negative letter, but such frank

expressions of opposition were rarely conveyed directly to the two councilwomen.¹

Many Duval County residents were quite willing to accept blacks in government. Hans Tanzler, Jr., mayor of Jacksonville from 1967 to 1975, said that the new council elected on a reform platform in June 1967 had

a different ambiance--an enthusiasm with a first experience. Those just elected were all chosen by the people as part of a city-wide vote. This was the best single thing that could happen to Jacksonville . . . [even though] dissidents are always out there).²

"There is no friction between white and Negro council members," said Mary Singleton in August, 1967, after being elected vice-president of the council. Loren Broadus, a white councilman, told a reporter, "Mrs. Mathis and Mrs. Singleton are very nice people and I like them very much. I think their election to the council might have been the best that ever happened to the city of Jacksonville."³

Mayor Tanzler initiated additional change by appointing other blacks to government jobs, such as the first black secretary at City Hall in the summer of 1967--a controversial thing to do. He commented:

When I brought blacks into the office, some older, conservative, die-hards [who were also] very

¹Anonymous letter, August 20, 1968 (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department); Solomon interview.

²Tanzler interview.

³Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

unhappy with Consolidation to start with, . . . decided to retire and thus made the transition a little easier. . . . There were a lot of rumblings of discontent [with these appointments].⁴

In the fall 1967 elections for city council seats in the coming consolidated government, blacks were 21.6 percent of the registered voters in Duval County. Attorney Earl M. Johnson finally won an at-large seat on the city council which he kept until 1983. Another black, Oscar N. Taylor, also won a city council seat from the new District Seven. Janet Johnson commented that

the tide had turned. It was like a new city--far more receptive--and Earl was getting compliments. Some say the people who fight the war can't occupy the town--[but] we did. It shows we weren't anti-city but anti-customs and laws. To help shape [the city] was more than [many] people do in a lifetime.⁵

However, racial attitudes were among the factors affecting the 1968 presidential elections when Duval County gave more votes for George Wallace (36 percent) than for Richard Nixon or Hubert Humphrey.⁶

In July, 1968, Mayor Tanzler appointed Ben L. Canty as the new city motor pool officer and Harold J. Gibson, then executive director of the Eartha M. M. White Nursing Home, as his administrative assistant. As Tanzler's liason with the council, Gibson said later that

⁴Tanzler interview.

⁵Janet Johnson interview.

⁶Bartley and Graham, p. 127; Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Janet Johnson interview.

the first years of Consolidation were nice years. Everybody had a halo--a glow. The quality of the council was . . . high. In 1968 there was not a lot of controversy. There were people of integrity and dedication.⁷

Harold Gibson noted the difference that the presence of black officials made in the late 1960s. He said that he, Sallye Mathis, Mary Singleton, and Earl Johnson

. . . all believed in non-violence. We were there because we believed in changing the system from within. . . . Our presence in the government changed the ability of races to fire up people. They couldn't say 'nigger' any more, or other racist rhetoric. The first word I heard when I went to work for the mayor was 'nigger.' I took my seat and didn't hear that word any more. They were quiet about racial things when I was in a room.⁸

Gibson noted:

Once I was on thirty-six boards, and I saw a change in every agency. If the director of the agency was smart, the racial policies changed. . . . Most times I never had to open my mouth. Our presence [led to change]. The same was true on the council. . . . They had to deal with us and the people we represented. I guess that Sallye and Mary together, and then Earl Johnson, were the primary forces that made the changes that occurred in our community. They were responsible--both in the white and black communities--for working within the system. They recognized that their very presence on the boards would make change.⁹

Being part of the decision-making "makes a difference in the way they talk about you," said Mrs. Mathis at the first statewide conference of black elected officials in

⁷FTU, July 21, 1968, p. B-1; FTU, January 11, 1983, p. B-1; Gibson interview.

⁸Gibson interview.

⁹Gibson interview.

1969. "It makes a difference in the expressions they use."¹⁰ Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were also pioneers as the first women on the Jacksonville City Council. Walter Smith, a leader in the Duval County Democratic Party, thought that when Mrs. Mathis and Mrs. Singleton came on the council, it was "a new twist--to accept women and blacks. I think they both made strong contributions" and did a lot "to bring about the acceptance of both blacks and women." It was not until 1975 that the first white woman, Nancie Crabb, was elected to the Jacksonville City Council. Gene Miller, a white woman, was appointed and then elected to the Duval County School Board in 1969.¹¹

The value of having women on the council was noted by Lynwood Roberts, a city councilman from 1968 to 1979, who said that both women "certainly set an example that women are truly an asset in the balance of government." From women, he said, "you get a rounded view. You get an opinion that has been neglected in the past--a woman's point of view as far as making the laws" is concerned.¹²

The two black women did not agree on all issues. In the summer of 1967, they worked on opposite sides of the

¹⁰FTU, November 16, 1969, p. G-2.

¹¹Walter Smith interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

¹²Interview with Lynwood Roberts, May 28, 1985.

consolidation issue and even found themselves living briefly in the same council district. Described by Richard Martin as the "head of the respectable Negro opposition" to consolidation, Mary Singleton maintained in early July that consolidation was "a plan to minimize our [black] strength in government." She was often seen in the anti-consolidation office across the street from the pro-consolidation office. She was secretary, while Walter Smith was chairman, of the city Democratic Executive Committee when that group unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the consolidation plan. Sallye Mathis continued as a leader in the campaign in favor of consolidation.¹³

Sixteen days after the June 20 General Election, a controversy over city council district lines raised the emotional level of the consolidation campaign among blacks. Some errors had been noticed in the new Duval County voting districts, based on census data, which had been laid out in January, and it was discovered that Mary Singleton would be in a district of mostly white voters. Therefore, while making mostly routine changes, the Duval legislative delegation moved the district lines at her request and ended up putting her into District Eight with Mrs. Mathis. Then there was a "furor" at the realization that the only two blacks on the city council would have to compete against

¹³Martin, Consolidation, p. 160; FTU, July 1, 1967; Miller interview; JJ, July 19, 1967.

each other in the next election if consolidation passed, and there were more charges of gerrymandering, especially since three anti-consolidation legislators had been seen talking with the supervisor of elections before the changes were made. Columnist Hank Drane commented on July 16:

The big question being asked . . . was whether the changes were an oversight or deliberately conceived in an effort to defeat the plan in the August 8 referendum. . . . Unless the boundaries are revamped so that the two councilwomen will not have to run against each other, opponents of the plan have a ready-made argument to convince the county's Negro population to vote against the charter.¹⁴

A seventeen-year-old black man from Jacksonville, Pat Caddell, who was an administrative aide to Representative Fred Schultz of Jacksonville, figured out a satisfactory way to draw the districts in about an hour by putting Mary Singleton in District Eleven, which was about 60 percent black and had no other council incumbent. Both she and Frank Hampton were reported to have approved the change.¹⁵

According to Richard Martin, "the controversy worked ultimately to the advantage of consolidation. It dramatized for Negroes the issues at stake in consolidation and the importance of fighting a hard political campaign on its behalf." Black leaders immediately organized a group to inform blacks about the issues and to campaign for

¹⁴FTU, July 6, 1967; FTU July 7, 1967, p. B-1.

¹⁵Martin, Consolidation, p. 176. See also FTU, July 7, 1967, pp. B-1, B-12.

consolidation, with Dr. W. W. Schell as chairman, Sallye Mathis as treasurer and Wendell Holmes, Jr., as secretary.¹⁶

Sallye Mathis became a tireless campaigner for consolidation. She and Homer Humphries were the only city council members to come out with a statement in favor of consolidation, on July 11. She was successful in her efforts to get the N.A.A.C.P., the Jacksonville Urban League, the Human Relations Council, and a number of other largely black civic groups and churches to endorse the consolidation plan.¹⁷ Alton Yates, executive director of Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunities, Inc. (G.J.E.O.) from 1968 to 1972, said:

The efforts of black leaders such as Earl Johnson, Sallye Mathis, Wendell Holmes and Clanzel Brown were instrumental in obtaining a pro-consolidation majority in the black community at the time of the referendum. Mrs. Mathis, a councilwoman, . . . probably was the most active one of all. Nobody got out there and knocked on those doors the way she did. She walked all over town [reminding] people how bad things were.¹⁸

In the fall elections for the newly-districted city council seats, Mary Singleton was fortunate to have no opponent in her new District Eleven and therefore did not have to run a campaign. However, as columnist Richard Martin noted, it was "an ironic ordeal" that Sallye Mathis,

¹⁶Martin, Consolidation, p. 160; FTU, July 7, 1967, p. B-1.

¹⁷Hester to author; FTU, July 12, 1967; FTU, July 31, 1967; FTU, August 6, 1967; Martin, Consolidation, p. 162; Miller, p. 98.

¹⁸FTU-JJ, October 1, 1978, p. H-10.

"the only city official who campaigned actively for the passage of Consolidation, had to campaign for a place in the new government she helped bring to life." Mrs. Mathis was running in the new District Eight, which was mostly Mrs. Singleton's former district, where there was strong opposition from some anti-consolidation black leaders. However, she easily defeated her opponent, Roosevelt T. Williams, in the first primary on October 24.¹⁹

Thus, in spite of their divergent views and the districting confusions, the participation of these two black women as council members and as influential political leaders was a new happening and indicated an increase in political power for blacks and women in Jacksonville. They now had two votes on the council and increasing influence in the community.

Demonstration of Competence

Elected at the ages of fifty-five and forty-one, respectively, councilwomen Mathis and Singleton soon helped break down racial and sexual stereotypes by demonstrating their competence. "Both women were really bright ladies--totally observant of all that was going on, in spite of what some on the council thought," said David MacNamara, who was city council secretary from 1968 to 1973. "Both studied the voluminous agenda of the council meetings and never cast a

¹⁹FTU, October 23, 1967; FTU, October 26, 1967; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

vote that they didn't know what the issues were, the implications, and always the overall good of the community."²⁰

Besides having more formal education and experience than some other government officials, council members Mathis and Singleton had the added qualifications of a deep understanding of black and other low-income people's concerns. Lynwood Roberts commented that "Mrs. Mathis, a former dean of girls, had much experience in understanding and dealing with people. Her involvement with people led to real insight into the community. I learned a lot from both of these ladies." Both women were "very intelligent and very fair," said former councilman Earl J. Huntley; they would talk with people about the bills and they "did their homework."²¹

Both councilwomen had to learn to compromise on certain issues and yet maintain both their basic principles and working relationships with those who opposed them. Lynwood Roberts remembered that when the two women did not always agree with others on the council,

you'd better be able to explain your position and they would tell you about their position and would try to persuade you. But if you stood your ground, there were never any hard feelings. . . .

²⁰Interview with David MacNamara, June 11, 1985.

²¹Roberts interview; Telephone interview with Earl J. Huntley, September 5, 1985.

When they told you they were going to do something, you could count on it.²²

In 1975, Mary Singleton acknowledged that the blacks on the council had often been outvoted by white officials, especially in getting money to solve problems in their districts.

At least everybody became aware of the problems by virtue of, I guess, my just bringing it to their attention. You do have some people that are stereotyped that you have to serve with that will try to cut out your programs. . . . It's a competitive sport, we say. Because why should I give you the money, vote for you to have something, when I need it over here? So that's where you have to be able to work with people and compromise.²³

Being on the city council was a time-consuming job. From October, 1968, through June, 1972, "the Council committees met 952 times for a total of 3,041 hours, not including sub-committee or other meetings." The full council spent 392 hours, meeting 156 times and enacting 4301 pieces of legislation by October 1, 1972. Many times the meetings lasted until after midnight, especially during the first year of the consolidated government when the council passed over eight hundred new ordinances.²⁴ "The five thousand dollars a year the councilmen are paid," said councilman John Lanahan, "is just about enough to pay our

²²Genwright interview; Roberts interview.

²³Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

²⁴FTU, December 30, 1972, p. B-14. See also FTU, October 1, 1969, p. AA-2; JJ, July 2, 1970; JJ, December 15, 1971; JJ, January 3, 1972.

expenses, like going to supper meetings." "There are so many meetings and functions," commented Mary Singleton in 1975, "and we used to meet until two o'clock in the morning on the city council. Getting that consolidated government going was no little job. They call us part-time people, but really it's a full time job." Bonnie Harvey, who worked on the city council staff beginning in 1972, said that through the years Councilwoman Mathis had a good attendance record and was never late to council meetings. Both councilwomen were never too busy to talk to people, Ms. Harvey noted.²⁵

As city council members, the two women often helped with other organizations and projects. Social worker Harold E. Quillin, who worked with Sallye Mathis at Brentwood Child Care Center board meetings, said:

Working with Sallye Mathis was a joy--like working in the light. She was one of the most intelligent people I have ever known. She knew what was important and what was not. She went right to the heart of things. She did not waste people's time, but would summarize and lead people to move in the right direction.²⁶

Besides attending countless meetings and keeping themselves informed about the issues, both councilwomen became known as accessible to the general public and received numerous calls for help with specific problems from people in and outside of their districts, who thought they

²⁵John Lanahan, quoted in FTU, December 30, 1972, p. B-14; Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Interview with Bonnie Harvey, May 6, 1987.

²⁶Interview with Harold E. Quillin, April 18, 1987.

were more approachable than other officials--sometimes in the middle of the night. Mary Singleton commented:

I know if I had a husband I would not be involved like this. I couldn't . . . because you don't have the time to devote to a real home life. My son is nineteen and my daughter married, so I'm pretty flexible now. . . . You can't pin-point the clock hours. . . . I don't know when I've been able to eat through a meal. Sunday--Saturday--making yourself available--that's what it's about. It has had a lot of effect on me, but I really enjoy it, because I like people; I like to meet people.

Sallye Mathis made similar comments about getting calls pertaining to her district at 6 A.M. or 12 or 1 o'clock at night. "It keeps me going all the time. I need one more day in the week."²⁷

In 1972 Mary Singleton commented: "More blacks are running these days [for office] because it has been proven that they can get elected and can perform. Those of us have served have made inroads so that others can follow us."²⁸

Advocacy for Needy People

As members of the Jacksonville City Council, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton also served as spokespersons for blacks, for women, and for other needy people, while maintaining working relationships and some close friendships with other city officials. On the whole they emphasized the needs of people in general--especially low-income people--although they occasionally felt the need to speak out for

²⁷Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Sallye Mathis interview.

²⁸FTU, September 4, 1972, p. E-5.

black rights, specifically. In 1968, Councilwoman Singleton noted that as blacks on the council, "We are only four out of nineteen votes. In regard to sewers and drainage ditches, she believed that government officials tended "to let cost, not need, determine what is done. Our job, as Negroes, is to convince our council colleagues that need is paramount. Those who have done without for so long deserve some consideration now." She thought that one of the problems was that it was hard for government officials to appreciate the conditions in which the poor lived.²⁹

The styles, personalities and friendships of the two women differed somewhat, and, although they were not close friends, they worked together well.³⁰ Mary Singleton socialized more with white people and was less apt to bring up black issues; Sallye Mathis more often emphasized the needs of her district and sided with blacks.³¹ David MacNamara, an old friend of Mary Singleton's, noted that both women

suffered the stress and strain of segregation, but never brought up past prejudice or segregation or showed any vindictiveness about that. . . . Both were very dedicated representatives, but in slightly different ways. Mary was a very engaging personality who could speak of the needs in her

²⁹FTU, June 5, 1968, p. B-14.

³⁰Solomon interview.

³¹Johnny Sanders interview; Lanahan interview; Tanzler interview.

district without sounding threatening. Sallye, too, was tremendously effective.³²

Dr. David Swain believed that "Sallye Mathis was very good at grass level organizations and had less visibility at the council level [before 1973]. Mary was more city-wide," he said, "and was more the one to stick her neck out to do things than Sallye. When she left, Sallye Mathis became more visible."³³

Janet Johnson thought that Mary Singleton "was not obsessed with her blackness and often did not come across as pro-black, although obviously she was." Mrs. Mathis was criticized many times since she often talked about her district and her people, but she did not let that stop her. "Sallye Mathis was the one that blew up a lot," said Mrs. Johnson; "Earl [Johnson] said: 'We need a Sallye Mathis. Some people only hear when you blow up.'" Janet Johnson thought that in later years, Sallye Mathis became "very city-oriented" and gave real leadership in the city of Jacksonville. Rev. Rudolph McKissick, pastor of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, noted that sometimes her conviction about an issue "made her unpopular among her constituents, but she was willing to accept unpopularity for that which she believed. She was known and respected for that." Known as "very religious," she was often appointed

³²MacNamara interview.

³³Telephone interview with Dr. David Swain, May 6, 1985.

chaplain by the city council presidents with the job of beginning council meetings with a prayer.³⁴

Lex Hester, who was Chief Administrative Officer for the first seven years of the new consolidated government, said that both women

made strong contributions [as council members]. Mary developed into a politician's politician and got along well--she was 'one of the boys.' Sally retained her crusading individuality sometimes to the frustration of her Council peers. However, she was always respected for her integrity and fought fiercely for her district and black concerns (as well as good government issues of universal application). Mary also tirelessly worked for black issues but was a more pragmatic politician.³⁵

Nevertheless, soon after the defeat of her fair housing bill in 1970, Mary Singleton noted in a speech to the Jacksonville Baptist Association the lack of progress in race relations in many white organizations and institutions which were often treating blacks as inferior. Although many whites think "we are moving too fast" in integration, she said,

your children and mine believe in the equality of man. Unless we provide them with full equality they will question your integrity and mine. They will ask, 'Why did you tell us that we are equal and act like we are not?' The future of our land is in our hands.³⁶

³⁴Janet Johnson interview; McKissick interview.

³⁵Hester to author.

³⁶Mary L. Singleton, speech to Jacksonville Baptist Association, May 7, 1970, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department).

The two black councilwomen not only developed working relationships with the other council members, but they also had close personal friendships with some of them. Lynwood Roberts and Johnnie Sanders and their families were close personal friends with Isadore and then Mary Singleton and their children. Considered by some as more outgoing than Sallye Mathis, at least among whites, Mary Singleton continued her love of cooking and entertaining both black and white people in her home and she liked to socialize with the other council members after meetings. Mrs. Bobbie Sanders and John Lanahan said they "couldn't get close to Sallye Mathis."³⁷

However, Senator Joe Carlucci, who was on the Jacksonville City Council from 1968 until 1978, said that during his years on the council,

Sallye Mathis was beyond any doubt the best genuine friend I had. I had some others that were my friend, when they wanted something from me, but Sallye was always there. She was a lady. She was just great--a consistent, good person. . . . I know we both had a lot of respect for each other and we both believed in each other. We both knew we could take each other's word for what we said. I never had to do some research to see if what Sallye was telling me was true. I couldn't say that for very many on that city council. There were some times when I'd sense that she needed help and I'd try to help her, and conversely, there were times when she'd sense [the same] and she'd try to help me. We always understood each other. Sallye was a very close person [in the sense that] she didn't fraternize--she wouldn't go out and drink and do other things like that. She

³⁷Roberts interview; Bobbie Sanders interview; Lanahan interview.

had a role of leadership in her community to fulfill and she worked hard to fulfill it.³⁸

Senator Carlucci also noted that, in dealing with her treatment by other people,

Sallye also probably had a tolerance level that was extremely good, although people would say things. . . . She let a lot go over her head. Once in a while she'd unload on the city council. . . . Sallye probably never hated a thing in this world. If there was anything she disliked immensely, it would have been tokenism. She had an overdose of that in one area or another. If I'd been in her shoes, I don't think I'd have been as nice as she was. . . . She also had a sense of humor.³⁹

The two councilwomen had to deal with their being the first women, as well as their being the first blacks in many years, on the city council. They did not introduce bills specifically about women, although most of their work affected women. However, by word and example both women encouraged women in general to enter politics at a time when few tried to combine the roles of homemaker and government official. They felt that women brought a special sensitivity into government. "The public is realizing that women are as efficient in government as men," said Sallye Mathis in 1969, "and women also have a more sympathetic ear for the needs of people in many instances." Mary Singleton agreed that women could offer "more compassion for people." She acknowledged that

³⁸Interview with Senator Joe Carlucci, October 11, 1985. See also FTU, December 5, 1976, p. I-2.

³⁹Carlucci interview.

the only time I envy a man is when I leave the office--dead tired, hungry. . . . If I were a man, my wife would have dinner waiting. . . . If I had a husband or my children were home, I don't believe I would be able to keep the job because of the responsibilities I have acquired outside of home.⁴⁰

Like other "first women" in mostly male government bodies, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton sometimes found it difficult to get the men to take their ideas seriously. As did the councilwomen following them, they tried to handle these issues by doing their homework, being competent, and speaking out when they felt it was necessary.⁴¹

David MacNamara thought that these first two women on the city council

had more problems being accepted as women than they did as blacks, and they handled it masterfully--neither ever lost their patience or demonstrated chagrin and disappointment. They were treated in a most gentlemanly manner, but I don't think either of them was ever consulted in depth by the leadership of the council.⁴²

Janet Johnson also said that "the men on the council probably didn't take them too seriously, but they had votes [and the men had to deal with them]. Initially, Sallye Mathis was not on the important committees," Mrs. Johnson added, "and she felt that this was because she was being

⁴⁰FTU, June 28, 1972, p. E-6; Mary L. Singleton, speech, 1969, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department). See also Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

⁴¹FTU, January 10, 1988, pp. B-1, 8.

⁴²MacNamara interview.

punished for being more outspoken" than some others. Sallye Mathis "was on the council longer, so her presence was felt more at the end."⁴³

Rev. Charles Dailey said that male council members, Earl Johnson excepted,

did not really appreciate Mrs. Mathis. At times they were disrespectful, as though she didn't know what she was talking about. In fact, she was better educated than most of them. . . . They tolerated her, and she was aware of that. She didn't intend to stay so long, but she resented that attitude and I think she stayed long to outlast it. One prominent politician, who called her 'this colored woman' and was callous to her, was low on her list. She caught it from both sides--as a woman and a black. Mrs. Mathis didn't play [games]. [She would convey,] 'You stay in you place.' You respect her and she would respect you. One of the commendable things about her was that she was a lady and she was not ashamed of that. . . . When it was obvious her illness was terminal, there were eulogistic comments.⁴⁴

The performance of these two women as elected officials "made the black community very proud," said Corrine Brown, who was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1982. Various Jacksonville leaders have noted that Sallye Mathis and/or Mary Singleton served as role models for themselves or others.⁴⁵

⁴³Janet Johnson interview.

⁴⁴Dailey interview.

⁴⁵Interview with Corrine Brown, September 11, 1985; Interview with Betty Bullock, May 22, 1985; Interview with Delores Capers, October 24, 1985; Dennis interview; Telephone interview with Gwendola Jones, October 28, 1986; McKissick interview; Interview with Deitre Micks, January 15, 1986; Mills interview; Interview with Gloria Pittman, September 9, 1985; Small interview; Smalls interview.

Emphasis on Needs of Low-income People

While on the Jacksonville City Council from 1967 to 1972, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton made a point of bringing to the attention of city government the concerns of low-income citizens, many of whom were black and many of whom were women and children. Even though political participation and most public facilities had been opened to blacks, what the late Martin Luther King, Jr., called "the larger battle of economic justice"--of eradicating inequality in jobs, housing, education and other arenas of discrimination--was just beginning and was much more complex than integrating lunch counters.⁴⁶

Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton worked with partial success for remedies in the areas of fee limitation, capital improvements in their districts, regulations, and government services. "I feel like what's good for blacks is good for whites, and vice versa," said Mary Singleton. "Everything I've done has never been for big people; I always take from them to give to the poor, so to speak."⁴⁷

Fee Limitation

When utility fees were studied by the council, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton "were always conscious of how the

⁴⁶Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community? (New York: Harper & Row, Publ., 1967), pp. 3-7, cited in Bass and DeVries, p. 56. See also Meier and Rudwick, From Plantation, p. 301.

⁴⁷Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

costs would impact the poor," said Lynwood Roberts. As they opposed a \$99.4 million budget for the new consolidated city government in 1968, Councilwoman Singleton reminded the council "that the low-income people were promised consolidation would be cheaper, but that the higher garbage and sewer charges in the new budget would put 'a new demon in their pockets.'" Councilwoman Mathis warned that the property tax relief promised in the mayor's budget message would go to "landlords, homeowners and realtors" and probably not be passed on to renters.⁴⁸ At the time of a water-sewer rate vote in December, 1968, Mrs. Mathis said: "Any time I vote, I'm representing . . . people who've never been heard from before." Similar efforts were made in the coming years with little success. In 1971, Councilwoman Mathis also opposed a sewer hookup fee of two hundred dollars. In 1972, she, Mary Singleton, Earl Johnson and eight other councilmen opposed a thirty-five dollar rate for suburban garbage service, and a \$33.50 rate was approved.⁴⁹

When efforts to limit fees usually failed, Councilwoman Mathis and others tried to get special relief for low-income residents, without success. In 1969 she introduced a city council ordinance to provide assistance to lower income users of services, while reminding Mayor Hans Tanzler of his

⁴⁸Roberts interview; JJ, July 31, 1968. See also FTU, September 10, 1968.

⁴⁹JJ, December 20, 1968, p. 18; FTU, June 24, 1970; JJ, July 14, 1971; JJ, October 13, 1972.

promise of relief to low income people for sewer charges when they were first suggested. The similar ordinance introduced by her and Mary Singleton in 1971 was defeated also, as was Sallye Mathis' resolution to reduce utility rates for a group of low-income Senior Citizens.⁵⁰

In her 1973 study of the results of Jacksonville's consolidated government, Dr. Joan Carver noted that during each of the first four years of the new government, property taxes were reduced and over 40 percent of locally raised revenue came from charges and utility taxes, with large users of electricity and utilities paying a lower rate than small users. People in the "old city" were also paying higher rate for water and sewer charges than elsewhere. "Had the council not balked," commented Dr. Carver, "added charges for garbage services, proposed initially by the administration, would probably have been imposed at the time the water and sewer charges were established."⁵¹ By 1971 there was more recognition of the disparities and there was some improvement in the system of utility fees and other taxes.⁵²

⁵⁰Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 69-202, Ordinance 71-196, Resolution 71-1268 (Jacksonville, Fla., 1969, 1971); FTU, March 24, 1969; FTU, April 17, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, September 10, 1969; FTU, February 14, 1970, p. B-1.

⁵¹Carver, p. 361.

⁵²Carver, p. 361; Bold View (Jacksonville, Fla.: City of Jacksonville) 6 (January 1974): 13 (1972-1973 Annual Report).

Council members Mathis and Singleton also tried to hold down the cost of public transportation. In 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971, they cast opposing votes when bus fares were raised. In December 1971, Mary Singleton brought petitions, reportedly bearing three thousand signatures opposing the increases, which she and Sallye Mathis noted would bring financial hardships to low-income people. In 1968, Mathis also opposed an increase in non-metered cab fees.⁵³

As vice-chairman of the council's Agriculture and Recreation Committee, 1968-1969, Councilwoman Singleton urged the council to pass a resolution urging the state road department to remove the "ridiculous" charge for using the bridges over Nassau Sound for fishing. Aware that many people needed the fish for food, she also disagreed with the prohibition against fishing after sundown on the bridges. "That's when some of the fishing is best," said Mary Singleton, who enjoyed fishing herself. In 1971 she urged a resolution opposing a bill in the Florida House of Representatives to require a salt water fishing license for private citizens.⁵⁴

⁵³Florida Star, June 8, 1968; FTU, October 7, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, October 16, 1969; FTU, June 24, 1970, p. B-1; JJ, December 15, 1971, p. 10; FTU, December 16, 1971; FTU-JJ, March 5, 1972, p. D-1.

⁵⁴Brooks interview; FTU, April 15, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, April 6, 1971.

Capital Improvements

In addition to their efforts to limit utility fees, council members Mathis and Singleton worked hard to get improvements in roads, sewers, drainage, fire protection, lighting and recreational facilities in their districts which they felt had not received their share of money for many years. In April 1968, Sallye Mathis took several local councilmen on a tour of street problems caused by poor drainage and sewers. At a May meeting of the Urban Affairs Committee, Mary Singleton opposed extension of urban services into new sections until city government improved long-neglected services inside the current city limits. "I've got twenty-five streets [in her district] full of potholes caused by poor sewage," she said. Sallye Mathis agreed and noted needs in her district as well.⁵⁵

In August, the councilwomen solicited and studied itemized priority-and-time schedule lists for capital improvements authorized by the city's 1968-69 budget as part of a massive sewer and water improvement program. In the budget for Sallye Mathis' District Eight, \$410,486 was listed for specific sewer, drainage, water and paving projects on certain streets. However, even after the money was voted for projects, she had to keep up with the construction developments and complain to the city's

⁵⁵Sallye Mathis interview; Mary Singleton interview, 1975; FTU, April 20, 1968, p. B-12; FTU, May 3, 1968, p. B-1.

Department of Public Works about delays and other problems.⁵⁶

In 1971, Councilwoman Mathis protested the five-year secondary road program which had tentatively been approved by the Jacksonville Area Planning Board since it omitted repairs to roads in the core city. "None of the requests I have made in the four years I've been in City Council are listed here," she said. "If these roads can't be improved, I want to know why."⁵⁷

Lynwood Roberts remembered discussing drainage issues with Sallye Mathis when they served together on the Finance Committee. Mrs. Mathis

would say, 'Now, Lynwood, I want to help everybody in this city. I need your help on this project [in my district].' Always her [home-]work was done. She wouldn't vote against me, but would remind me her district also needed help. She was pleasant, but how could I turn her down later, or next year? She was always there. The door was always open. If I voted against her, she would still smile. Each vote was based on the merits of the situation. She was very commendable.⁵⁸

In 1975, Councilwoman Mathis noted:

⁵⁶"Council District 8--1968-1969 Capital Outlay," Jacksonville, Fla., 1968; Sallye B. Mathis to James S. English, March 24, 1969, April 23, 1969, and October 6, 1969, Jacksonville, Fla., and other correspondence (in "Sallye B. Mathis" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department); Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 70-550, urging the highest priority for four specific storm drainage projects and a sewer project in her district.

⁵⁷FTU, February 12, 1971, p. B-1.

⁵⁸Roberts interview.

We have renewed several miles of water and sewer lines and several streets have been paved that really needed it. . . . My district, to a certain extent, is well lighted. We've attempted to put street lights on all poles. . . . Of course, what has been done is just a drop in the bucket of what needs to be done. My district was grossly neglected for twenty-five years, and it's just a matter of catching up. . . . There's never enough money.⁵⁹

She was also able to get fire hydrants fixed that had been broken for years, although only after driving the fire and water department chiefs around to show them where the hydrants were needed. By 1975 she felt "very good fire protection" had been achieved in her district; her evidence was reductions in fire insurance premiums there.⁶⁰

In 1968 Sallye Mathis arranged for the transfer of funds for equipment for inner-city playgrounds and community centers. However, she commented in 1975 that the parks were not what they should be.

I always feel that in the more affluent areas more money is really being spent. Of course, everybody denies that but when you look at the figures, you can see that monies are being spent, large amounts, in the affluent areas. . . . I think where we had one great victory was that there was a bond issue to be voted for recreation and we were able to defeat that . . . on the basis that the monies were not distributed equally as far as we could determine.⁶¹

⁵⁹Sallye Mathis interview.

⁶⁰Sallye Mathis interview; Florida Star, September 21, 1968, p. 3.

⁶¹Sallye Mathis interview; FTU, January 21, 1972; JJ, February 4, 1972.

Right after her re-election in 1971, Councilwoman Mathis said she was still "'the woman who gets things done.' That has been my slogan. . . . I will continue to work on that slogan until the west side of Jacksonville looks like a new town."⁶²

Mary Singleton also felt in 1975 that she had been somewhat effective regarding streets and roads in her city council district. "I got more street lights than anybody ever got for their district," she said. She was also able to get "traffic lights in places where you have five or six streets coming together," such as at Cleveland Street and Moncrief Road, "with kids trying to cross to go to school," as well as a bridge across a little creek at Grand Park "to avoid making the kids walk about thirty blocks to get to school on the other side."⁶³ She campaigned to get "certain notoriously-potted roads repaired," such as East Twenty-first Street from which buses had been banned, and "the aptly named Canal Street," which was often filled with rain water. The last physical need she worked on, which was implemented in 1975, was four-laning and building a new bridge across one of the biggest streets, West Thirty-third Street, with improvements in the drainage in that area.⁶⁴

⁶²JJ, March 3, 1971, p. 3.

⁶³Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

⁶⁴FTU-JJ, September 17, 1978, p. H-1. See also Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Mary L. Singleton, "Keep Mary Singleton Working For You," campaign flier, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla.;

Regarding fire protection, Councilwoman Singleton was shocked to find out that there was no fire station near her own house, and, although she tried hard, she could not get one in her neighborhood, since the water mains were not big enough there. In 1971, she and others protested the closing of a fire station on Kings Road. However, new fire stations were built on Lipia Road and at Myrtle Avenue and Moncrief Road.⁶⁵ In 1970, she got the city council to pass an ordinance requiring the Seaboard Coast Line to install and maintain automatic signals and gates at the railroad crossing at Moncrief Road near Thirty-sixth Street. This was "the only crossing in the nation that had to pay the full cost of signalization," she said.⁶⁶

While on the Agriculture and Recreation Committee from 1970 to 1972, and chairman from 1971 to 1972, Singleton pushed for more funds for recreation activities at Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park, which was being developed on land purchased at Seminole Beach. She also advocated more picnic

Mary Singleton to Joseph S. Chronistic (Jacksonville city traffic engineer), February 3, 1969, Jacksonville, Fla.; Dr. Hugh Darling to Mary Singleton, February 3, 1969, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department).

⁶⁵Mary Singleton interview, 1975; JJ, October 20, 1971; FTU, August 30, 1969, p. A-9; Telephone interview with Matt Frankel (Senior Public Safety Analyst, Public Safety Department, City of Jacksonville), May 28, 1987.

⁶⁶Mary Singleton interview, 1975. See also FTU, March 25, 1970, p. B-6; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 70-133-79.

areas throughout the county.⁶⁷ However, she said she was not as effective as they wished to be in the area of recreation in their districts because of the difficulty of getting the money. Mary Singleton said in 1975: "I wasn't able to establish any new playgrounds, but I was able to upgrade the existing ones, such as trying to get lighting at night."⁶⁸

In 1971, Councilwoman Singleton easily won the council seat from District Eight, which was mostly new to her after the 1970 redistricting. She said she would "spend a lot of time in the public works department in setting up priorities in her area."⁶⁹

Regulations

In the area of regulations and other policies, both councilwomen worked hard on the many details of the new consolidated government and generally supported what they perceived were the needs of ordinary people. A member of the Urban Affairs Committee from 1968 to 1969, Mathis was especially interested in zoning issues that involved protecting residential neighborhoods from encroaching commercial businesses, especially those where alcohol was

⁶⁷FTU, July 7, 1971; Bold View, 3 (October, 1971): 13.

⁶⁸Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

⁶⁹JJ, March 3, 1971, p. 3.

sold. At various times she opposed the extension of permission to sell alcoholic beverages.⁷⁰

In 1969, Councilwoman Mathis led in getting legislation passed to make cemetery owners clean up their cemeteries.⁷¹ In 1971, she persuaded the Jacksonville Area Planning Board to approve an ordinance to set minimum standards for new cemeteries or additions to existing ones.⁷² She and six other council members asked for an investigation of the city's Recreation Department because of the "poor upkeep" of city parks. "I know of at least twenty parks that are nothing but weed patches," she said.⁷³

In 1971, the city council passed Sallye Mathis' ordinance to permit police-escorted funeral processions during the hours of 7 to 9 A.M. and 4 to 6 P.M. on weekdays. In 1972 she opposed a new Minimum Housing Code that she considered too weak, but the council passed it quickly in order to obtain federal funds for further urban renewal.⁷⁴

⁷⁰FTU, May 28, 1971, p. B-1; JJ, August 4, 1971; JJ, October 17, 1972; FTU, December 7, 1972, p. A-19.

⁷¹FTU, May 19, 1973, p. B-1.

⁷²FTU, April 30, 1971; Sallye B. Mathis, "Sallye Brooks Mathis," campaign flyer, 1971, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files).

⁷³JJ, October 28, 1971.

⁷⁴Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 71-1006-483; FTU, November 3, 1971; FTU, May 16, 1972, p. A-9; Interview with Richard Bowers (director, Community Relations Commission, 1971-1973, and director Neighborhood Improvement Mechanism, 1973-1976, Jacksonville, Fla.), April 21, 1987.

In 1972 she successfully led opposition to locating a residence for those undergoing treatment for alcohol or drug rehabilitation in the unused Darnell-Cookman Junior High School on Davis Street and several other facilities. She was concerned about the sale of alcohol and illegal drugs in these areas leading to further deterioration of the neighborhoods. Closed at the time of school integration, the Darnell Cookman building was eventually used for adult education programs, as community residents desired.⁷⁵

Government Services

Councilwomen Mathis and Singleton also fought for improved government services for all citizens. They insisted that clients of service programs be treated with respect and compassion. "Both were really articulate," said Rev. Eugene Parks, who was also active in inner-city programs. In addition, the two women helped persuade the council to approve matching funds for federal grants for housing and urban renewal, programs for senior citizens, hospitals, libraries, delinquency, mental health and alcoholism programs, and child day care.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 71-1006-483; FTU, November 3, 1971; FTU, February 13, 1972, p. B-1; FTU, February 14, 1972, p. B-11; FTU, February 20, 1972, p. D-17; JJ, June 11, 1972; JJ, December 8, 1972, p. 33; Florida Star, January 11, 1975; Interview with Olivia Forest, June 10, 1985.

⁷⁶Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Telephone interview with Dr. Patricia Cowdery (head of Jacksonville's Department of Health, Welfare and Bio-environmental Services), June 2, 1987; Telephone interview with Rev. Eugene Parks (Urban

From 1968 to 1970 Mary Singleton was on the new Public Health and Welfare Committee, which handled the recently merged city and county health departments. The committee upgraded the city's thirty-two health clinics and developed "outreach" programs in the various neighborhoods. It also handled the new welfare programs, air and water pollution, and mosquito and rodent control. Walter Smith noted that Mary Singleton was an especially good mediator between the various earlier county and city agencies that the committee was blending together. In 1972 she urged that hospitals in Florida treat all emergency patients regardless of the patients' ability to pay.⁷⁷

Concern about the city welfare program prompted Councilwoman Singleton to visit a welfare office.

I just sat one day and watched how they handled people that walked in. It was disgraceful. They didn't know . . . who we were. And I almost lost my temper. Here was an old man--white, poor, sick--and they treated him like a dog, and we couldn't understand how anybody could treat people like that asking for help. [Also] I knew that if they treated him like that, what did they do to some black person? When we finished they had a different approach to how they handled the people that walked in there, because they never knew who was going to be sitting there watching them. So then we did beef up some things in welfare. I tried to, anyway.⁷⁸

Minister, United Methodist Church), June 2, 1987; Telephone interview with Edward R. Exson, June 1, 1987. See Bold View, 1967 to 1973.

⁷⁷FTU, October 1, 1969, p. BB-10; Cowdery interview; Walter Smith interview; Roberts interview; FTU, February 17, 1972.

⁷⁸Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

As vice-chairman of the council's Urban Affairs Committee, 1968-69, Councilwoman Mathis also helped extend urban services throughout the county. While serving on the Public Health and Welfare Committee--most of the time from 1969 until 1982, she kept a close watch on the Duval County Medical Center, where low-income people had to go for medical care, and its replacement in 1971--University Hospital. She lobbied continually for money for the public health facilities. In 1972 she urged hospital officials to improve admission procedures and waiting room facilities at University Hospital and in 1975 she felt they had improved. By 1972, Jacksonville had a new health center and nine neighborhood health clinics, as well as satellite offices of the city's welfare division.⁷⁹

Having served on the old Brewster Hospital (for blacks) board of directors, Sallye Mathis continued on the governing board of its replacement, Methodist Hospital. Marcus Drewer, president of Methodist Hospital, commented:

Serving as an officer on the Hospital Honorary Board of Governors, Mrs. Mathis was instrumental in the development and expansion of many of the hospital's departments and services. Her influence in the city was also a great benefit to this institution.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Sallye Mathis interview; FTU, April 14, 1972, p. A-22; FTU, October 6, 1972, p. B-1; Bold View 3 (March, 1971): 22.

⁸⁰Pacemaker (Jacksonville, Fla.: Methodist Hospital) 15 (July-September 1982): 2.

The two councilwomen took turns representing the city council on the board of directors of the Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunity program (G.J.E.O.), which channeled federal money to numerous programs. "Sallye and Mary seemed to have a special feel for the voiceless," said Alton Yates, who was executive director of G.J.E.O. from 1968 to 1972. "It was sometimes a very unpopular stand" to be an advocate for low income people--the "throw-away people," as Mrs. Mathis termed them. The G.J.E.O. programs enabled people to get training, with day care and other assistance.⁸¹

Alton Yates said that

at the commodity distribution center (the forerunner of the food stamp program), people had to stand outside in the heat or cold from 4 A.M. until 5 P.M.--many of them old. The young would get ahead. Ambulances were standing near to take the people who would faint to the hospital. Sallye Mathis was a primary mover to decentralize the distributions and put them inside [buildings].⁸²

Councilwoman Mathis had a strong effect on programs for low-income elderly people. When she went on the Executive Board of G.J.E.O. in 1968 there had been little emphasis on the elderly and many felt a gap, said Alton Yates.

⁸¹Interview with Alton Yates, May 14, 1985. See JJ, November 2, 1967, which notes Mary Singleton getting the city council's Budget Committee to restore part of its originally planned contribution to G.J.E.O.; FTU, May 1, 1968, p. B-13.

⁸²Yates interview.

So, G.J.E.O. established a committee to work on grants for the elderly and brought about the first senior citizens program in Jacksonville, primarily as a result of Sallye's pushing, to my knowledge. The city increased its appropriations for anti-poverty programs which she justified on the basis of feeding and housing the elderly and assisting them, especially in winter, with utility bills. Of all the members of the [G.J.E.O.] board, Sallye was the advocate for the elderly.⁸³

Another project Sallye Mathis helped start was a probation center (residence) for women. Opening in 1972 in Jacksonville under a Law Enforcement Assistance Association (L.E.A.A.) grant, it was housed first at the Jacksonville Y.W.C.A. A member of the Y.W.C.A. board of directors, she served on the probation center's board of directors as well.⁸⁴

Councilwoman Mathis also fought for and worked with the city's multi-million dollar Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) urban renewal program which obtained massive federal funds to rehabilitate blighted areas, especially downtown and along nearby Hogan's Creek. The program included clearance of sub-standard housing and development of new housing, parks, widened streets and the downtown campus of Florida Junior College (later Florida Community

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Telephone interview with Lois Graessle, May 8, 1985; Solomon interview; Sallye Mathis interview; Telephone interview with Christine Cheatham (secretary at Probation and Restitution Center, Jacksonville, Fla.), June 4, 1987.

College at Jacksonville).⁸⁵ Mathis arranged several tours of problem areas of the inner-city for city and state officials. In 1969, she urged people to organize and lobby in Tallahassee for an urban renewal bill, which she said had been defeated at the previous legislative session by the lobbying activities of "landlords and slumlords." She was appointed by Governor Claude Kirk to Florida's Urban Redevelopment Council, 1969-1970.⁸⁶

Sallye Mathis worked closely with the local H.U.D. Advisory Board to establish guidelines to ensure that grant funds to city residents were distributed fairly and actually received. These benefits included help in moving to new housing without financial hardship and being treated equally in the process. Vera Davis, chairman of the Project Area Committee of citizens for the Hogan's Creek area in the early 1970s, said that council member Mathis pleaded unsuccessfully for rehabilitation of the substandard housing in the area where Florida Junior College was later built, to avoid relocation of the residents. The citizens' committee decided to relocate the people, however. Vera Davis said that Sallye Mathis' concerns may have led to more emphasis

⁸⁵Bold View, 3 (March, 1971): 15, 18, 19; Jacksonville Magazine (Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce) 7 (Winter 1970/71).

⁸⁶FTU, February 8, 1969, B-1; Mathis, "Resume," 1972.

on relocation help, since later testimony showed that the residents were pleased with their relocation.⁸⁷

Mrs. Mathis "kept her eyes on things," said Florida Alexander, to see that people and public service agencies were treated fairly. When Methodist Hospital wanted a piece of Y.W.C.A. property near Eighth Street, Mathis was a member of the council's H.U.D. Appraisal Review Committee. She found out what the property was worth and led the fight to see that the Y.W.C.A. got a fair price for it.⁸⁸

Sallye Mathis also successfully urged a resolution "acknowledgeing the importance of the service furnished by unmetered taxicabes in the City of Jacksonville." She brought what she said were over six thousand signatures opposing any move to restrict the unmetered cabs. Providing a service to people not near the bus lines, the small cab companies, which were sometimes black-owned, provided employment but were struggling with high taxes and insurance costs.⁸⁹

Both councilwomen supported efforts to curb the use of harmful drugs. Mary Singleton went to meetings in Washington, D. C. and Miami to discuss the problems with people in other cities and helped to develop the Northeast Florida

⁸⁷McKissick interview; Bowers interview; Davis interview.

⁸⁸Alexander interview.

⁸⁹Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 72-167-31; Forest interview; FTU, February 23, 1972, p. A-1.

Comprehensive Drug Program with federal and local funding.⁹⁰ In 1970 she helped arrange for Attorney-General-elect Robert Shevin to speak in Jacksonville about ways to combat drug abuse.⁹¹

In 1970, Mary Singleton felt that her greatest accomplishment had been "the complete reorganizing and financing of our child services facilities." The consolidated government "inherited an obsolete and almost inhumane system," she said; "and we have streamlined the procedures, bettered the facilities and vastly increased both the quality and the number of personnel."⁹² In 1968, as chairman of the city council's Child Services Sub-committee of the Health and Welfare Committee, Mary Singleton reported unequal and inadequate funding, facilities and staffing at the two segregated "parental homes" for girls and the one for black boys. (There was no local home for white boys). Her repeated recommendations for upgrading and integrating the homes and for separating dependent children from delinquent ones were eventually carried out. The girls' home was renovated by 1971, the home for black boys on Jesse Street was renovated and integrated, and a new home for boys

⁹⁰Roberts interview; Bold View 3 (March 1971): 14; FTU, May 20, 1971, p. B-2; FTU, September 14, 1972, p. C-1; Singleton, "Keep Mary Singleton," 1972.

⁹¹Mary L. Singleton, "Mary Littlejohn Singleton," news release, Jacksonville, Fla., December 31, 1970, (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department).

⁹²Singleton, News Release, 1970.

on Ricker Road in Southwest Jacksonville was completed in 1972. "I feel so good," she said in 1975. "They moved into a beautiful sort of rural setting, with a new building, a nice qualified director, fully integrated staff-wise, and everything else."⁹³

Don McClure, director of the county's Child Services Department in 1968, said that Mary Singleton "became a champion of children's needs." She always helped with the planning for child services, supported his efforts, and led in getting his budget requests approved by the city council. She also helped create the county's Human Resources Department, which included both child services and the various adult services programs except for health.⁹⁴

While on the city council, Mary Singleton also led in the planning for more child day care services in Duval County, in obtaining government funding and local government

⁹³Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Telephone interview with Don McClure, (Chief Administrative Officer, City of Jacksonville, Fla.), March 26, 1987; Mary L. Singleton, "Report on the Parental Home For Negro Girls, to the Committee on Health and Welfare, Subcommittee on Child Services, Jacksonville City Council," Jacksonville, Fla., 1968; Jacksonville City Council, Public Health and Welfare Committee, Minutes of Meeting, October 29, 1968, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department); FTU, August 20, 1968, p. B-1; FTU, August 22, 1968, p. B-1; FTU, September 7, 1968, p. B-8; Florida Star, September 14, 1968; FTU, October 30, 1968, p. B-1; FTU-JJ, October 1, 1969, p. BB-1; FTU, December 11, 1969; FTU, February 18, 1971, p. B-7; Florida Star, February 27, 1971, p. 6; FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1; Bold View 3 (March 1971): 23.

⁹⁴McClure interview.

interest in expanding services, and in the coordination of these services. "She was the forerunner of all our child care development," said Ardis Kling. Councilwoman Singleton met with the Child Services Advisory Board which initiated a broad study of children's needs by a Child Care Study Commission. Appointed by Mayor Hans Tanzler, Jr., the commission was chaired by Lois Graessle, in cooperation with Jacksonville's Community Planning Council. In 1970, Mayor Tanzler appointed Singleton chairperson of the Child Study Commission. The commission's report made clear the great need for more child care programs, especially in poverty areas. The report also recommended a Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) committee to coordinate the efforts, obtain funds and support for state licensing of care centers, and do further research. In addition, the group produced a Guidebook For Establishing Day Care Centers. On March 23, 1971, the Jacksonville City Council adopted Singleton's resolution "supporting the concept of a '4-C' program and urging its establishment and implementation" in the county.⁹⁵

⁹⁵McClure interview; Graessle interview; Telephone interview with Ardis Kling, April 3, 1985; Child Care Study Commission, Interim Report on Licensed Day Care Programs in Jacksonville (Jacksonville, Fla.: Child Care Study Commission, 1971); Child Care Study Commission, Guidebook For Establishing Day Care Centers (Jacksonville, Fla.: Child Care Study Commission, 1971); Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 71-338-93; FTU, January 24, 1970; FTU, March 20, 1971.

The Child Care Study Commission applied for the initial federal funds to start the first day care centers run by local government in the county. In June 1971, the "4-C" program received a twenty thousand dollar, six-months grant (which required a hard-to-get one fourth, non-governmental local match), to begin the program under the auspices of the Community Planning Council. This was the second such program in Florida, after Miami's. With Mary Singleton as chairman and Betty Carley as child care staff person, it worked with some four hundred non-profit child centers at first. "I think anyone who looks at day care in Jacksonville can see that it is insufficient," Mary Singleton said in 1971, "and 4-C is the most sensible way to improve the programs we have and to increase the local number."⁹⁶ The Duval County program was chosen as one of a few in the southeast to receive considerably more federal money for a day care training program. Eventually the city of Jacksonville took over the 4-C program. Betty Carley later commented:

There are not enough words to thank Mary for developing the groundwork [for the 4-C program]. It was a new concept at the time to consider whether the government should be involved in child care. She was at the forefront in building those services in Jacksonville.⁹⁷

⁹⁶FTU, July 1, 1971.

⁹⁷Telephone interview with Betty Carley (Senior Human Services Program Manager for the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services), April 3, 1985; Community Planning Council, Inc. Board of Directors, and

Advocacy of Black Rights

Council members Mathis and Singleton spoke up for the needs of blacks when they felt blacks were facing racial discrimination--especially by city government. They brought civil rights problems to the fore and gave courage to others. According to Janet Johnson, the black members of the council did not function as a caucus but worked together on issues that were primary for blacks. "They had a good working relationship," she said; each of the black members "was different and each was needed."⁹⁸

The black council members introduced only a few bills focused primarily on black needs and these bills had limited results. As Dr. Joan Carver has noted, the willingness on the part of many local governments to fund capital improvements and service programs to aid blacks tends to come sooner than change in basic social attitudes towards integration.⁹⁹

The 1971 resolution by the two women and Joe Carlucci declaring November 8, 1971 to be "Eartha Mary Magdalene White Day" to honor her for her many accomplishments passed

Executive Committee, Minutes of Meetings, 1971-1972, Jacksonville, Fla. (in files of Jacksonville Community Council, Inc., Jacksonville, Fla.); FTU, July 10, 1972; FTU, September 7, 1972; FTU, October 19, 1972.

⁹⁸Janet Johnson interview.

⁹⁹Carver, p. 225.

unanimously.¹⁰⁰ However, the only local civil rights bill that passed was Earl Johnson's bill on fair employment among businesses dealing with city government; it was approved in December 1969 after much debate and some weakening of its provisions. In 1975 Mary Singleton thought discrimination in hiring still existed in both Jacksonville and Florida government, even though Mayor Hans Tanzler had always hired a few blacks and some other women.¹⁰¹

On July 8, 1969, council members Mathis and Singleton and others introduced a resolution which passed, calling for a re-examination of the merits of a downtown site for a planned four-year state university in Jacksonville. Although the Florida Board of Regents was about ready to approve a suburban site for the university, supporters of the resolution felt that a downtown location would have been closer to many blacks and other low-income students. The resolution was approved by the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, and by the city council on August 4.¹⁰² At the

¹⁰⁰Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 71-1082-370; Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, October 26, 1971, Jacksonville, Fla.

¹⁰¹Janet Johnson interview; FTU, October 29, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, December 10, 1969, p. B-1; FTU-JJ, December 14, 1969, pp. A-1, 2; Florida Star, February 17, 1971, p. 6; Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

¹⁰²Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 69-618-94; FTU, July 9, 1969, pp. B-1, 13; FTU, July 11, 1969, p. B-1; Daniel L. Schafer, From Scratch Pads and Dreams: A Ten Year History of the University of North Florida (Jacksonville, Fla.: University of North Florida, 1982), pp. 15-38.

August 15 council meeting, when a citizens' study committee was ready to report that the downtown site was "feasible, practicable and obtainable," council president John Lanahan "rushed through the council a resolution which appeared to some like a simple vote of thanks to the committee." However, his resolution "contained a clause in its final paragraph confirming prior findings that the factors of time and cost make the selection of an urban university unfeasible at the present time." Lanahan ended debate on the issue and forced a vote on his surprise resolution which effectively endorsed the suburban site.¹⁰³

Later, council members Mathis, Singleton and Joe Carlucci charged that this vote was timed to coincide with the absence of four council members known to be supporters for the downtown site.¹⁰⁴ Councilman Earl Johnson called the vote "a step backward." Trying to be conciliatory to those who had advocated a downtown site, Lanahan suggested that the downtown site be used for a junior college vocational studies center. The Downtown Campus of Florida

¹⁰³FTU, October 1, 1969, pp. AA-2, 3. See also FTU, August 16, 1969, p. B-1; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 69-808-132 (Lanahan); Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, August 15, 1969; Schafer, From Scratch Pads, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰⁴Absent council members were Jake Godbold, Don MacLean, Mathis and Lynwood Roberts. Schafer, From Scratch Pads, p. 31.

Junior College (later called Florida Community College at Jacksonville) was built on this location.¹⁰⁵

Later in 1969 the city council approved Sallye Mathis' bill to contribute fifty thousand dollars to Edward Waters College, run by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, after "a persistent fight" by her.¹⁰⁶ However, in March 1970, the city's special attorney said that the gift was illegal since it violated Florida's prohibition against government gifts to a religious institution.¹⁰⁷

Several times the city council supported white residents who made strong protests to city government against the building of low-income housing in their suburban neighborhoods of Jacksonville. These decisions were opposed by the black council members.¹⁰⁸

A clear defeat came to Mary Singleton's 1969 bill to prohibit "discrimination in the sale or other transfer of housing," with procedures and possible penalties for violations. Her proposal in July 1969 followed the passage of national fair housing legislation in 1968. Dr. David Swain called Singleton's fair housing bill "an effort to

¹⁰⁵FTU, October 1, 1969, pp. AA-2,3.

¹⁰⁶FTU, October 29, 1969, p. B-1; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 69-882-66.

¹⁰⁷FTU, March 18, 1970; Duval County School Board, Missing Pages, s.v. "Sallye Brooks Mathis."

¹⁰⁸FTU, February 2, 1968, re. Park Street in Lakeshore; FTU, April 15, 1970, p. B-1, re. Ft. Caroline Road in Arlington.

stop block-busting and to stabilize the housing market." Swain knew of several neighborhoods that blacks had moved into in 1966 and 1967 which had subsequently turned all-black when realtors stopped selling to whites.¹⁰⁹ Caroline Swain, who was then Housing Coordinator for the Jacksonville Urban League, said that the Jacksonville Fair Housing Council, a volunteer group, was using pledge cards to build awareness of housing discrimination and trying to get black families into certain areas. In January 1970, the Public Affairs Committee, of which Singleton was a member, recommended withdrawal of the bill without any discussion, and on January 27 the bill was defeated by the council.¹¹⁰

In a written statement to the Public Affairs Committee on January 22, Councilwoman Singleton criticized the committee for not even granting her

the courtesy of considering my committee substitute. . . . If the ordinance is being ignored because of the degree of discord that has been created by a well-funded group of citizens who would prefer that we still live in the 1860s, I am disappointed and saddened.¹¹¹

Homer Humphries, then chairman of the city council's Public Affairs Committee, did not think that this "very

¹⁰⁹Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 691-881; David Swain interview.

¹¹⁰Interview with Caroline Swain, May 6, 1985; FTU, January 19, 1970, p. B-9; FTU, January 23, 1970, p. B-1; FTU, January 24, 1970, p. B-10; FTU, January 28, 1970, p. B-1.

¹¹¹Mary L. Singleton to Jacksonville City Council, January 22, 1970, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department).

controversial" bill added to what already was in federal and state law."¹¹²

In 1975 Mary Singleton commented:

I had the votes to pass it, but it was sabotaged the night we were going to take the vote. . . . They had spread the word, "It's not going to pass," and they bought it. I was so mad . . . [but] I just told them that it had been sabotaged, but justice would prevail.¹¹³

Harold Gibson remarked later that "it was time for the bill. I think they knew we needed it, but they were leery of their constituents." He thought the bill's supporters underestimated those who were still in favor of segregation. He said Mayor Tanzler fought for the bill, as did the interracial Jacksonville Ministerial Association.¹¹⁴

At a January 28 press conference, Sallye Mathis said she was "hurt and disgruntled" that the council had not even discussed the bill before defeating it. "I didn't know that we were dealing with a racist council," she added. When a newsman asked her if she was calling the entire council racist, she said, "I'm saying they are either racists or they are influenced by racists." City Council president John Lanahan then wrote to Sallye Mathis that he was "appalled" by her statement to the press that the council was "racist," calling it "unwarranted and an insult to all

¹¹²Telephone interview with Homer Humphries, November 29, 1985.

¹¹³Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

¹¹⁴Gibson interview; FTU, February 3, 1970, p. B-10.

the council members," and asking for "a public apology for this accusation." When a newsman asked her if she would call a press conference to apologize, Sallye Mathis retorted: "Are you going to hold your breath until next year?" Janet Johnson said that the failure of the housing bill was "sheer frustration" after the good relationships that had developed; some white councilmen "felt that if they voted for the blacks it meant they were against whites, which was unnecessary," she said.¹¹⁵

On February 10, following the defeat of the Fair Housing bill, the city council re-established the controversial Community Relations Commission it had abolished the previous December during a dispute over its membership. However, according to Dr. Joan Carver, there was some feeling among blacks that the commission and similar organizations dealing mainly with black problems "were out of the mainstream of city decision making."¹¹⁶

Keeping the promised three to four blacks on the city council proved to be difficult. In late 1969, Oscar Taylor was suspended from the council after being indicted by a Duval County grand jury on four counts of bribery. Taylor "got caught in the corruption that was common earlier," noted Senator Arnett Girardeau. It was brought out at his

¹¹⁵FTU, January 29, 1970, p. B-9; JJ, January 30, 1970, p. 17; FTU, January 31, 1970, p. B-12; Janet Johnson interview.

¹¹⁶FTU, February 11, 1970, p. B-1; Carver, p. 221.

trial that he offered a bribe by a businessman at the request of the state attorney's office and he accepted it. A bi-racial council committee chose Taylor's replacement, John A. Clarkson III, a twenty-four-year-old black computer operator for a local insurance company and former teacher.¹¹⁷

The redrawing of the district lines for the Jacksonville City Council in December 1970 again raised fears that the changes would be unfair to black voters. Sallye Mathis and Arnett Girardeau strongly objected to the first plan to combine parts of Mathis' current district and Mary Singleton's district and also reduce the black voters in John Clarkson's District Eleven from 60 percent to 30 percent. Observers felt that these changes would probably eliminate one black from the city council, at a time when blacks comprised 23 percent of the total county population. The official explanation for the redistricting plan was that the outward migration of blacks from the core city made "three districts with black majorities impossible without an unacceptable amount of gerrymandering."¹¹⁸ The planning board did not have detailed data on the population in the

¹¹⁷FTU, December 12, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, September 12, 1970, p. B-1; FTU, September 15, 1970, p. B-6; FTU, October 15, 1970, p. B-1; Girardeau interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

¹¹⁸Carver, p. 246. See also FTU, December 29, 1970, p. B-1; FTU, December 30, 1970, pp. B-1, 12.;

voting districts at the time.¹¹⁹ Solomon Badger, Jr., who was the only black on the Jacksonville Area Planning Board at the time, had urgent late night meetings with Sallye Mathis and a few others during the Christmas holidays to try to develop a fair districting plan to offer the board, but they didn't have much time. District Eleven was changed to have about 55 percent black voters, but in the spring elections of 1971 John Clarkson lost the seat to a white man, David Harrell. Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton easily won re-election in their new districts in 1971, and Earl Johnson easily retained his at-large seat.¹²⁰

In December 1972, District Eleven was enlarged. It then had a population 48.7 percent black, although Harold Gibson, who was then chairman of the Duval County Planning Board, said that he expected the district to gain in black population.¹²¹ When councilman Joe Carlucci suggested having twelve at-large councilmen and reducing the district

¹¹⁹FTU, December 31, 1970, p. B-1.

¹²⁰Badger interview; FTU, December 31, 1970, p. B-1; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

¹²¹FTU, December 27, 1972. See also FTU, December 28, 1972, p. B-1; FTU, December 29, 1972, p. B-1. In 1975 the District 11 seat was won by another white, Randy Amos; in 1979 the seat was easily won by a black man, A. Warren Jones, who was re-elected several times. Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

council members to seven, Sallye Mathis wrote to him opposing his plan.¹²²

As city council members, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton cooperated with Mayor Hans Tanzler and the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce in their efforts to find jobs for blacks as a deterrent to race riots. On August 9, 1967, the Mayor's Employment Committee located hundreds of jobs in local businesses for which 1,214 people applied during the first two weeks of the program and 101 were actually hired. City agencies secured funding for various additional programs for job training and placement.¹²³

Councilwoman Mathis gave many people information on job openings--especially government jobs. She helped leaders of the Jacksonville Opportunities Industrialization Center to "see the right person in government and industry to help open doors" for the people in their program. She said that she "monitored some of the [city's] jobs and regulations to see that some were treated fairly." She intervened on behalf of individuals whom she felt were not getting fair treatment as city employees. Beginning in August 1967, she urged advancement for six twenty-year employees in the city's Department of Electric and Water Utilities until four

¹²²FTU, December 30, 1972, p. B-13; Sallye B. Mathis to Joe Carlucci, December 31, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla.

¹²³Telephone interview with Nathan H. Wilson (chairman of the Community Relations Commission, 1967-1975), May 8, 1985; Jacksonville Magazine, 4 (Fall, 1967): 22; FTU, August 16, 1967, pp. A-4, B-1.

of them were reclassified and thus became eligible for promotion. She persuaded the Duval County Civil Service Board to support the rehiring of three young men who had been released from provisional employment as groundsmen for the electric department after failing tests for employment; they were then allowed to take a second test.¹²⁴

In a speech to the Jacksonville Employers Community Relations Association in 1968 about the hardcore unemployed, Mary Singleton urged an end to employment and promotion practices by employers that discriminated against minorities. Black applicants for jobs were hindered, she asserted, by unnecessary educational and physical requirements unrelated to the jobs involved, employment tests that screened out minority groups, and automatic disqualification when an applicant had a criminal record. "Up With People," she said, "doesn't mean picking them up or giving them handouts. . . . They don't need your sympathy; they need your help so that they can make their proud contribution to society."¹²⁵

¹²⁴Bennefield interview; Sallye Mathis interview; Sallye B. Mathis to Tom Mathis, August 23, 1967 and March 13, 1968, Jacksonville, Fla.; Jack D. Petty to Sallye Mathis, February 9, 1968, Jacksonville, Fla.; Jack D. Petty to Charles Simmons, April 19, 1968, Jacksonville, Fla.; Florida Star, October 24, 1967; FTU, February 2, 1968.

¹²⁵Mary L. Singleton, "Up With People," speech, June 12, 1968, Jacksonville, Fla. (in "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Dept.).

Council representatives Mathis and Singleton continued to have input into educational issues, although not always with the results they desired. Sallye Mathis gave moral support to the Duval County Teachers Association when it was part of a state-wide teachers' strike early in 1968. When public school staff recommended a new high school north of the Trout River instead of in "East" Jacksonville, in 1971, Mary Singleton said that if the Duval County School Board again failed to build the high school promised ten years earlier, the city council should withhold funds from the board in protest. Mathis added that the Eastside school was needed. "If we go along with the School Board staff survey we will be following what we have done in the past--ignoring the core city and improving outlying areas."¹²⁶ She soon urged salaries for school board members, since not paying them discriminated against certain groups who lacked the money. "It takes time to study the issues and make field trips," she asserted. "That's being involved."¹²⁷

Sallye Mathis also took part in the expression of viewpoints by the "Concerned Black Parents of Jacksonville" in regard to new suspension policies. She remained an

¹²⁶Cason interview; FTU, February 10, 1971.

¹²⁷FTU, February 18, 1971; JJ, July 14, 1971.

active member of the N.A.A.C.P. executive board and of its Education Committee.¹²⁸

On June 23, 1971, a massive school busing program to integrate the Duval County Public Schools was ordered by U. S. District Judge Gerald Tjoflat. The plan, which was close to that proposed by the Duval County School Board, was opposed by many whites. It was also criticized by N.A.A.C.P. leaders who appealed the decision the next day, since it closed too many black schools and put most of the burden of busing on black students. A week earlier, Sallye Mathis had testified at the hearings about the school plan and told of possibilities for improving the conditions around the sites of some of the schools proposed for closing in black neighborhoods in hopes that they could be kept open.¹²⁹

In June 1972 Councilwoman Mathis wrote to city council president Lynwood Roberts urging him to oppose a council resolution to hire lawyers to fight the desegregation order. She felt that paying money for the effort would be "a waste of taxpayers' dollars." The council approved the resolution on July 11 but it was soon declared unconstitutional. Also

¹²⁸Rev. Rudolph McKissick to Dr. Cecil Hardesty (Duval County Superintendent of Schools), April 28, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla.; Citizens on the Duval County Suspension Policy, Minutes of Meeting, April 16, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); Telephone interview with Eddie Mae Steward, April 5, 1987.

¹²⁹FTU, June 12, 1971, p. B-1; FTU, June 17, 1971, p. B-1; Florida Star, June 19, 1971; FTU, June 24, 1971, pp. A-1, 2.

on July 11 she was unable to deter the council's approval of a state-wide petition opposing busing for integration.¹³⁰ The city-wide busing program did finally begin in the fall of 1972 in Duval County despite a local boycott of public schools by anti-busing whites.¹³¹

Black government officials were in a position to try to mediate when there were possibilities of conflict between blacks and whites. Harold Gibson commented that the black officials hoped "that by our presence we [would] soften the action of the police, who were eager for confrontation, to vent their rage against blacks." Gibson said that as Mayor Tanzler's assistant, he "was at every confrontation. Our presence forced the police to be careful. They felt we would be creditable witnesses."¹³²

Janet Johnson remembered the movement around the country in the late 1960s led by Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown, "whom we [middle-class] blacks saw as agitators. They were angry and talked about violence." On August 9, 1967, Rap Brown, national chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.), spoke at a rally in

¹³⁰FTU, July 12, 1972; FTU, July 13, 1972, p. B-1; FTU, July 14, 1971; JJ, July 17, 1972, p. A-1; FTU, August 9, 1972, p. B-2; FTU, August 11, 1972, p. B-1; Sallye B. Mathis to Lynwood Roberts, July 12, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 72-713-191, Resolution 72-695-189.

¹³¹FTU, September 6, 1972, p. B-1; FTU, November 11, 1972, p. D-12.

¹³²Gibson interview.

Jacksonville.¹³³ Determined to prevent violence, youth and adult black leaders in Jacksonville met with young black street leaders and carefully planned ways to maintain order. Many blacks thought that Brown did not plan violence in Jacksonville anyway but simply a rally.¹³⁴ The young street leaders also met several times with Mayor Tanzler, who listened to their problems and convinced them he was trying to find solutions. The new jobs program by the mayor and the Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the two new black councilwomen had also just been announced.¹³⁵

Attended by around three hundred persons, the black rally ended quietly after a surprise visit by Governor Claude Kirk. He made remarks to Rap Brown which many blacks thought were insulting. According to Walter Smith, the angry crowd was giving the governor cat calls when Mary Singleton came into the ballpark; moving through the crowd easily, she told the group: "This is not the answer," and helped to calm them. As black leaders had planned, certain blacks among the crowd called, "We'll solve our own problems," and violence was prevented.¹³⁶

¹³³Janet Johnson interview; FTU, August 10, 1967, p. A-1.

¹³⁴Atwater interview.

¹³⁵FTU, August 16, 1967, pp. A-4, B-1; FTU, August 20, 1967, p. A-13.

¹³⁶Atwater interview; Walter Smith interview. See also FTU, August 10, 1967, p. A-1; JJ, August 11, 1967, p. 14; FTU, August 20, 1967, p. A-13; FTU, December 29, 1969, p. B-1; Jacksonville Magazine, 4 (Fall 1967): 18, 22.

On August 27, Mary Singleton was quoted as saying: "Former S.N.C.C. chairman Stokely Carmichael is telling the truth about a lot of things. I don't go along with all of his methods, though. I just can't buy violence." She thought that riots in northern cities often resulted because "people can't find homes and have to live in slums of the worst kind."¹³⁷

Being a black elected official was not easy. Janet Johnson related that when "The Black Front," a local group which talked about violence, sent all local elected officials a telegram to meet at a church with national leaders, Earl Johnson was the only one who showed.

They literally threatened him, and called him 'oreo' and other names. I could not believe that after all the progress we'd had they would do this. Obviously they were uninformed.

Later that evening Sallye Mathis called Janet Johnson and said that some of the group were at her house with loud speakers. She didn't want the police called, or the press. Grace Solomon, her husband and some other friends went to Mrs. Mathis' house that night until things quieted down.¹³⁸

In October 1967, Mayor Hans Tanzler appointed a new Community Relations Commission, which Sallye Mathis said a year later was possibly the reason racial violence was avoided in 1967. She, Mary Singleton and Oscar Tylor

¹³⁷Southern Courier, August 26-27, 1967, p. 3.

¹³⁸Janet Johnson interview; Solomon interview.

defended Mayor Tanzler's selection of black members of the commission "who communicated with the street people," as Sallye Mathis described them.¹³⁹

In April 1968, as some blacks reacted to the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., with sporadic violence in Jacksonville and other places around the country, the Jacksonville City Council postponed its April 10 meeting out of respect for the national civil rights leader who was being buried that day. At a public gathering, Sallye Mathis commented:

I think it is very fitting of the Council to do what it has done in memory of Dr. King. As a member of the Council and of the Negro race, I hope his life will be a symbol of turning the other cheek. I would appeal to the young Negroes and young whites to join hands and 'go to the new city hand in hand in love.' When everybody in Jacksonville learns to live in love, we will not have to worry about violence."¹⁴⁰

Mary Singleton mentioned her personal friendship with Dr. King and said: "Some people die for others. If we in this city continue like we have been going we will survive." On April 11, the city council voted unanimously to support Mayor Tanzler's use of a curfew and other means of maintaining law and order during the tense time.¹⁴¹

Insensitivity and sometimes brutality by the local police were long-standing complaints of blacks in

¹³⁹FTU, October 31, 1967, p. B-3; FTU, September 10, 1968.

¹⁴⁰FTU, April 8, 1968, p. B-3; FTU, April 9, 1968, p. B-1; FTU, April 10, 1968, p. B-1.

¹⁴¹FTU, April 10, 1968, p. B-1; FTU, April 11, 1968, p. B-1.

Jacksonville, who felt that the sheriff's department was "outside of the direct control of the mayor and considered to be rather insulated from black influence." In 1975 Mary Singleton thought that any black protests, sit-ins, boycotts, riots in Jacksonville the previous ten years "all stemmed from police. I think they termed it police brutality. . . . They do have a big problem of communications, . . . one of the biggest problems we have in Duval County." She tried to get civil service tests for police designed to fit the jobs, but black applicants had trouble passing the personal interview--"a blatant case of biasness," according to Singleton.¹⁴²

In October 1969 there was a small riot on Florida Avenue around five P.M. The Florida Times-Union reported several days of looting, hurling of objects and the burning of several buildings. Rev. Charles Dailey said:

It was a neighborhood situation that had already run its course. Undue force was used in dealing with a small theft, when a salesman shot a boy who took a box of cigars across from the Mathis store, and he is crippled now. The word got out in an instant. . . . Most of the places hit were where loan operations took place at tremendous rates of interest. Sallye Mathis called the mayor and Harold Gibson, but it was over by the time they got there.¹⁴³

¹⁴²Carver, p. 221; Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

¹⁴³Dailey interview; FTU, November 1, 1969, p. A-1; FTU, November 2, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, December 29, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, November 23, 1987, p. E-1.

Harold Gibson said that when the police arrived at Florida Avenue in their new riot gear, there was no one left but him and "one drunk." There were arrests for looting. When the mayor closed Florida Avenue, the main street in the area, for a day or two, Sallye Mathis and Dailey protested that "it was unnecessary to keep the streets closed over the weekend since there was no violence and nothing to loot. They held this community hostage," in spite of plans for a funeral. Dailey said that he did "credit the Sheriff's department with the fact that there was no bloodshed--no shooting at the police or by them. It was just a spontaneous thing, with no anger."¹⁴⁴

Sallye Mathis led the fight to get a committee to study the situation, but "the committee talked to people who said what they wanted to hear," said Dailey. At a state meeting of black elected officials in December, Sallye Mathis was quoted as saying that one of the primary causes of the violence was that young blacks "were reacting because the older people were being cheated month after month" by the higher-priced, white-owned retail stores in black neighborhoods. "The young people can go elsewhere," she said. Several black officials from other places in Florida agreed

¹⁴⁴Gibson interview; Dailey interview. See also FTU, November 1, 1969, p. A-1; FTU, November 2, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, December 29, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, January 10, 1970; FTU, May 28, 1970, p. C-17; FTU, November 23, 1987, p. E-1.

that this was a prime concern in their areas also.¹⁴⁵ The "One hundred-member Task Force on Civil Disorder" appointed by Mayor Tanzler reported "a lack of responsiveness to needs of black slum residents" on the part of businesses and government, including "dwellings not maintained by slum landlords," exploitation by white businesses and lack of government services.¹⁴⁶

In May 1970 about two hundred people took part in a march from St. Stephen's A.M.E. Church to the Federal Office Building on Bay Street. N.A.A.C.P. president Lloyd Pearson, Jr., explained that they were protesting the killings of students at Kent State and Jackson Universities, "of blacks during a racial disturbance in Augusta, Georgia, and [of] two Jacksonville blacks--James Donaldson by a policeman and Anthony Reese by a private guard." As one of the speakers, Salle Mathis said:

We are letting people of Jacksonville and the nation know about the killings. Life is precious, and it is time for us to bow to God that this [the killings] not be repeated. We must not hate or hold malice. We cannot live with hate.

The crowd on the steps answered, "Right on."¹⁴⁷

Mary Singleton had her own experience with law breakers. When her barbeque business on Moncrief Road was robbed

¹⁴⁵Dailey interview; FTU, November 16, 1969, p. G-2. See also FTU, January 10, 1970.

¹⁴⁶FTU, May 28, 1970, p. C-17.

¹⁴⁷FTU, May 4, 1970.

twice within a month in 1968, she decided to close it, since she couldn't get insurance or employees, she said. She thought that more police were needed.

It's too easy to get out once you do something. . . . When they do catch up with them, the money is all gone; They've spent it or something. The criminals should have to work to pay you back the money they steal.¹⁴⁸

Yet Councilwoman Singleton strove to improve the Duval County prison farm and the city's jail while she was on the council's Public Safety and Judiciary Committee, 1968-1972. In 1969 some extra funds were voted to improve the jail after she and six other council members were "appalled" at the conditions they saw there.¹⁴⁹ Senator Joe Carlucci remembered visiting the prison farm with Mary Singleton and councilman Joe Forchee. The council members worked

to enlarge the facility and make it more useful so the men could learn to do something useful as opposed to learning to be better criminals. As we walked through the farm, some prisoners would call for Mary, give her some sad story, and ask for help. She would look them in the eye and say, 'You got yourself in; now you get yourself out. You committed a crime; you pay for it.'¹⁵⁰

In April 1971 Mary Singleton recommended rehabilitation programs, conversion of an unused room for such programs and

¹⁴⁸FTU, February 6, 1969, p. B-1.

¹⁴⁹FTU, October 22, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, November 11, 1969, p. B-1.

¹⁵⁰Carlucci interview.

recreation, a full time nurse, and various physical improvements for the prison farm.¹⁵¹ In 1975 she commented:

The same thing the judge is telling them now, I told them in 1968. They would have riots out there, but they were stupid. They would leave the mops and the brooms and all kinds of equipment in the cells with the men so that they could beat each other in the head with them. The security was bad; the lighting was bad. I don't believe in building palaces for prisoners, but I do believe that if a man is going to come out of there, you should have some humanistic things going on in a jail, because, if you're not, you're going to let out some animals. I got the jail cleaned up, but they wouldn't spend the money to really do what they had to do. That's why they're under the mandate of the courts now. Way back then in 1968 (if they had done what I urged), by now we would have it all straightened out.¹⁵²

When there was a disturbance at the county prison farm on August 6, 1971, Mary Singleton, who was on the Sheriff's Interagency Council, 1971-1972, was appointed to investigate the incident. Both she and the Community Relations Commission gave detailed reports. In response to her recommendations, county officials promised to not repeat the methods of treatment of certain prisoners which she termed "inhumane." They said they would also try to expand prison facilities. A new wing was added to the prison farm in the next few years.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹FTU, April 22, 1971.

¹⁵²Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

¹⁵³Mary Singleton, "Resume," 1974; Mary L. Singleton, "Councilman Mary L. Singleton's Report: Disturbance at City Prison Farm--Friday Night, August 6, 1971," Jacksonville, Fla., 1971 (In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department); Bowers interview; FTU, April 22, 1971;

In June 1971, while the massive school busing program for the integration of the Duval County Public Schools was being decided upon by Judge Gerald Tjoflat, the tensions of some whites and blacks were expressed in violence. Jacksonville had five nights of disturbance involving fire-bombing, looting and over one hundred arrests. Marines and National Guardsmen were brought to Jacksonville, as was a tank-like juggernaut to spray tear gas.¹⁵⁴ Richard Bowers, director of the Community Relations Commission, toured the troubled area with Sallye Mathis and said that she "had a calming effect" in communicating with the black teen-agers.¹⁵⁵

Sheriff Dale Carson blamed the disturbance on "a rock-throwing mob," while Dr. Arnett Girardeau blamed it "on police harrassment of people eating peacefully in restaurants and worshipping in churches as well as on the streets." Dr. Girardeau objected to Carson's praise of his policemen for using "restraint" and telling them that they could "use whatever force was necessary to make any arrest,"

FTU, August 18, 1971, p. B-1; FTU, August 27, 1971; Bold View 6 (January 1974): 17.

¹⁵⁴FTU, June 17, 1971, p. B-1; FTU, June 18, 1971, p. B-1; FTU, June 21, 1971, p. C-1; JJ, June 22, 1971, p. 21.

¹⁵⁵Bowers interview; Community Relations Commission, Fourth Annual Report, (Jacksonville, Fla.: Community Relations Commission, 1971,), p. 14.

and threatened to complain to the U. S. Department of Justice.¹⁵⁶

During the disturbance, Sallye Mathis was involved in the formation by the local N.A.A.C.P. of a committee to design ways to solve the racial tensions. Called the "Black Community Coalition," the committee met with the mayor and the sheriff about police brutality and inequities in regard to the hiring and promoting of black policemen. "We saw some improvements," said coalition member Rev. Rudolph McKissick.¹⁵⁷

With Dr. Arnett Girardeau as chairman, the Black Community Coalition urged the city's Community Relations Commission to find out from the state attorney general whether Jacksonville police exceeded their legal powers by making mass arrests of people during recent racial disturbances and to try to correct any abuses they might find.¹⁵⁸ On September 30 the coalition wrote to Governor Reuben Askew to complain of "a complete breakdown between the Black citizenry and the local police agency" during the previous twenty-four hours, with one police officer and one black citizen killed and others "wounded or brutalized." This

¹⁵⁶JJ, June 23, 1971, p. 25. See also FTU, July 24, 1971, p. A-12.

¹⁵⁷McKissick interview; Bowers interview; Interview with attorney William J. Sheppard, March 9, 1988; FTU, June 19, 1971, p. B-1; FTU, August 18, 1971, p. B-1; JJ, August 26, 1971; FTU, September 29, 1971.

¹⁵⁸FTU, August 11, 1971, p. B-4.

letter, with about thirty names on the letterhead, noted at least seven cases of blacks being shot without cause or receiving other, unjustified treatment showing "total disregard of the constitutional rights of black citizens."¹⁵⁹ In September 1971, Sallye Mathis cast the only vote against a city council resolution to honor a (white) policeman who was shot and killed while trying to make an arrest.¹⁶⁰ At the third anniversary celebration of consolidated government, Mayor Hans Tanzler identified race relations as Jacksonville's number one problem.¹⁶¹

The coalition of black leaders then "felt that the top citizens must be visibly involved in determining strategies for race relations."¹⁶² In response, the Council of Leadership for Community Advancement (C.O.L.C.A.) was formed by Sallye Mathis and Dr. Andrew Robinson (black Dean of the College of Education at the University of North Florida and a member of the Community Relations Commission), in the fall of 1971 as a committee of black and white business and community leaders outside the official structure of government. Mayor Hans Tanzler and J. J. Daniel, a leader in the

¹⁵⁹ Arnett. E. Girardeau to Governor Reubin Askew, September 30, 1971, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files).

¹⁶⁰ FTU, September 29, 1971.

¹⁶¹ FTU, October 2, 1971, p. B-1; FTU, October 9, 1971.

¹⁶² "The Need for a Conference on Race Relations: A Rationale," Jacksonville, Fla., n.p., [Fall] 1971 (in Solomon files).

drive for consolidation, endorsed the idea and their names were on the invitations for a November 16 conference. At the meeting, Daniel and Robinson were chosen as white and black co-chairmen of C.O.L.C.A. After the reading of five position papers prepared by the local N.A.A.C.P., five task forces were set up, with black and white co-chairmen, on the police, education, housing, employment and the media.¹⁶³

According to Dr. Joan Carver, the effort to form C.O.L.C.A. showed a "lack of confidence of some of the black leaders in the responsiveness of the formal political structure and in its ability to meet the problems of the black community." The organizers were attempting "to mobilize those same elites who had led in the movement for reform of relations previously," since the efforts of blacks alone had not been successful.¹⁶⁴

With Sallye Mathis still a "prime mover," C.O.L.C.A. met until August 1972.¹⁶⁵ The group passed resolutions on its varied concerns, such as calling on city government "to guarantee fair employment practices on all construction work under city control." It opposed the city council's vote to

¹⁶³Ibid.; Andrew Robinson interview; McKissick interview; Bowers interview; Andrew Robinson to Sallye Mathis, November 1971, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); Conference on Race Relations, List of members (including Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton), Jacksonville, Fla., 1971 (in Solomon files); FTU, January 17, 1972, p. B-1; FTU, February 22, 1972, p. A-1.

¹⁶⁴Carver, pp. 221-222.

¹⁶⁵Andrew Robinson interview.

appropriate money in July 1972 to help the Duval County School Board hire a lawyer to fight school busing for integration.¹⁶⁶

Sallye Mathis attended all the C.O.L.C.A. meetings, said Richard Bowers, who was director for the Community Relations Commission, which kept the minutes of the C.O.L.C.A. meetings. She "had a unique ability to communicate with the larger white community--perhaps out of her educational background."¹⁶⁷

Bowers credited these and other inter-racial efforts with Jacksonville's "unusually positive" adjustment to school busing, which began in the fall of 1972. "The consciousness of the business community was raised during the series of meetings in the summer of 1972, and efforts were made to solve job and other problems," said Bowers. N.A.A.C.P. president James Washington agreed that, because of C.O.L.C.A., "lines of communication are open that were not open before."¹⁶⁸

There still remained problems between the black community and the police, however. In December 1972,

¹⁶⁶Andrew Robinson interview; Council of Leadership for Community Advancement (C.O.L.C.A.), Minutes of Meetings, April 17, 1972, April 21, 1972, May 19, 1972, June 16, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); FTU, April 22, 1972; FTU, January 17, 1972, pp. B-1, 9; FTU, June 1, 1972; FTU, July 22, 1972, p. B-5.

¹⁶⁷ Bowers interview.

¹⁶⁸Bowers interview; FTU, July 22, 1972, p. B-5.

Councilwoman Mathis brought a delegation of blacks to a meeting of the city council's Public Safety and Judiciary Committee so that they could tell the councilmen about police brutality in the reported beating of three black men during a disturbance. According to the Florida Times-Union,

Mrs. Mathis said she and others had been trying to build up respect in the black community for institutions but that such reports of brutality were destroying the efforts. She said some policemen seemed to assume that the blacks were wrong before they arrived on the scene. 'If they see twenty-five black people on the sidewalk they come with their guns,' she said. 'I don't think that's protection.'

Committee chairman Joe Carlucci told the group that "they should never be afraid to bring grievances to the Council."¹⁶⁹

In 1975, Sallye Mathis thought she had been "very effective" concerning police-community relationships.

I think that I have worked with the Sheriff and his department to the extent that much of the police brutality had been eliminated. We still have a little of it, but they know that that's one of my big issues, and when I do hear about it, I get right on it.¹⁷⁰

Encouragement of Civic Participation

In addition to their work directly on the city council, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton made specific efforts to encourage people--especially black, female and other low-income people--to participate in various aspects of

¹⁶⁹FTU, December 21, 1972.

¹⁷⁰Sallye Mathis interview.

government and other community affairs. In addition to their busy schedules as city legislators, Councilwomen Mathis and Singleton were themselves impressive examples of additional, volunteer service.

Sallye Mathis continued her active participation on the governing boards of the Jacksonville branch of the N.A.A.C.P., the Jacksonville Opportunities Industrialization Center, the Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.C.A., and the Jacksonville Urban League (often serving as its chaplain). While on the Board of Trustees of WJCT (Channel 7) Community Television station, she and Wendell Holmes urged programing for and about all segments of the community. She was also on the Florida Council on Aging and the governing bodies of Gateway Girl Scout Council and the Community Planning Council of Jacksonville, Inc. She continued active membership in the Human Relations Council, Citizen's Committee for Better Education, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Democratic Party, Florida Education Association, and projects for the Clara White Mission and the new Eartha White Nursing Home.¹⁷¹ Civil rights lawyer Dietre Micks (who was elected to the Jacksonville City Council in 1986) noted that Sallye Mathis

¹⁷¹Sallye Mathis interview, 1975; Solomon interview; Schell interview; Yates interview; Holmes interview; Powell interview; Mathis, "Resume," 1972; JJ, May 18, 1967, p. 16; FTU, June 18, 1967; Florida Star, October 24, 1967; FTU, August 6, 1968, p. B-1; FTU, October 1, 1968, p. BB-9; Florida Star, February 27, 1971, p. 6; FTU, February 16, 1973; Sallye B. Mathis, "A Study Report: Morning Star School," to Community Planning Council, August 18, 1971, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files).

often reminded people in a group to keep their minds "on the issues--not on personalities; she was like a backbone to what we were trying to accomplish."¹⁷²

Sallye Mathis remained an active member of Central Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School. She was also part of an ecumenical prayer-social service group which helped elderly and handicapped people. She sent notes or tokens of appreciation to people when they had sickness or other problems. "I know she paid many a light bill for some poor, old soul," said reporter Rexford Drane. With Sallye Mathis, "being on the council was kind of like the icing on the cake--she did so much otherwise," said Willye Dennis, who was her close friend and prayer partner.¹⁷³

Mary Singleton was likewise active in a number of civic groups. She was on the governing bodies of Catholic Charities (secretary, 1972-1973), the U.S.O. Council, National Council of Christians and Jews, American Cancer Society, Planned Parenthood, United Fund, Suicide Prevention Center, Bishop Kenney High School, Mental Health Association, American Business College and the Northside Record, a newspaper. She was also a member of the Jacksonville Urban League, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, Northside Businessmen's Club, Jacksonville Zoological Society, North

¹⁷²Micks interview.

¹⁷³Sallye Mathis interview; Smalls interview; Interview with Sylvia Thibault, September 9, 1985; Telephone interview with Rexford Drane, June 6, 1985; Dennis interview.

Florida University Advisory Council, and St. Pius Catholic Church.¹⁷⁴ She joined Zeta Phi Beta sorority in 1970, was an active member, and represented the group in national and state workshops.¹⁷⁵ "In those days it became fashionable to have a black or a woman on committees," she commented later. "With me, they could kill two birds with one stone. I was the most overworked person in Jacksonville."¹⁷⁶

Mary Singleton continued to be active in the Democratic Party. In 1967, she was secretary of the new Democratic Club of Jacksonville, and she also became first vice-president of the Professional Women's Democratic Club of Duval County. In 1968 she was an alternate delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and a presidential elector for the fall elections. In 1972 she was one of three local Democrats appointed by Governor Reuben Askew to the Host Committee for the 1972 Democratic National Convention which was held in Miami Beach.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Singleton, "Resume", 1974; Telephone interview with William Tierny (Catholic Charities Bureau), April 8, 1985; Anderson interview; Thelma Jackson interview; FTU, February 2, 1968; FTU, October 1, 1968, p. BB-9; FTU, November 16, 1968; FTU-JJ, March 21, 1969, p. D-1; FTU, September 14, 1972, p. C-1; FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1; FTU, April 8, 1985.

¹⁷⁵Telephone interview with Evelyn B. Wells (Zeta Phi Beta Sorority), May 8, 1985; FTU, August 5, 1970.

¹⁷⁶FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1.

¹⁷⁷Singleton, "Keep Mary Singleton," 1972; Singleton, "Resume," 1974; JJ, March 29, 1968, p. 15; FTU, October 1, 1968, p. BB-9; JJ, November 4, 1968, p. 17; JJ, January 4, 1972;

Through their various activities and contacts, both women made a point of sharing information about the workings of government--and where and how to contact the various city services and other agencies so that they "can help themselves. . . . They don't have to sit and wait for me in order to get the services all the time," said Sallye Mathis. They also held "town meetings" for their districts at which constituents could express views and learn more about city government.¹⁷⁸ They both hosted weekly radio shows for hearing questions and giving information to the public. In 1971 Sallye Mathis voted for an appropriation of money to televise city council meetings so that the many people who could not get to the meetings could view them.¹⁷⁹

Sallye Mathis, especially, encouraged people to observe government meetings and to be aware of what was happening.¹⁸⁰ Willye Dennis reported that Sallye Mathis sometimes said she was sorry she was on the council because she had to restrain herself since she had only one vote.

Yet it gave her further insight into the political arena of Jacksonville. She taught us that there is a political system. They [the people on the

¹⁷⁸Sallye Mathis interview; Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Singleton, "Resume," 1974; Florida Star, October 24, 1967; FTU, January 18, 1969; FTU, February 8, 1969, p. B-1; FTU, March 10, 1969, p. B-1.

¹⁷⁹FTU, August 5, 1970; JJ, July 14, 1971; Sallye B. Mathis, "Sallye Mathis Reports," radio show scripts, December 18, 1972 and January 13, 1978, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files).

¹⁸⁰Genwright interview; Mills interview; Bennett interview.

council] seem the epitome of success, but actually they are human beings, with troubles and foibles, and they are part of the system. Sallye had to learn on the council to be flexible--to work together on some things, even though one might disagree on other things. She was concerned about the insecurity of some people who sit on the council. She was also concerned about the elitism on the council--most representing the middle-upper class--and the difficulty of getting things done for the little man.¹⁸¹

Gwendola Jones commented also:

It was from Sallye that I learned that politics controls all aspects of life--our very way of life. You've got to be political because politics determines whether you turn on your tap and get water or sludge. There's politics in everything--in your church, the school, even your home--you barter and you trade. You've got to learn the process and make it work for us.¹⁸²

Sallye Mathis never refused to speak to blacks or whites at schools, churches and other organizations, including those in rural areas, according to Ethel Powell, who often traveled with her to night meetings. The main thing she spoke about was "that we should go forward and not take a second seat. It was always a message of hope--always a forward look--very timely. She pushed blacks forward," said Mrs. Powell.¹⁸³

Both Mary Singleton and Sallye Mathis had a special interest in motivating young blacks to get a good education, to be responsible, and to work hard, noted David McNamara.

¹⁸¹Dennis interview.

¹⁸²Gwendola Jones, tape-recorded speech at Minority Women's Coalition program, Jacksonville, Fla., May 18, 1986.

¹⁸³Powell interview.

Betty Bullock said that she "got a good knowledge of government" while in high school because Councilwoman Mathis and a few other black leaders spoke at the school about participating in government. "'Read your papers, visit the council, look around you,' they told us." She also recalls being invited to meetings at Sallye Mathis' house at which the councilwoman consulted others to see how people felt before she made a decision.¹⁸⁴

With her interest in education, Mary Singleton became director of the Development Fund for Edward Waters College, 1971-1973. She was a part-time "adjunct professor, teaching "Local and State Government" at Edward Waters College in 1971 and also taught some substitute classes in "Problems in American Democracy" at Bishop Kenney High School. "She had a tremendous rapport with all the students," according to Dassie Anderson of Bishop Kenney High School.¹⁸⁵

Besides urging people to be informed, Councilwomen Mathis and Singleton also encouraged them to be involved in government--by voting and lobbying for things they needed.

The two legislators got people to come to hearings on such issues as problems with the streets, and encouraged people to write and visit legislators in Tallahassee to lobby for

¹⁸⁴MacNamara interview; Bullock interview; Warren Jones interview.

¹⁸⁵Telephone interview with Ms. Elmer Campbell (Edward Waters College), April 9, 1985; Anderson interview; FTU-JJ, October 10, 1971, FTU, October 14, 1971, p. D-8.

bills. Sallye Mathis often went with other League of Women Voters members to lobby at the state legislature and saw to it that other blacks, such as Ethel Powell, were included. She worked to get additional blacks appointed to government bodies.¹⁸⁶ "Sallye was very outgoing and she compelled you to do more--to participate," said her sorority sister Hettie Mills. "Sallye was very inspirational because she caused people to look at the better part of themselves."¹⁸⁷

Both councilwomen regretted that some blacks did not vote and participate as much as possible. "When you have been held down so long," said Sallye Mathis, "you get to the place that you feel sometimes, 'Well, what's the use?' . . . and it's not [the black's] fault," she said. Since blacks were left after the Civil War without land or other resources, "the white man has been ahead of the black man for so long it's just hard for him to catch up."¹⁸⁸

Council representatives Mathis and Singleton not only urged people to vote and lobby but also encouraged individuals to work in political campaigns and run for office themselves. When Councilwoman Nancie Crabb and later Florida Representative Corrine Brown began to campaign for public office, they went to Mary Singleton for advice which

¹⁸⁶Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Sallye Mathis interview; Pittman interview; Powell interview.

¹⁸⁷Mills interview.

¹⁸⁸Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Sallye Mathis interview.

they found helpful.¹⁸⁹ Mary Singleton told the North Side Business Men's Club that women

must have confidence in themselves and thwart their fears and at least try [to run for office]. I say, 'Try it, they will like it.' Women can bring to public life objectivity and positive thinking. Also, women are better managers than most men, they are more concerned with 'people problems,' they have keener interests in what happens to children, they make better listeners, and historically, women have been better able to see through men and their motives. . . . Today's woman is re-evaluating her traditional role and trying to preserve what is valid while seeking realistic means to express her personality.¹⁹⁰

Through the years, Sallye Mathis worked with a group of other black leaders in Jacksonville to get young people, especially blacks, to run for elective office. Numerous people interviewed for this study said that Sallye Mathis encouraged them personally to become involved in politics and was willing to discuss problems and issues with them.¹⁹¹

Sallye Mathis urged people to keep high standards in their political involvement and to maintain their spiritual commitment" so they would not be "torn apart" by the difficulties of political activity. In conversations and meetings, she enunciated her firm beliefs that being religious in political life meant trying hard to make

¹⁸⁹Crabb tape-recorded response; Corrine Brown interview; Pittman interview.

¹⁹⁰FTU, June 28, 1972, p. E-6.

¹⁹¹Interviews with Solomon Badger III, Corrine Brown, Willye Dennis, Harold Gibson, A. Warren Jones, Gwendola Jones, Gwendolyn Leaphart, Gene Miller, Gloria Pittman, Dietre Micks, Patricia Smalls, Eddie Mae Steward.

"right" decisions according to Christian principles about what was best for one's constituents and then having the courage and faith in divine help to fight for those positions in spite of opposition.¹⁹²

The many contributions of Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton to the Jacksonville community were appreciated and publicized as they were honored for outstanding service by numerous organizations. They were both cited in the 1972 edition of Personalities of the South.¹⁹³

¹⁹²Micks interview; Corrine Brown interview; Bullock interview.

¹⁹³Between 1967 and 1972, Sallye Mathis was honored by the Jacksonville branch of the N.A.A.C.P., Y.M.C.A., Gateway Chapter Links, Inc., Florida A. & M. University, Florida Memorial College, Florida Publishing Company (runner-up "Eve" award for Education), Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce, Jacksonville Urban League, Grand Park Civic Community Organization, Lakewood-San Jose Junior Women's Club, Southern Regional Council, (national) Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and local chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Sallye Mathis interview; Mathis, press release, 1967; Mathis, campaign flier, 1971; Mathis, "Resume," 1972; Sallye Mathis, "Resume: Sallye Brooks Mathis," Jacksonville, Fla., 1979; FTU, February 14, 1972, p. B-8; Personalities of the South, 5th ed. (Raleigh, N.C.: American Biographical Institute, 1972), p. 467.

Mary Singleton was honored by the Jacksonville Branch of the N.A.A.C.P., Fla.-Jax. Club, Florida A. & M. University (1967 and 1969), Florida Memorial College, Florida Education Association, Gateway Chapter, Links, Inc., Jacksonville Urban League, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, Eugene J. Butler Cancer Society, Jacksonville Recreation Department, West Duval Jaycees, Florida Publishing Company ("Eve" award for work on day care), Duval County Citizens Benefit Corporation, and local chapters of the National Organization for Women, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fla, and Zeta Amicae. In 1970 she was honored by votes of the City Hall news reporters as "Most Objective," along with Homer Humphries, and also as "Best Represents the Will of the People." Singleton, campaign flier, 1972;

Thus, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton served as role models for blacks--and women--in elective positions in Jacksonville city government. With their differing personalities and styles, they demonstrated to the entire community that inter-racial cooperation and male-female cooperation were possible at the leadership levels of government. They worked hard on setting up the new consolidated city-county government. They increased the consciousness of city officials of the needs of low-income citizens and others with special problems and their rights to a share of city expenditures. They were able to get programs and funds for numerous improvements, although not all they wished. When they felt it was necessary, they pressured the city of Jacksonville to be fair to blacks as a group and at times were able to mediate between government officials and the black community. Known as public servants who "really cared about people," they encouraged the participation of others in public affairs and themselves served on numerous volunteer groups. They were appreciated and honored by many people and organizations by 1972. Yet they still had much to give to Florida in the next decade.

Singleton, "Resume," 1974; FTU, March 7, 1969, p. A-8; JJ, July 7, 1970, p. 17; FTU, August 25, 1972; FTU, September 14, 1972, p. C-1; Personalities of the South, 5th ed. (1972), pp. 663.

CHAPTER VIII
EPILOGUE: AFTER 1972

Sallye Mathis

City Council Representative

After 1972, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton continued their public service. Easily re-elected to her position on the Jacksonville City Council until her death in 1982, Sally Mathis continued her efforts on behalf of low-income people generally and at times the specific interests of black people. She protested repeatedly against hikes in utility fees and urged lower electric rates for elderly persons-- with little visible success beyond keeping the issues alive. In 1980 she was still reminding the council that water is a necessity.¹ However she was successful in getting the city council to pass resolutions supporting bus fare reductions in 1972 and 1973 which resulted in a reduction of the nonrush hour bus fare for people over age sixty-five to ten

¹Warren Jones interview; Telephone interview with James Fortuna, July 16, 1987; FTU, January 5, 1973; FTU, July 20, 1973; FTU, September 25, 1975; B-1; FTU, February 3, 1981, p. B-1; FTU, February 4, 1981, p. B-1; FTU, February 18, 1981, p. B-2; FTU, March 27, 1981, pp. A-1, 2.

cents. This was "a brainchild of hers," said Raiford Brown. She introduced similar bills in later years.²

Sallye Mathis continued her efforts to get her district's share of capital improvements and was successful in some years when funds were available for projects around the county. In 1974 the long-needed, major sewer work was begun for Myrtle Avenue between Eighth and Nineteenth Streets. She had to fight many years for certain projects, and some never did pass. In 1980, when each district was to receive about a million dollars from a local bond issue and taxes, she laid out the priorities for her district (paving and drainage for Sherrington Street and other locations, safety measures, and improvements for the Emmet Reed Center and nine parks) which were carried out after her death.³

Working to improve city regulations, Mathis worked on various clean-up efforts in the city. While she was chairperson of the Public Health and Welfare Committee, 1973-1976, her bill to prohibit burial in a wooden box was

²Raiford Brown interview; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 72-1069-336, Resolution 73-811-205, Resolution 79-270, Ordinance 79-534; FTU-JJ, March 5, 1972, p. D-1; FTU, July 17, 1973, p. C-8; FTU, August 15, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, September 13, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, July 16, 1980, p. B-1.

³Thibault interview; Warren Jones interview; Bill Haw to Sallye Mathis, April 10, 1974, Jacksonville, Fla.; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 78-1049, Ordinance 78-1050, Resolution 80-912-299 (Capital Outlay Program); Jacksonville City Council, File 21-249 (Jacksonville, Fla., 1980), pp. 15-16, re. District 11; FTU, April 14, 1974, p. B-5; FTU, July 30, 1980; JJ, March 17, 1981, p. 3; FTU, March 27, 1981, p. B-1; JJ, February 28, 1983, p. 3A.

passed. She worked with Frank Hampton, who was on the Jacksonville City Council from 1972 to 1975, on legislation to force a clean-up and maintenance of cemeteries and other parts of the city. In 1976 she and councilman Joe Carlucci introduced another ordinance against littering in cemeteries and other places.⁴ Remembering a time she did not have change for a pay toilet during a bus trip to her college in South Carolina, she was successful in the passage of her ordinance to ban the use of pay toilets in public places.⁵

Council member Mathis successfully urged the city council to deny permits for allowing beer at the Beaches' park and for a new bar on Canal Street. In 1976 she opposed proposed revisions of the local housing code after they had been watered down. In 1981 she criticized some owners of adult congregate living facilities in Duval County, as well as state supervision of such homes.⁶ Consistent with her concern for all people, Mathis urged other council members

⁴Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 73-1258-567, Ordinance 73-718 as amended by the City Council, Ordinance 76-251, FTU, June 4, 1973, p. C-8; FTU, June 21, 1973, p. C-8; FTU, July 6, 1973, p. B-7; FTU, July 24, 1973; FTU, September 20, 1973, p. D-4; FTU, October 5, 1973; FTU, October 18, 1973; Bold View 7 (January 1975): 11 (1973-1974 Annual Report).

⁵Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 74-71, as amended and passed; FTU, February 27, 1974, p. B-1.

⁶FTU, August 7, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, August 22, 1974, p. B-6; FTU, December 5, 1974, p. B-1; FTU, January 9, 1975, p. B-1; Bowers interview; JJ, September 9, 1976; FTU, March 13, 1981.

to be more polite to private citizens who appeared before them--to treat them "as they would like to be treated."⁷

Between 1972 and 1982, Councilwoman Mathis also pressed for high standards and city council support for various government-supported programs, such as city-owned child day care, new nursing home facilities, a new canning kitchen, Gateway Hope Center for the blind, Sunny Acres program for handicapped children, the Legal Aid Association, and other nutrition and health care programs.⁸ As city council representative to the Northeast Florida District Mental Health Board and also a member of the Northeast Florida Advisory Committee On Alcohol, she was concerned about the location, programs and funding of drug-alcohol detoxification and rehabilitation centers.⁹ When the city council passed Sallye Mathis' bill to urge the establishment of state operated residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children, Mary Singleton introduced similar legislation at the state level, but it received only limited

⁷JJ July 8, 1975, p. 5.

⁸Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 73-1410, Ordinance 74-1339, Resolution 74-1371, Ordinance 78-1352; FTU, June 27, 1973, p. B-5; FTU, August 9, 1973; FTU, August 22, 1973; FTU, June 20, 1974, p. C-20; FTU, January 9, 1976, p. B-15; JJ, May 11, 1976.

⁹Mathis, "Resume," 1979; Sallye Mathis interview; Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, July 18, 1972, Jacksonville, Fla., p. 6; FTU, August 7, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, August 22, 1974, p. B-6; FTU, December 5, 1974, p. B-1; FTU, January 9, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, November 20, 1975; FTU, June 17, 1976, p. B-8; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 75-657-183.

support there. With councilwomen Nancie Crabb and Sylvia Webb (later Thibault), Sallye Mathis co-sponsored a 1981 bill endorsing the city's efforts to increase the number and benefits of part-time jobs available to women and disadvantaged persons.¹⁰

Councilwoman Mathis continued her personal interest in University Hospital, and encouraged the other members of the Public Health and Welfare Committee to do so also. "Always concerned with the poor, she would go in cognito" to see how clients were treated at the hospital, said councilman Warren Jones. In 1975 she commented:

I'm chairman of the Public Health and Welfare Committee, so anything that comes through the Council that's for the welfare of the people, I can get right on that. I'm able to push it very far, and many of our citizens have been benefited by issues that have come through our committee.¹¹

Sallye Mathis continued her efforts to help elderly people. A member of the Northeast Florida Area Agency on Aging, she helped develop a city Commission on Aging, which was established in 1974. James Fortuna, who was appointed administrative assistant for adult services by Mayor Hans Tanzler in 1973 and by Mayor Jake Godbold in 1975, agreed

¹⁰Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 73-158-13, Resolution 81-587-223; Sallye Mathis, "Why Treatment for Severely Emotionally Disturbed Children" (two-page rationale), Jacksonville, Fla., 1973 (in Solomon files); JJ, March 14, 1973, p. 25; FTU-JJ, December 5, 1976, p. I-1; Jacksonville City Council, Resolution 81-587-223.

¹¹Warren Jones interview; Sallye Mathis interview. See also Mathis, "Resume," 1972; FTU, June 5, 1980; FTU, July 11, 1980, p. A-1.

that Sallye Mathis was "the most emotionally committed . . . [and] vocal person on the council for the elderly. She was the one I could go to to get council support for buildings and programs for the elderly," Fortuna said, including social services for elderly people in their homes to keep them out of nursing homes.¹²

Council member Mathis continued to work with the Jacksonville Housing and Urban Development programs, especially in the Hogan's Creek area, which used mostly federal revenue-sharing (Community Development) funds starting in 1974, and mostly local money after 1978. A neighborhood center for senior citizens, apartment complexes, and a new health building were constructed. In 1975 Mathis persuaded the city council to authorize the building of a group of single family homes on First Street in the Hogan's Creek III area. She continually opposed the overcrowding in some of the older housing projects, said James Genwright, and saw some of the buildings removed to alleviate that problem.¹³

As plans were being made to level the whole neighborhood in the Hogan's Creek Phase IV area south of the Eighth Street hospital complex, Councilwoman Mathis was able to help the mostly black homeowners in the area who had

¹²Telephone interview with James Fortuna, July 16, 1987; Bold View 7 (January 1975): 17.

¹³Bowers interview; Bold View 8 (January 1976): 10-11; FTU, April 9, 1975, p. B-1; Genwright interview.

organized to try to prevent the program from leveling the whole neighborhood. The homeowners, some of whom had lived in these homes for many years, felt they would not be paid enough for their property to be able to buy comparable homes elsewhere.¹⁴ In 1981 Mrs. Mathis explained that she knew older people who had lost "their will to live--when they were uprooted by other programs aimed at reviving the inner city." Olivia Forest, an officer in the Neighborhood Advisory Council, said that Sallye Mathis led in urging the city council to remove only the unusable buildings removed and to get funds to remodel around fifty of the basically sound homes and some neighborhood institutions.¹⁵ It was regarded "a personal victory" when the council finally rejected the proposed building of a hospital-related motel in the area of these homes in 1980.¹⁶

Council member Mathis also aided Rev. H. T. Rhim and the small, black St. Joseph's Missionary Baptist Church which was scheduled to be removed from the downtown redevelopment area near Florida Junior College. She gave the church members advice and encouragement and helped them

¹⁴Forest interview; Schell interview; Bowers interview; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 80-697; Community Development UPDATE (Jacksonville, Fla.: City of Jacksonville, Department of Housing and Urban Development), 7 (September 1982): 2; FTU, February 5, 1975, p. D-20; FTU, February 6, 1975, p. D-8; JJ, April 9, 1975, p. 17; FTU, January 25, 1980, p. B-7; FTU, March 6, 1980, p. B-2.

¹⁵JJ, February 2, 1981, p. 2; Forest interview.

¹⁶FTU, March 6, 1980, p. B-2.

lobby for eight years with government officials. In November 1981, City Council president Joe Forshee pushed through the council a resolution which enabled the church to buy land near their old church building on which they built a new structure. They were even able to renovate the old building for a child care center.¹⁷

Sallye Mathis was also instrumental in extending the plans for the Downtown People Mover project in the Springfield and Eighth Street hospital areas. As a member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee formed by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority in 1978, she spoke several times to the committee to urge the routes most helpful to people in the community and not just to business needs.¹⁸

Being a member of the city council was not easy. Several council members noted how Sallye Mathis persevered in funding efforts against difficulties. Council member Sylvia Thibault thought that Sallye Mathis went through "a great deal of frustration" in this effort, as all the council members did, but also "maybe felt the frustration of being female. Maybe it [was] not having the businessmen listen to her" and having "to go over and over" the needs

¹⁷Interview with Rev. H. T. Rhim (pastor of St. Joseph's Missionary Baptist Church), October 8, 1985; Telephone interview with Joe Forshee, May 13, 1988; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 79-694-288, Resolution 81-816-303.

¹⁸Carley interview; Telephone interview with Steve Arrington (Manager, of Highway and Automated Skyway Express, Jacksonville Transportation Authority), June 24, 1987; Mathis, "Resume," 1979 (Jacksonville, Fla.).

before she could get funding for even major projects. Mrs. Thibault did think, however, that the councilmen "had a great deal of respect and love" for Mrs. Mathis. Nancie Crabb thought that Sallye Mathis

showed that an older black woman who had been a school teacher and was a very proper lady could get into politics and survive. She got a lot of projects for her district just by sheer perseverance. She did not let things go.¹⁹

Councilman Warren Jones noted that Sallye Mathis "would come right out and look at problems" in the neighborhoods, and she was more available to the public than some council members. Besides her work on specific projects on the council and in the community, Jones felt that her biggest contribution in all her work on the council was her continual "presence--based on her dedication to improve the lot of the poor." Harold Gibson, a city councilman from 1979 to 1983, said that Sallye Mathis was like his "mentor. If she believed in something, she never wavered. . . [She was] kind of the conscience of the council."²⁰

In addition to her efforts on behalf of low-income people generally, Sallye Mathis continued to speak out for the rights of black people during her last ten years on the Jacksonville City Council. Conscious of the need for awareness of black history, she was able to bring public honor to several local blacks. In 1974 she persuaded the

¹⁹Thibault interview; Crabb tape recorded response.

²⁰Warren Jones interview; Gibson interview.

city council to name the new fire station on Division Street for Henry J. Bradley, whose death as a volunteer fireman in the Jacksonville fire of 1885 led to the creation of the first professional municipal fire department in Jacksonville. In 1979 the council approved her bill to name the park at Eighth Street and Myrtle Avenue after James P. Small, a principal, coach and teacher at Stanton High School for thirty-three years. In 1980, the city council passed her resolution commemorating the late Councilman George Eugene Ross for "his loyal and unselfish service" on the Jacksonville City Council from 1901 to 1907. She also obtained a more dignified picture of Ross, the last black city councilman until 1967, to replace the one on the wall outside the city council chambers.²¹

As a member of the city council, Sallye Mathis was able to explain black perspectives to the other members on the council. In 1973 several blacks sued the city in 1973 to prevent J. B. Stoner of the National States Rights Party from renting the civic auditorium for a whites-only meeting. Councilwoman Mathis was able to explain black concerns about

²¹Powell interview; Smalls interview; Solomon interview; Warren Jones interview; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 74-100-29, Resolution 79-1299-430, Resolution 80-768-232; FTU-JJ, March 11, 1973, p. D-1; FTU, January 22, 1974; Florida Star, February 21, 1974; FTU, July 22, 1980; FTU, August 14, 1980, p. B-6.

allowing a segregated event by a group advocating segregation in a city building.²²

Sallye Mathis also supported Councilman Frank Hampton's bills proposing that the city buy back Brentwood Golf Course which had been sold in 1960 after Hampton's suit to desegregate it. She argued for the purchase to "make amends to blacks who prior to 1960 paid taxes but could not use it."²³ The city council voted to buy the golf course in 1975, but Mayor Hans Tanzler vetoed the purchase, largely because of its cost, he said. The council decided not to override his veto.²⁴ Mathis thought that the real reason for not wanting the site was that it was in a low-income neighborhood. In 1977 some of the land was obtained by the city to use for the new A. Philip Randolph Northside Skills Center, a swimming pool, and other community programs.²⁵

Sallye Mathis also had input into various school desegregation issues as a member of the N.A.A.C.P. Board of Directors, the N.A.A.C.P. Education Committee and the city council. Dietre Micks, who was an N.A.A.C.P. attorney for

²²Micks interview; FTU, June 22, 1973, p. B-7; FTU, June 28, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, July 12, 1973, p. B-10; FTU, July 21, 1973, p. B-3.

²³FTU, June 11, 1975. See also FTU, December 28, 1972, p. B-1.

²⁴FTU-JJ, November 24, 1974, p. B-1. See also FTU, February 19, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, March 4, 1975; FTU, June 23, 1975, pp. B-1, 7; FTU, November 26, 1976, p. B-1; Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, June 24, 1975.

²⁵Sallye Mathis interview; FTU, February 25, 1977, p. B-1.

the school desegregation case in Duval County, said that Sallye Mathis gave the N.A.A.C.P Education Committee great insight into desegregation and how it should be handled. In 1973, during the first year of massive bussing for school integration in Duval County, Councilwoman Mathis visited several local schools. She wrote to school superintendent Cecil Hardesty that on these visits she had found white and black students and teachers working together well, with changed attitudes on the part of white students, who wanted to "learn more about black people." She attributed these positive attitudes to good planning and "spirit" by school principals or their assigned guidance counselors.²⁶ When the new Community Education Council turned out to have only white members in 1975, Councilwoman Mathis tried unsuccessfully to amend the ordinance to require that at least three black persons be members of the Community Education Council.²⁷

In 1978 Sallye Mathis wrote a "Letter to the Editor" of the Florida Times-Union to disagree with articles printed that were very negative about the largely black "New Stanton" Vocational High School.²⁸ She also worked with

²⁶Micks interview; FTU, April 16, 1975, p. B-5.

²⁷Micks interview; Steward interview; Sallye Mathis to Dr. Cecil Hardesty, March 16, 1973, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, March 3, 1975; FTU, April 16, 1975, p. B-5.

²⁸FTU, February 27, 1978, p. A-1; FTU, February 28, 1978, p. A-1; FTU, March 3, 1978, p. A-14; Florida Star, April 10, 1978.

Wendell Holmes on a committee to make "New Stanton" school into a magnet, college-preparatory school.²⁹

In 1980, a fair housing bill was introduced at the request of Mayor Jake Godbold and recommended by the council's Rules Committee of which Councilman Rodney Hurst was chairman and Sallye Mathis a member. The ordinance was passed by the Jacksonville City Council in July 1980.³⁰

Council member Mathis continued also as a critic of policies of the Sheriff's Department and of conditions at the county prison farm and jail. In 1973 she supported Councilman Frank Hampton's bill to enlarge the sheriff's Disciplinary Hearing Board with several members from the council and the public, since, she said, "the people have no one to turn to" when they have problems with the police.³¹ In April she delayed reorganization of the Sheriff's Department when the sheriff's new plan did not include blacks in the proposed promotions to administrative positions. However, her ordinance calling for blacks to be represented in the police force on a percentage as equal as possible to the percentage of blacks in the county did not

²⁹Holmes interview; Solomon interview; Davis interview; FTU, June 19, 1980, p. B-1; FTU, July 23, 1980, p. B-1; FTU, June 19, 1981, p. B-1; FTU, June 26, 1981, p. B-1.

³⁰Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 80-718-350; Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of Meeting, July 22, 1980; FTU, July 23, 1980, p. B-1.

³¹FTU, March 28, 1973.

pass.³² In 1981 she was still working on the same issues with an ordinance by her and Councilman Warren Jones (which did not pass) to establish an independent Police Conduct Review Board to hear and mediate citizen complaints against members of the Sheriff's Department.³³

As head of the city council's Public Health and Welfare Committee, Sallye Mathis continued her efforts to improve the county jail and prison farm. She and David Harrell both complained of rats and over-crowding at the prison farm when they toured the facility in February 1973. When a prison farm inmate died after receiving inadequate medical care in December 1973, Mathis helped local N.A.A.C.P. president Eddie Mae Steward and others gain entrance to the prison and report on conditions. She worked with attorney Deitre Micks on a suit by inmates to protest the conditions at the prison farm, and her committee continually tried to improve health standards at the prison farm and the county jail.³⁴ In January 1975 Judge Charles R. Scott ordered extensive overhaul of jail operations, less crowding, improved food,

³²Florida Star, April 7, 1973; JJ, April 19, 1973, p. 17; FTU, April 20, 1973, p. D-15.

³³Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 81-627; FTU, May 23, 1982, pp. B-1, 2; FTU, May 23, 1982, pp. B-1, 2; FTU, May 25, 1982, p. B-1; FTU, May 26, 1982, p. B-1.

³⁴Micks interview; Steward interview; Florida Star, February 10, 1973; JJ, February 8, 1973, p. 9; FTU, February 22, 1973; JJ, February 22, 1973, p. 8; FTU, December 15, 1973; FTU, December 21, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, January 17, 1974, p. B-1; FTU, May 9, 1974, p. B-1; FTU, June 20, 1974, p. C-20.

sanitation and medical care, and separation of juveniles and those awaiting trial from convicted adult prisoners.

Conditions soon showed some improvement.³⁵

Council member Mathis also spoke out occasionally in defense of individual black persons. In 1976 she opposed what she felt was an unequal application of conduct standards for black vs. white city officials. On July 13, 1976, Councilman Earl Johnson was elected the first black president of the Jacksonville City Council. However, he was soon urged to resign because of a charge of disorderly conduct while intoxicated on August 13. He went to a rehabilitation center in Georgia for treatment. On August 24, when Sallye Mathis thought the council was about to accept Johnson's resignation as council president without adequate consideration, she, Randy Amos and David Harrell broke the quorum by leaving the meeting to delay a vote and hid in a broom closet in City Hall while others searched for them. The next day she apologized to temporary council president

³⁵Bold View 8 (January 1976): 5; Bold View 9 (February 1977): 16; FTU, FTU, January 29, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, February 5, 1975; FTU, February 20, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, March 26, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, July 18, 1975, p. A-1; FTU, February 26, 1976, p. D-11; FTU, June 5, 1976, p. D-11; FTU, June 9, 1976, p. B-1; FTU, June 17, 1976; FTU, July 25, 1976, p. C-1; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 75-311-64 (by Public Health and Welfare Committee). See also Jacksonville City Council: Ordinances 75-367-104, 75-368-105, 75-385-135, 75-375-137, 75-379-141, 75-418-142, 75-437-169, 75-638-250, 75-626-290, 75-34-382.

Lynwood Arnold and said that walking out was not the way to handle the problem.³⁶

With considerable support from the black community, Sallye Mathis urged the council not to accept Johnson's resignation. "He who is without sin, you go out and cast the first stone," she said; "I know of some cases where you have done the same thing and your buddies smoothed it over. You buddies didn't let it get in the newspaper and on T V." Other council members insisted that their desires to remove Johnson had no racial connotations.³⁷ The decision was postponed for thirty days and, after twenty-eight days of rehabilitation, Johnson returned to the council. However, on September 28 the council suspended Johnson as council president pending an impeachment-like trial for misconduct. His resignation as president was accepted on October 14 against the opposition of Mathis and several other council members. With encouragement from many, Johnson ran again

³⁶Janet Johnson interview; Arnold interview; Bullock interview; FTU, July 13, 1976, p. A-1; FTU, August 25, 1976, p. A-1.

³⁷Sallye B. Mathis, tape-recorded speech at Jacksonville City Council meeting, August 24, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. (in Solomon files); FTU, August 25, 1976, p. A-1; JJ, August 26, 1976, p. A-1; FTU, August 26, 1976, pp. A-1, 14; FTU-JJ, August 29, 1976, p. B-1.

for his position as an at-large councilman in 1979 and was easily re-elected.³⁸

In 1980, Sallye Mathis was irate with the city council for not appointing Cheryl Peeples as the new assistant council secretary. Ms. Peeples, a young, black secretary of records, had started work at the council in 1968, and had been recommended for the new job by her recently retired predecessor and by the council secretary, Rexford Drane. When it looked as if council president David Harrell was not going to appoint Ms. Peeples, council members Mathis and Harold Gibson said the reason was racism. "I think it is a slap in the face to us as black people," Sallye Mathis said. "How long will black people have to endure this situation?"³⁹ Councilman Warren Jones said: "It was probably the maddest I've seen her." Cheryl Peeples was soon hired for the job of assistant council secretary.⁴⁰ As the city council elections of 1975 approached, Sallye Mathis said she

³⁸Florida Star, September 18-24, 1976; FTU, September 28, 1976, p. B-1; FTU, September 29, 1976, p. A-1; FTU, October 15, 1976, p. A-1; FTU-JJ, December 5, 1976, p. I-1; Jacksonville City Council: Ordinance 76-984-395, Ordinance 76-985-412; Resolution 76-991-240; Jacksonville City Council, Minutes of meeting, September 28, 1976; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

³⁹FTU, December 24, 1980, p. A-1; Interview with Rexford Drane, June 6, 198 ; Bold View 1 (June 1969): 3; FTU, December 24, 1980, p. A-1.

⁴⁰FTU, January 7, 1981, p. B-1; Warren Jones interview; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 87-1265-397. In 1987 Cheryl (Peeples) Kidd was appointed council secretary by the Jacksonville City Council.

was "tired of campaigning, but said that if God were pleased with her work he would not give her an opponent. She had no opposition and thus continued in her position easily." She was also re-elected without opposition in 1979.⁴¹

When asked in 1975 whether winning and holding office had been worth the effort, she replied: "It surely has . . . been worth the effort to me, because I feel that I have really been able to help so many people who really had problems . . . that nobody paid attention [to] through the years."⁴²

Between 1973 and 1982, Sallye Mathis also participated in the League of Cities Community Affairs Commission, the Governor's Library Conferences, the state Organization of Black Elected Officials, and the governing bodies of the Methodist Hospital Foundation, the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, and the Community Planning Council. She served on the Trustee Board and at times as treasurer at Central Baptist Church, but in 1980 transferred her membership to Bethel Baptist Institutional Church which her husband had attended.⁴³

⁴¹FTU, December 5, 1976; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

⁴²Sallye Mathis interview.

⁴³Sallye Mathis interview; Mathis, "Resume," 1972; Mathis, "Resume," 1979; McKissick interview; FTU-JJ, March 11, 1973, p. D-1; Community Planning Council, Inc., Board of Directors, Minutes of Meetings, 1972-1974, Jacksonville, Fla.

Sallye Mathis continued to urge others--especially blacks and/or women--to participate in public affairs. In 1977 she was one of the Florida delegates to the National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas, November 18-21, 1977, which was part of the United States' observance of International Women's Year.⁴⁴ Inspired by the conference's stress on encouraging greater participation of women in policy-making positions, she soon founded the Minority Women's Coalition in Jacksonville. Her dream was to have a local coalition of women's organizations "to foster the development of women educationally, politically, spiritually and professionally, [and] to encourage minority women to become more actively involved in the life of their community," especially in the various aspects of the political arena.⁴⁵ Close to two hundred women attended the first big meeting on January 8, 1978, at Edward Waters College, where the main speaker was State Representative Gwen Sawyer Cherry of Miami who had been in charge of the Florida Coordinating Committee for International Women's Year. Within ten months, with Sallye Mathis as president, the Minority Women's Coalition sponsored or co-sponsored six workshops on political awareness, employment and other topics and arranged trips to Tallahassee for the women to observe and express their views

⁴⁴Janet Johnson interview; FTU-JJ, November 13, 1977, p. G-1.

⁴⁵Minority Women's Coalition, "Constitution, Minority Women's Coalition," Jacksonville, Fla., 1978.

to legislators. After her death in 1982, the coalition established a "Sallye B. Mathis scholarship" to be awarded annually to a minority woman.⁴⁶

In 1980 Sallye Mathis helped start the Black Leadership Council in Jacksonville. She was one of the three black females in this new group of about twenty black leaders, which spoke out on various issues.⁴⁷

Additional honors were given Sallye Mathis after 1972. In 1976, so many people wanted to attend an appreciation banquet in honor of Sallye Mathis, sponsored by Operation R.E.S.P.E.C.T. that the banquet was moved to larger facilities, at the Robert Meyers Hotel.⁴⁸ She was honored by various additional groups and cited in various publications.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Corrine Brown interview; Pittman interview; Dennis interview; Powell interview; Sallye B. Mathis, "Sallye Mathis Reports," January 13, 1978, Jacksonville, Fla.; Minority Women's Coalition, Minutes of Meetings, Correspondence, Programs, Jacksonville, Fla., 1978-1985.

⁴⁷Holmes interview; Dennis interview; Leaphart interview; Black Leadership Council, Minutes of Meeting, March 4, 1980, Jacksonville, Florida (in Solomon files).

⁴⁸FTU-JJ, December 5, 1976, p. I-1.

⁴⁹Sallye Mathis was honored by the Jacksonville Opportunities Industrialization Center, Greater Jacksonville Economic Opportunities (G.J.E.O.), Mental Health Board--District 4, Methodist Hospital, Jacksonville Urban League, Tuskegee Institute, Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce, International Longshoremen Association-Local 1408, Grand Park Community Organization, Florida Junior College Community Awareness Award, Northeast Florida Area of the National Society to Prevent Blindness, Rising Sun Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star, Florida Times-Union ("Eve" award for Employment), Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, and Kappa Alpha Psi

Last Year

After twenty years of good health, Sallye Mathis became ill in August 1981. She underwent surgery for removal of a cancerous tumor from her spine in February 1982 at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She continued therapy at the Cathedral Rehabilitation Center in Jacksonville--hoping to regain the use of her legs. When she attended the March 30 city council meeting in a wheelchair she received a standing ovation. During her illness, she tried to keep up with community issues and talked with city officials and other friends about the projects she had listed as priorities for her district. She paid the expenses for Willye Dennis to attend the Black Democratic Caucus meeting in Tampa to get information to help Jacksonville.⁵⁰

Fraternity. Mathis, "Resume," 1979; FTU, February 20, 1973, p. B-14; FTU, September 1972, Florida Star, November 2, 1974, p. 4; FTU, May 6, 1976; JJ, November 10, 1981, p. 8-A; FTU, April 29, 1982, p. B-2.

Sallye Mathis was cited in The Afro-American Encyclopedia, 10 vols. (North Miami, Fla.: Educational Book Publishing, 1974), 6:1607; Delta (Washington, D.C.: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority), Fall 1978, p. 13; Mary Mace Spradling, ed., In Black and White--A Guide to Magazine Articles, Newspaper Articles, and Books Concerning More Than Fifteen Thousand Black Individuals and Groups, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1980), 2:656; Who's Who Among Black Americans, 1st ed. (1976), p. 573; 2nd ed. (1978), p. 589; 3rd ed. (1981), p. 523 (Northbrook, Ill.: Who's Who Among Black Americans); Who's Who of American Women, 1974-1975, 8th ed., p. 616.

⁵⁰Warren Jones interview; Genwright interview; Andrew Robinson interview; Dennis interview; JJ, March 31, 1982, p. 4A; JJ, April 30, 1982, p. 7B; JJ, June 2, 1982, p. 3A.

Sallye Mathis shared some of her conclusions about men and women in government when she said that she hoped to find a good black woman to replace her on the council. She said she felt that female public officials were more sensitive than men to the needs of children and the elderly who are society's most precious resources. "If I don't find a qualified woman that is willing to run for my seat, I will run again myself," she said. "My job as councilwoman is not a hard one, but one that requires first the characteristic of sensitivity."⁵¹

Sallye Mathis hoped to get back to her council duties, but she suffered a relapse and died on July 25, 1982, at the age of seventy. There was a large funeral for her at Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. The Jacksonville City Council honored her by designating November 30, 1982, as "Sallye Brooks Mathis Day."⁵²

Mary Singleton

State Legislator

In 1972 Mary Singleton ran for the Florida House of Representatives in District Sixteen. Frank Hampton in 1968 and Arnett Girardeau in 1970 had run for state legislative seats from Duval County mainly to prove that a black could not win an at-large election in a county where blacks were

⁵¹JJ, April 30, 1982, p. 7B. See also Florida Star, May 8, 1982.

⁵²FTU, July 26, 1982, pp. 1, 2; FTU, July 27, 1982, p. A-3; FTU, July 31, 1982, p. A-3; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 82-710-364.

only 21 percent of the electorate. Girardeau did receive enough votes to compete in the second primary in 1970. After Florida blacks had repeatedly requested single-member districts for state legislative seats, the Florida legislature finally compromised in 1972 and arranged for Duval County delegates to the Florida House of Representatives to be voted on by several blocks of voters. Since most of the northern half of the county would vote together for five representatives, a black candidate had a better chance of winning in this block of Districts Sixteen to Twenty which included most of the blacks in the county and was 35 to 39 percent black.⁵³

Mary Singleton was the first black to run from Jacksonville after these changes. State Representative Bruce Smathers (from Jacksonville) reminded her that the state legislative job would be less demanding on her health than her city council job where she was "at the beck and call of constituents" twenty-four hours a day. "I was tired of city council," Mary Singleton said later. "I figured that people like me can't quit, because I know the people had good representation--when they had me."⁵⁴

⁵³Single-member districts for the Florida House of Representatives and Senate were not legislated until 1982. Duval County Supervisor of Elections; Hampton interview; Girardeau interview; Interview with Eric Smith (Duval County member of the Florida House of Representatives, 1972-1976), September 24, 1987; FTU, December 24, 1970, p. B-3; FTU, January 28, 1972.

⁵⁴Telephone interview with Bruce Smathers (from Tallahassee, Fla.), June 7, 1985; Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

Mary Singleton won the election easily with 23,410 votes, 67.7 percent of the total vote, in the September 12 first primary. Her two white opponents, Warren H. Folks, a former barber who was still picketing public buildings "as an advocate of segregation," and Wesley F. Leake, a boatyard owner, got fewer than six thousand votes each. In the General Election she was the only Democratic legislative candidate who did not have a Republican opponent. Frank Hampton was elected to her former District Eight seat on the Jacksonville City Council.⁵⁵

In addition to a heavy black vote, Mary Singleton clearly had considerable white support in 1972, as she polled the largest number of votes in the House of Representative races in Duval County that year. There were those who thought she would have won the election even with the previous at-large, county-wide vote, because of her popularity in the white community. Eric Smith, who was also elected to the Florida House of Representatives from Jacksonville in 1972, commented that Mary Singleton "had common sense, gave straight answers, [and] was honest and credible." Don Trednick noted that

she had a charisma and an outlook on life [that appealed to people]. You wouldn't say she was black or white or any color. She was a broad citizen, and the white people were really for her. She made really fine decisions. She could have

⁵⁵Duval County Supervisor of Elections; St. Petersburg (Florida) Times, September 14, 1972, p. 8-B; FTU, January 14, 1973, p. B-1.

stayed in the legislature as long as she wanted to.⁵⁶

Mary Singleton was the third black to be elected to the Florida House of Representatives in the twentieth century-- joining Joe Kershaw, elected from Miami in 1968, and Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry, elected from Miami in 1970. She was the first black and the first woman elected to the state legislature from North Florida in the twentieth century. She joined five other women in the Florida House of Representatives and Lori Wilson, a member of the Florida Senate.⁵⁷

As a state representative, Mary Singleton was more than just a symbolic, first black representative from North Florida, who was able to relate congenially with other legislators. Florida Representative Tommy Hazouri said that she

was a very active and productive legislator, and a good leader. She introduced significant pieces of legislation, lobbied for these and other measures, and got a number of them passed. She was not concerned with whether a bill passed with her name on it or someone else's but merely that it got passed.⁵⁸

The bills Representative Singleton introduced were mainly in the areas of education, criminal justice, family

⁵⁶Eric Smith interview; Trednick interview; St. Petersburg Times, September 14, 1972, p. 8-B; JJ, September 13, 1972.

⁵⁷JJ, November 17, 1974, p. D-2.

⁵⁸Interview with Tommy Hazouri (who became mayor of Jacksonville in 1987), September 4, 1985.

and health issues, economic fairness, and elections. Former state legislator Lewis Brantley said that Mary Singleton felt strongly that all people should have an equal chance at success in life and that the basis of that success was education, which was "inseparable" from economic development. She had allies among a number of the other Duval County state legislators who were young, also new, and considered themselves "progressive," said Hazouri. She consciously strove to introduce legislation that was good for all people regardless of race, and was praised by a number of fellow legislators for doing so.⁵⁹

In 1973 and 1974 Mary Singleton was a member of the Education, Health and Rehabilitative Services, and Natural Resources committees of the Florida House of Representatives. After being re-elected in 1974 without opposition, in 1975 and 1976 she was vice chairperson of the House Education Committee and a member of the Criminal Justice Committee and the Select Committee on Human Rights.⁶⁰

A member of the House Education Committee for four years, Mary Singleton had her biggest impact in the area of education. In 1973 her bill was passed allowing children to enter public school at an earlier age than previously allowed--if the child would attain age six during the year,

⁵⁹Brantley interview; Hazouri interview.

⁶⁰Allen Morris (Clerk of the Florida House of Representatives) to author, June 21, 1985, Tallahassee, Fla.

had attended kindergarten and could pass a state-approved readiness test. When she found later that many counties did not offer public kindergartens, the new policy seemed discriminatory in favor of those who could afford private kindergartens.⁶¹

In 1974 she introduced a bill to lower the age for possible admission to public kindergarten and worked to abolish the requirement of kindergarten attendance for early admission to first grade--an idea which was incorporated into other legislation. She was very influential in the passage of the "Early Childhood Education Act of 1974. As a teacher, she had often complained that children were not getting enough of the basic skills in their elementary years. The act required each school district, together with parents, educators and other community residents, to devise a comprehensive plan to assure that each pupil in the kindergarten through the third grade would "have an individually appropriate program to permit the development of his or her maximum potential," with a sufficient "level of competency in the basic skills" as well as emotional and social development. As Mary Singleton urged, the Florida Department of Education was to develop a Master Plan for

⁶¹Morris to author; 1973 HB (House Bill) 513, which became Chapter 73-265 of the Florida Statutes: Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee, Laws of Florida, 1973, 2 vols. (Tallahassee, Fla., 1973), 1:118; Florida, History of Legislation, 1973, (Tallahassee, Fla., 1973), p. 118; JJ, August 30, 1973, p. 37.

elementary education and offer materials and training to school staff. The act also abolished the requirement of kindergarten attendance for entering first grade and simply required that a child over five and a half years of age demonstrate a readiness to enter in accordance with uniform state-approved criteria.⁶² The test for entrance into first grade was soon shortened and revised. In a later newspaper interview, she advised parents to not pressure their children about the test.⁶³

Later she worked to get the same accountability in all grades of the public schools. In 1976 she introduced a bill requiring functional literacy examinations (often called "Minimum Level Skills Tests") prior to graduation from high school and elementary school and prior to promotion from eighth and third grades and guided the idea into the "Equal Educational Accountability Act of 1976." Wishing to "avoid social promotion" and feeling that twelfth grade was "too late" to remedy problems, she was trying "to make school

⁶²1974 HB 2356, SB (Senate Bill) 857, CS (Committee Substitute for) -SB 96, which became Chapter 74-238: Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee, Laws of Florida, 1974, 2 vols. (Tallahassee, Fla., 1974) 1:671-673; Florida, History of Legislation, 1974 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1974), pp. 24-25, 154, 198; Florida, House of Representatives, Journal, 1974 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1974), May 29, 1974, p. 1093; Johnny Sanders (Jacksonville City Council President-Elect) in speech nominating Mary Singleton for the Florida Times-Union "Eve" award for Education, September 1974, Jacksonville, Fla.; Eric Smith interview; FTU, July 1, 1974.

⁶³FTU, July 1, 1974; JJ, August 15, 1974; FTU, May 28, 1975, p. B-8.

districts accountable for their educational processes as well as to provide adequate time to remedy any student learning problems."⁶⁴ Former State Representative Steve Pajcic said that this and some of her other bills "showed her vision" that, in order to achieve, black students had to be held to the same standards as other students. Representative Corrine Brown noted the importance of this bill was shown by the big improvement in test scores in some communities which worked together to improve the quality of their schools.⁶⁵

Another major achievement of Representative Singleton's was legislation in the area of school discipline. In 1974 she introduced a bill to create a pilot network of participating schools to offer alternative educational programs to students who were not adapting to a conventional school setting. In 1975, while vice-chairman of the House Education Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Academic Programs, she criticized the use of too much of the money from Florida's Safe Schools Act of 1973 on fences, guard

⁶⁴1976 HB 2877, SB 107, which became Chapter 76-223: Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee, Laws of Florida, 1976, 2 vols. (Tallahassee, Fla., 1976), 1:489-508; Florida, Legislative Information Division, History of Legislation, 1976 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1976), pp. 35, 458; Florida, House of Representatives, Journal, 1976 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1976), pp. 1052, 1244-1246; FTU, March 9, 1976, p. B-1.

⁶⁵Pajcic interview; Corrine Brown interview. See also FTU, December 27, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, April 28, 1976, p. B-2; FTU, May 12, 1976, p. B-2.

dogs and policemen in the schools instead of on helping the disruptive students.⁶⁶ She introduced a bill to get money from the Safe School fund transferred to alternative education programs, without success. Arguing for "special classes for troublemakers in the public schools," she said, "This isn't coddling them. There are entirely too many suspensions and these kids are right back on the streets. They need assistance to help straighten them out."⁶⁷ She was also convinced that it was unconstitutional to suspend or expell students without recognizing their due process rights.⁶⁸

Her 1975 House Bill 1025 became in 1976 a major school discipline act requiring county school boards to define and distribute a code of conduct and rights for students. State guidelines were adopted for punishing students including corporal punishment. Prior to suspensions or expulsions, remedial and other measures were to be tried. The reasons for and lengths of suspensions or expulsions were to be explained by a school administrator to a student and his

⁶⁶1974 HB 3761, Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 445; FTU, July 1, 1974, p. B-5; FTU, January 25, 1975, p. B-1; FTU, March 20, 1975.

⁶⁷1975 HB 1024, Florida, Legislative Information Division, History of Legislation, 1975 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1975), p. 228; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1.

⁶⁸Mary Singleton interview, 1975; JJ, January 22, 1975, p. 9; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1. See also JJ, April 11, 1975; FTU, June 5, 1975.

parent and approved by the school board.⁶⁹ The legislature added the provision that school staff would not be held legally responsible for discipline of a pupil if the action was "made in good faith," in conformity with state rules. As chairperson of the House Education subcommittee which campaigned hard to guide the bill through the legislature, she was honored by the Florida Administrative and Supervisory Association.⁷⁰

Continuing her interest in child day care, Representative Singleton also supported Representative Gwen Cherry's legislation to strengthen regulations for the licensing of child day care facilities, which passed in 1974.⁷¹ She co-sponsored with Representative Cherry an unsuccessful 1974 bill to allow child care centers for children of state employees in state buildings. She worked with state officials on matters such as helping day care centers which were having difficulty receiving their food

⁶⁹1975 HB 1025, 1976 HB 2647, SB 575 which became Chapter 76-236: Laws of Florida, 1976, 1:552-558; Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, pp. 155, 177; JJ, April 11, 1975; FTU, June 5, 1975; FTU, March 23, 1976, p. B-1.

⁷⁰JJ, April 6, 1976; FTU, April 14, 1976, p. A-4; FTU, May 22, 1976, p. B-2; FTU, June 5, 1976, p. B-2; FTU, September 4, 1976, p. B-2; The Communicator--Newsletter of the Florida Administrative and Supervisory Association (Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida Administrative and Supervisory Association), June 1976.

⁷¹FTU, February 14, 1974.

reimbursements.⁷² She also served as a member of various education groups.⁷³

Representative Singleton also supported additional programs to help children with special needs, and she became a member of the Florida Foundation for the Handicapped, the Florida Council for the Handicapped and the governing body of Morning Star (Catholic) School for retarded children. She was vice-chairperson of a Duval County committee to study the educational needs of special children and worked with other legislators to expand programs for exceptional children within the public schools.⁷⁴ In 1973 and 1974 she submitted bills to fund state-operated residential treatment centers for emotionally disturbed children, as urged by the Jacksonville City Council in a 1973 resolution by Councilwoman Sallye Mathis. These bills did not pass, but in 1974

⁷²HB 3783, Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 449; FTU, May 16, 1974, p. C-6; Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

⁷³She became a member of the Early Entrance Advisory Committee and the Early Childhood Advisory Council of the state Florida Department of Education, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee of the Day Care and Child Development Council of America (Southeast Region), the Citizens' Advisory Council of the Florida State University Division of Education, the Florida Council of Social Studies, and the governing bodies of Norwood School, Jacksonville Marine Institute, and the Florida Junior College (at Jacksonville) Foundation. Mary Singleton interview, 1975; Singleton, "Resume," 1974; Interview with Jackie Eldridge, June 11, 1985; FTU, February 14, 1974; FTU, May 16, 1974, p. C-6.

⁷⁴Singleton, "Resume," 1974; JJ, March 14, 1973; FTU, March 15, 1973. See Ch. 74-227: Laws of Florida, 1974, 1:627-630; Ch. 75-69, Ch. 75-284: Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee, Laws of Florida, 1975, 2 vols. (Tallahassee, Fla., 1975), 1:1014-1040.

Mary Singleton was able to secure planning and site purchase money for such a facility in Duval County.⁷⁵ After visiting a huge Sunland Center for retarded children, she submitted a bill in 1975 which would have provided for the establishment of a two-year project for residential care in Duval County of moderately retarded children currently in Sunland. "Every child shouldn't have to receive training at the Sunland schools," she said.⁷⁶

Some of Representative Singleton's ideas were not enacted until after she left the legislature. One example was a bill for the development of an "open university" in Florida whereby disabled people might take college credit courses via television.⁷⁷ Her bill to repeal the 1975 lowering of the school dropout age from sixteen to fourteen (if students could pass a high school equivalency exam) was approved by the House of Representatives but not in the Senate.⁷⁸ She also introduced a bill to end the state requirement for an American vs. Communism course in high

⁷⁵FTU, September 12, 1973; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 73-158-13; 1973 HB 500, 1974 HB 1826, Florida, History of Legislation, 1973, p. 115; Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 248; Johnny Sanders, speech, 1974.

⁷⁶1975 HB 1065, Florida, History of Legislation, 1975, p. 236; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1.

⁷⁷1974 HB 2357, Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 154; 1975 HB 707, Florida, History of Legislation, 1975, p. 156.

⁷⁸1976 HB 2455, Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, p. 360; FTU, March 23, 1976, p. B-1; JJ, April 19, 1976, p. 8.

schools since she felt the course "pits one form of government against the other, . . . people against people."⁷⁹

Besides her interest in education, Mary Singleton viewed herself as a "law and order" legislator, although one with a sense of fairness. She had said in 1969, after her barbeque businesses in Jacksonville had been robbed a number of times, that "the criminals should have to work to pay [their victims] back the money they steal."⁸⁰ Her 1973 bill 544, which passed in 1974, provided that, in imposing sentences for felonies or misdemeanors involving property but not injury, courts could reduce a sentence when restitution was to be made to the victims of the crimes. She felt that working to pay back what they stole would help rehabilitate people. She also worked with Representative Eric Smith on his Florida Crimes Compensation Act to help victims of crime be reimbursed for their losses.⁸¹

Representative Singleton also had robberies in mind when she submitted a 1974 bill requiring dealers in junk and other secondhand metal goods to keep records of purchases, including identification of persons selling goods to them.

⁷⁹1974 HB 2365, Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 154; JJ, September 20, 1973, p. 1. See also JJ, September 22, 1973, p. 4.

⁸⁰FTU, February 6, 1969, p. B-1.

⁸¹1973 HB 544, which became Chapter 74-125: Florida, History of Legislation, 1973, p. 126; Laws of Florida, 1974, 1:377; Eric Smith interview; FTU, January 14, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, April 17, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, July 11, 1974, p. A-4; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1.

A companion form of this bill passed in 1975.⁸³ Her 1975 bill providing for licensing and identification cards for private investigative agencies, watchmen and patrol services also passed as a companion bill.⁸⁴

Criminal justice bills she was not successful with included a 1973 bill to confine most seventeen to twenty-one year olds in juvenile detention facilities and to separate youths from hardened criminals in the prisons. In 1975 and 1976 she introduced a bill for state reimbursement to counties for expenses incurred in the care of prisoners assigned to a county jail rather than a state prison, as well as for health and safety standards in county jails.⁸⁵

Among her other positions on "law and order" issues was her opposition to gun control bills. "I don't believe in coddling criminals," she said, "and I'm going to vote against every gun control bill which deprives citizens of the right to adequately protect themselves."⁸⁶ She also

⁸³1974 HB 3445, Florida, History of Legislation, pp. 1015, 116; 1975 HB 480, 1975 SB 609, which became Chapter 75-118, Laws of Florida, 1975, 1:222-223.

⁸⁴1975 HB 888, SB 245, which became Chapter 75-230: Laws of Florida, 1975, 1:252-259.

⁸⁵1973 HB 499, Florida, History of Legislation, 1973, p. 115; JJ, March 17, 1973, p. 25; 1975-1976 HB 1016, Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, p. 14.

⁸⁶FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1.

voted for the death penalty legislation, as a deterrent to crime, in 1973, despite the opposition of many blacks.⁸⁷

In June 1974, she was appointed by Governor Reubin Askew to the Jacksonville Criminal Justice Advisory Council which was established to evaluate grant funds. She was also on the Board of Trustees of the Jacksonville Marine Institute which she felt would help rehabilitate teen-agers in trouble.⁸⁸

Besides education and law and order issues, Representative Singleton also tackled some sensitive family and health issues. As a member of the House Select Committee on Human Rights in 1975 and 1976, she submitted two bills to regulate abortions, which finally passed as companion bills in 1976. Her HB 1160 prohibited abortion after the end of the second trimester of pregnancy, unless two doctors said the woman's health or life was at stake, and prohibited experimentation on a live fetus prior to or following a termination of pregnancy.⁸⁹ Her HB 1218 required abortion referral or counselling agencies to furnish full information to persons seeking advice and to obtain an informed consent before a

⁸⁷Jacksonville Chronicle, July 6-12, 1973, p. 5; Florida Flambeau (Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida State University), April 24, 1975; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1.

⁸⁸Jacksonville Magazine 11 (March/April 1974): 18-19; Singleton, "Resume," 1974.

⁸⁹1975-1976 HB 1160, 1976 SB 60, which became Chapter 76-231: Laws of Florida, 1976, 1:530-531; Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, pp. 19-20, 176; FTU, October 16, 1975, p. B-2; FTU, April 5, 1976, p. B-11; FTU, June 3, 1976, p. B-2.

referral, and prohibited such an agency from charging or accepting compensation.⁹⁰

Mary Singleton also continued her work to combat drug abuse. She helped pass bills for increased penalties for drug offenders in 1973 and the involuntary commitment of drug addicts to treatment facilities in 1974. A member of the Florida Region IV Drug Abuse Advisory Council, she helped with a public information campaign in Jacksonville and attended a meeting of the National Drug Abuse Training Center in Washington, D. C. in 1973. She was also on the board of the "Jacksonville Alcohol Program" of the Jacksonville Experimental Health Delivery System, Inc.⁹¹

Some of Representative Singleton's bills were aimed at economic fairness for ordinary individuals and businesses. With one successful bill she was able to express her love of fishing, as it eased restrictions on shad fishermen in the St. John's River.⁹² In 1975 her bill designating the sailfish as Florida's official state fish, suggested by a fifth grade class in Jacksonville, was amended to add the

⁹⁰1975-1976 HB 1218, 1976 SB 43 (by Senator Mattox Hair), which became Chapter 76-16: Laws of Florida, 1976, 1:24-25; Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, p. 184; FTU, April 5, 1976; FTU, April 8, 1976, p. B-3.

⁹¹Jacksonville Chronicle, July 6-12, 1973, p. 5; Record News (Jacksonville, Fla.), June 6, 1974; Florida Flambeau, April 24, 1975; FTU, May 22, 1973; FTU, September 12, 1973; Singleton, "Resume," 1974.

⁹²1973 HB 1859, 1974 HB 3450, which became Chapter 74-220: Laws of Florida, 1974, 1:600-602; Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 381.

Florida largemouth bass as the state freshwater fish and became the first bill passed by the legislature in 1975.⁹³

Mary Singleton's ideas on economic fairness included women and other groups. In 1973 she voted against ratification of the national Equal Rights Amendment for women since she felt that some parts of it might be damaging, although she did vote for SB 393, called "little E.R.A.," which gave Florida women some rights.⁹⁴ However, when the anti-E.R.A. lobbyists distributed loaves of bread with cards reading, "To the bread-winners from the bread-makers," Representative Singleton said: "That kind of turned me off. I have been making the bread and earning it for a long time."⁹⁵ A member of the Select Committee on Human Rights in 1975, she was one of the sponsors of the Florida bill that year for ratification of the national Equal Rights Amendment. She felt it would help eliminate job and pay discrimination, and helped campaign for the bill. The measure passed the Florida House of Representatives but was killed in a Senate

⁹³1975 HB 84 and House Concurrent Resolution 105, which became Chapter 75-1: Laws of Florida, 1975, 1:7; Florida, History of Legislation, 1975, p. 19; Eldridge interview; FTU, April 24, 1975, p. B-2; FTU, May 3, 1975.

⁹⁴1973 SB 393, which became Chapter 73-251: Laws of Florida, 1973, 1:573; Florida, House of Representatives, Journal, 1973 (Tallahassee, Fla., 1973), pp. 981-982; 1975 HB 2, Florida, House of Representatives, Journal, 1975, p. 1; Jacksonville Chronicle, July 6-12, 1973, p. 5.

⁹⁵FTU, April 8, 1974.

committee.⁹⁶ In 1975 and 1976 she also joined Representatives Gwen Cherry, Steve Pajcic and Don Tucker in submitting a bill which would have required programs by state agencies for equal employment opportunity in state government jobs.⁹⁷

Additional bills which Representative Singleton introduced unsuccessfully included one to require that every application for a motor vehicle registration must contain proof of financial responsibility. Another aimed to reduce the number of employees necessary in a group for group disability insurance. Another would have made a spouse and dependent children of employees eligible for coverage under blanket disability insurance.⁹⁸

Several bills Representative Singleton worked on involved elections. Her 1974 and 1975 bills tried to limit the purchase of lists of registered electors to only noncommercial interests, in order to avoid the bombardment of the electorate with junk mail. She also worked on measures for expansion of the hours for voting and voter registration, so that working people could more easily

⁹⁶FTU, April 8, 1974; FTU, April 11, 1975, p. A-6; FTU, April 14, 1975; FTU, May 5, 1975, p. B-1.

⁹⁷1975-1976 HB 1525, Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, p. 229.

⁹⁸1973 HB 658, which passed the House of Representatives only: Florida, History of Legislation, 1973, p. 151; FTU, May 11, 1973, p. C-3; 1975-1976 HB 1497, Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, p. 225; 1975-1976 HB 1496, Florida, History of Legislation, 1976, p. 225.

participate, and for single-member districts for the Florida legislature.⁹⁹

Representative Singleton was especially known for her ability to work with people, and a number of legislators agreed that they had never met anyone who didn't like Mary Singleton. Former State Representative John Forbes didn't remember her speaking on the House floor very much but thought her successful through mainly just talking to people. Former Representative Steve Pajcic thought that she

was a superb politician in the best sense of the word. She liked everybody and everybody liked her--that was a key to her electability. She had a way of getting the job done and appearing to be non-threatening, but she always had an agenda and accomplished things. . . .She also had a lot of pride, which she kept underneath and not in her way. She carried herself with dignity.¹⁰⁰

Mary Singleton was particularly helpful in enabling the Duval County delegation to work together. "With her big smile, even when she was hurting," said John Forbes, Mary Singleton "was the single most important reason the Duval delegation was cohesive politically." Practically every weekend she would let it be known that her apartment was open to all in the delegation. They would help with the food and sit around eating the home cooking. If there were

⁹⁹1974 HB 3337, Florida, History of Legislation, 1974, p. 356; 1975 HB 11, Florida, History of Legislation, 1975, p. 3; Jacksonville Chronicle, July 6-12, 1973, p. 5; FTU, May 2, 1974; JJ, May 15, 1976; Eric Smith interview.

¹⁰⁰Interview with John R. Forbes, June 7, 1985; Eric Smith interview; Ashworth interview.

problems between people she would tease them and get the disagreements out in the open. "She would get everybody laughing at the ridiculousness of the reasons for the fights" or other worries, noted Forbes, and the tensions would be smoothed out.¹⁰¹ As the only woman in the delegation, she was like "their den mother, so to speak, and she tried to keep them straight--with her excellent rapport with people," said her legislative aide, Jackie Eldridge. She also had a big annual party, and kept her freezer full of food she could heat up quickly in the microwave for guests.¹⁰²

Mary Singleton tried to be a moderating influence on racial, as well as other, issues. When an issue came up about blacks, she had the ability to desensitize the issue with humor--"not just to be funny but as a tool to dissect the ridiculousness of the situation. She had to be very intelligent to do this," said John Forbes.¹⁰³ She participated in a new Black Legislators Association, but she felt that whatever effectiveness the three black legislators (out of 120 legislators) had was as individuals. She didn't try to push "black" issues as such, but she worked on issues to help people in general and thus blacks as well. Her only

¹⁰¹Forbes interview.

¹⁰²Eldridge interview; Hazouri interview; Thelma Jackson interview; FTU, May 2, 1976, p. A-11; FTU, May 26, 1976, p. A-12.

¹⁰³Forbes interview.

piece of legislation specifically referring to a black person was a House Concurrent Resolution in 1974 to pay tribute to the late Eartha Mary Magdalene White, a widely-recognized social service leader in Jacksonville, "for her outstanding public service and untiring humanitarian service."¹⁰⁴ In 1973, when there were tensions between white and black students in Jacksonville schools over the proclaimed "Black History Week," she asked Governor Reubin Askew to discontinue his formal proclamation of the week and encouraged the incorporation of "multi-ethnic" studies about various ethnic groups, as in some schools already, which she felt would be less controversial.¹⁰⁵

As a state legislature, Representative Singleton had to deal with the racial prejudice of some other state legislators. In 1974 she told a reporter that she had no more problems because she was a black than any other new legislator. However she later commented to an interviewer that she could get more done in Jacksonville than in the state legislature.

You've got an element here [in the state legislature] that thinks blacks don't belong anywhere, and certainly not in the same policy making positions as they are. But they can sit there and put their feet on the table and feel comfortable calling men 'nigger,' you know, and saying things

¹⁰⁴Palm Beach (Florida) Post-Times, October 26, 1975, pp. A-1, 9; Forbes interview; FTU, January 20, 1974; Laws of Florida, 1974, House Concurrent Resolution 1974, p. 1350.

¹⁰⁵FTU, April 7, 1973, p. B-12; JJ, April 11, 1973, p. 4. See also FTU, September 27, 1973, p. C-5.

that are unbecoming, because somebody is going to take offense to it. . . . In essence, we [black legislators] might not get much done, but we sometimes keep a lot of things from happening that would have happened. So we do serve some kind of a purpose, I think, other than getting laws passed.¹⁰⁶

Mary Singleton also had to deal with varied attitudes towards women in the state legislature. A member of the Organization of Women Legislators, she told a group of executive secretaries in 1973 that she had no more problems as a woman than any other legislator. She admitted, however, that people look more closely at a woman legislator. "You've got to look like a girl, think like a man, and work like a dog," she added. In a 1975 speech she said that "women have to . . . research more than men. We have more values to uphold than men. We are more objective . . . [and] have more feeling for people."¹⁰⁷ She was the only member of the Duval County legislative delegation not invited on a yacht cruise hosted by a group of Tallahassee businessmen in 1975. Mary Singleton did not let other people's attitudes hinder her, however. Nancie Crabb commented that Mary Singleton "didn't fear talking with the big boys," although she didn't "play games" or make

¹⁰⁶Tallahassee (Florida) Democrat, May 5, 1974; Mary Singleton interview, 1975.

¹⁰⁷FTU-JJ, October 7, 1973, p. B-1, 7; FTU-JJ, October 19, 1975, p. B-2.

compromises. She was one who could "cross all barriers and handle people."¹⁰⁸

While she was a state legislator, Mary Singleton was busy with additional activities related to her job. She was appointed by Governor Reubin Askew to the State Housing Goals Council in October 1974. She was vice-chairman of a committee of the Duval County delegation and Jacksonville City Council to study the charter revision for Duval County. A member of the Florida Bicentennial Commission and the American Bicentennial Commission of Jacksonville (ex officio), she helped plan school and community events, such as a project for the painting of fire hydrants.¹⁰⁹

She also continued to be active in Democratic groups in Duval County and several state Democratic committees. In 1973 and 1974 she was a member of the national Democratic Party Charter Commission and was an alternate delegate to the Democratic National Committee meeting in December 1974.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸FTU, March 22, 1975, p. B-1; Crabb tape-recorded response.

¹⁰⁹Singleton, "Resume," 1974; King interview; FTU, April 25, 1973, p. A-1; Chronicle (Jacksonville, Fla.), May 18, 1973, JJ, August 24, 1973, p. 8; FTU, October 2, 1974; FTU, October 19, 1974; FTU-JJ, December 1, 1974, p. D-1; FTU, December 26, 1974, p. B-12; The Florida Democrat (Tallahassee, Fla.), March 1975; FTU, December 15, 1975.

¹¹⁰Singleton, "Resume," 1974; Eldridge interview; King interview; FTU, October 19, 1974; FTU, August 16, 1975; JJ, December 15, 1975; FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1; The Florida Democrat, March 1975.

Representative Singleton continued to encourage people to be informed and to participate in public affairs. With the help of her legislative aide, Jackie Eldridge, she sent out a regular newsletter, The Capital Column, to her constituents, with information on pending legislation and a ready-made form to help people send her their ideas. At her Jacksonville office across from Gateway Mall, Representative Singleton spent a considerable amount of time helping constituents with individual problems.¹¹¹ She was a popular speaker at high school graduation events in Jacksonville. She was also on the boards of directors of Methodist Hospital and of the Northside Record.¹¹² Sylvia Thibault recalled being at a social affair where someone who had just faced a mastectomy was thinking that life was over.

. . . Mary really lectured her. She said that none of us has any guarantees . . . [and] how important it is to live each day to the fullest. She said that she had had a mastectomy ten years earlier and didn't think of it much. The Lord was not through with her yet. She was not a quitter. She loved people really strong, and that love keeps you going.¹¹³

Director, Division of Election

After four years in the Florida House of Representatives, in May 1976 Mary Singleton was appointed Director of

¹¹¹Eldridge interview; FTU, April 25, 1973, p. A-1; Chronicle, May 18, 1973, JJ, August 24, 1973, p. 8.

¹¹²FTU, May 31, 1974; FTU, June 7, 1974, p. C-8; FTU, June 8, 1974; Singleton, "Resume," 1974; JJ, October 23, 1973; FTU, October 19, 1974; FTU-JJ, December 1, 1974, p. D-1.

¹¹³Thibault interview.

the Florida Division of Elections by Bruce Smathers, who was secretary of state from 1974 to 1978. A long-time friend, Smathers had asked her to accept this "sensitive office" several months earlier, since she had established "very good relationships" in the House of Representatives and he felt she could help push a revision of the election code for the state that he tried to start in the 1976 legislature. She eventually accepted the proposition and resigned from the House of Representatives, because she felt it would be "a good way to expand [her] horizons and make a contribution." She also needed a full-time job, noted Senator Girardeau, since she was having financial difficulties, with only one barbeque store left.¹¹⁴

After a five-minute standing ovation by fellow members of the House of Representatives when Smathers formally announced her appointment, Mary Singleton rode to Jacksonville Beach where she spoke to the Thirty-first Annual Convention of the Florida State Association of Elections Supervisors. In her new position she became one of the top women and the top black in the executive branch of state government, with an annual salary of \$21,500.¹¹⁵ Her

¹¹⁴Interview with Bruce Smathers, November 28, 1985; MacNamara interview; Girardeau interview; Mary Singleton interview, 1975; FTU, April 26, 1976; FTU, April 29, 1976, p. B-11; FTU, June 4, 1976, p. A-8; FTU, November 28, 1976, p. D-14; FTU, September 11, 1977, p. B-3.

¹¹⁵MacNamara interview; FTU, May 5, 1976, p. B-1; FTU-JJ, June 2, 1976, p. 27; FTU, June 4, 1976, p. B-13; Florida, House of Representatives, Journal, 1976, p. 1137.

legislative seat was won by Dr. Arnett Girardeau, who kept the position until 1982 when he became the first black to be elected to the Florida Senate from northeast Florida in the twentieth century. As a legislative aide he hired her daughter, Carol Singleton Scott, who had previously been employed in the office of the Secretary of State.¹¹⁶

As Director of the Division of Elections, Mary Singleton established close relationships with the supervisors of elections in all sixty-seven counties of Florida. "It was apparently a very smooth relationship," said Bruce Smathers. "She handled it beautifully," being "a unique person, who transcended her race and represented all the constituency. It was a testimony to her ability to get along with people."¹¹⁷

Mary Singleton's Division of Elections office kept the records for the administrative and legislative branches: all the state codes, forms, notices of hearings, appointments made by the governor, and election records. She had to approve all the ballots. Because the system had not been changed for so many years, she tried to upgrade it and

¹¹⁶Dr. Girardeau is the great-nephew of Richard L. Brown, who served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1881 to 1883. Morris; Girardeau interview; Duval County Supervisor of Elections; FTU, May 5, 1975, B-1.

¹¹⁷Smathers interview.

automate more of the county systems for registrations and voting.¹¹⁸

The biggest part of the job was the complete re-drafting of the state election code which hadn't been done for many years. "We've got to make it easier for supervisors of election and candidates to understand the law," said Mary Singleton, so that they would not unwittingly be in violation.¹¹⁹ It was a major undertaking to go through the books and assemble the hodge-podge of regulations for the proposed legislation from the secretary of state's office. She worked with Senator Mattox Hair, Representative Samuel P. Bell III, Representative Ander Crenshaw, the Association of Elections Supervisors, and others in the effort which resulted in about six chapters of the state statutes. Representative Bell, who was vice-chairman of the House Election Committee, said that

as the process of recodifying the Election Code began, we soon discovered that everyone was an expert on the election law. Each person who had run for office wanted to bring us the benefit of his election experiences and to insert his own prejudices into the redraft. It was necessary, therefore, to have persons with an objective viewpoint and a steady hand on the process. Mary's good humor and clear head provided objectivity to the process. . . . This was a period of considerable transition, and Mary's presence also

¹¹⁸Eldridge interview. See also Palm Beach Post Times, June 27, 1976, p. B-9; FTU, September 24, 1976, p. B-1; FTU-JJ, March 13, 1977, p. B-5.

¹¹⁹FTU, November 28, 1976, p. D-14.

groups as well.¹²³ She was also featured in various publications.¹²⁴

Last Years

When Bruce Smathers resigned as secretary of state in July 1978 to become a candidate for governor, "everybody who

¹²³Mary Singleton was honored by the Jacksonville chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Florida Education Association (TIGER award), Citizens for Community Action, Jacksonville chapters of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; Daughters of Isis, International Labor Association, Florida Conference of N.A.A.C.P., Fla.-Jax. Club, Florida A. and M. University chapter of Phi Delta Kappa Fraternity, Jacksonville section of the National Council of Jewish Women, Democratic Women's Club of Florida, Y.W.C.A., and Florida Publishing Company (runner-up for "EVE" award). Singleton, "Resume," 1974; FTU, January 14, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, February 20, 1973, p. B-12; FTU, July 7, 1973; FTU, August 14, 1973; FTU, December 7, 1973, p. B-1; FTU, July 13, 1974, p. B-5; FTU, September, 12, 1974; FTU, November 9, 1974; FTU, February 29, 1975, p. C-1; FTU, June 19, 1975, p. B-2; FTU, February 20, 1975, p. C-1; Tallahassee Democrat, August 20, 1975; JJ, December 15, 1975; FTU, January 24, 1976; JJ, April 19, 1976, p. 8; FTU, May 14, 1977, p. B-4; FTU, September 7, 1977, p. B-2.

¹²⁴The Afro-American Encyclopedia, 8:2351; Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans (Raleigh, N.C.: American Biographical Institute, 1975), p. 799; Dictionary of International Biography, 7th ed., part 3, vol. 10 (Cambridge: Melrose Press, Ltd., 1974), p. 1632; Editors of Ebony, Ebony Success Library, 3 vols., (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1973) 1:238; Personalities of the South, 9th ed. (1977), p. 521; Harry A. Ploski and Warren Marr, II, The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the Afro-American, 3rd ed. (New York: Bellwether Publishing Co., 1976), p. 1040; Spradling, 2:882; Who's Who Among Black Americans, 1st ed., (1976), p. 573; 2nd ed. (1978), p. 819; 3rd ed., (1981), p. 730; Who's Who in American Politics, 4th ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1973), p. 978; 5th ed. (1975), p. 856; 6th ed. (1977), p. 918; Who's Who in Florida, 1973/1974 (Lexington, Ky.: Names of Distinction, 1974), p. 131; Who's Who in Government, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1975), p. 569; 3rd ed. (1977), p. 556; Who's Who in the South and Southwest, 15th ed. (Marquis Who's Who, 1976), p. 718; 16th ed. (1978), p. 674; Who's Who of American Women, 8th ed. (1973), p. 890; 9th ed. (1975) p. 820; 10th ed. (1977), p. 823.

was anybody knew that Mary Singleton was about to be appointed [interim] secretary of state by Governor Reubin Askew," according to David MacNamara. However, even though Bruce Smathers had recommended her for the position, Governor Askew disagreed with a specific ruling she made as Director of the Division of Elections. She ruled that Florida's Sunshine Amendment as it was worded did not require non-incumbent candidates for public office to file financial disclosure forms, although she agreed that all candidates for elective office should file financial disclosure forms. Bruce Smathers said that she "did what she thought was right" in interpreting the current law, in spite of possible political consequences, and the constitutional lawyers eventually affirmed her decision. She felt the issue was not handled fairly by the administration and the courts. When Governor Askew appointed Jesse McCrary, a black attorney from Miami, to the position as the first black secretary of state in twentieth century Florida, she was surprised and very disappointed, according to David MacNamara, although she denied any disappointment in public.¹²⁵

Mary Singleton resigned as director of the Division of Elections on July 24, 1978, and surprised people by running for lieutenant governor as a running mate with former

¹²⁵Smathers interview; MacNamara interview; Harry Littlejohn interview; FTU, July 20, 1978, p. B-1; JJ, July 21, 1978, p. 2; FTU, July 25, 1978, p. A-1; FTU, July 27, 1978, p. B-3.

governor Claude Kirk on the Democratic ticket. He had switched back from the Republican party and was campaigning on a platform of helping the elderly, fighting crime, cutting government expenses and boosting tourism through such measures as casinos in Southeast Florida.¹²⁶ Kirk had had an uneven record on race issues while governor, 1967-1971, but he had been asking her to join him on the ticket for weeks.¹²⁷ Although she had been advised against this move by a number of her friends who thought she could have been elected to other positions, she said she was running because she didn't have a job and because she "liked his stands" (in this campaign). Having considered running for statewide office earlier, she was a person who always looked forward instead of backwards, Representative Forbes noted. She denied rumors of other motives, and noted that she understood the problems of the ghetto better than any other candidate. Her health had been getting worse, off and on,

¹²⁶FTU, January 21, 1978, p. B-2; FTU, July 6, 1978, p. B-4; FTU, July 25, 1978, p. A-1; FTU, July 26, 1978, pp. B-1, 2.

¹²⁷Kirk was considered conservative in regard to racial and other issues. In 1970 he defied federal court orders for school integration in Manatee County while he was governor. Later he became a national chairman of Parents Against Forced Busing. Colburn and Scher, Florida's Gubernatorial Politics, pp. 229, 234-245, 287; FTU, July 26, 1978, p. B-1; FTU, August 11, 1978, p. B-4.

but no one knew what was wrong or took her problem seriously, since she always had a strong, positive attitude.¹²⁸

During the campaign, she went to visit her twenty-nine-year-old daughter, Carol Scott, who was being treated for cancer at Oschner's Clinic in New Orleans. Carol Scott had been working in the office of the state Comptroller as Employment Opportunities Coordinator since 1977 and was active in political affairs with her mother. Carol helped campaign for her mother by telephone and during visits to Jacksonville joined friends and family who were working on the campaign.¹²⁹

Mary Singleton campaigned hard. However, the Kirk-Singleton ticket received only 5880 votes (7 percent of the statewide vote) in the first primary on September 12. It was the only time she ever lost an election.¹³⁰ Bob Graham, who won the election and was governor of Florida, 1979-1987, commented that

Mary was a source of stability and presented herself as a candidate of dignity and

¹²⁸FTU, September 11, 1977, p. B-3; FTU, July 6, 1978, p. B-4; FTU, July 26, 1978, pp. B-1, 2; FTU, July 27, 1978, p. B-3; FTU, August 7, 1978, p. B-3; FTU, September 9, 1978, p. B-3; Trednick interview; Forbes interview; Eldridge interview; Telephone interview with Jack Madden, October 14, 1985, from Tallahassee, Fla.

¹²⁹FTU, August 24, 1978, p. B-5; FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1; Madden interview.

¹³⁰FTU, August 11, 1978, p. B-4; FTU, August 17, 1978, p. B-3; FTU, September 5, 1978, p. B-1; FTU, September 17, 1978, p. H-1; FTU, October 3, 1978, p. B-2; Duval County Supervisor of Elections.

intelligence. I am confident that she was responsible for a significant proportion of the votes the Kirk-Singleton candidacy received.¹³¹

She was surprised when Kirk helped finance medical bills for her daughter and herself--including travel to a cancer clinic in Jamaica to try to help Carol. She also had a second masectomy operation.¹³²

From October 1978 until her death on December 7, 1980, Mary Singleton worked as the Jacksonville area coordinator of the state Comptroller's office and then as area director of the Department of Administration for the state Banking and Finance Division. Among her duties was presenting the budget for the comptroller's office to the legislature.¹³³

After the death of her daughter on February 4, 1979, Mary Singleton fought a legal battle to get custody of Carol Scott's two daughters, Laurie and Leslie, ages six and ten, from their father. They had lived with her most of the time since Carol's divorce. That struggle motivated her to keep active until a ruling giving her custody was finally upheld in January 1980. The children were later raised by her relatives.¹³⁴

¹³¹Governor Bob Graham to author, December 10, 1985, Tallahassee, Fla.

¹³²Harry Littlejohn interview; MacNamara interview; Eldridge interview; Madden interview.

¹³³Madden interview; Ashworth interview; FTU, April 12, 1979, p. B-7.

¹³⁴Eldridge interview; MacNamara interview; FTU, March 28, 1979, p. B-1; FTU, January 3, 1980, p. B-1.

Eventually Mary Singleton was so sick from cancer that she could only work part-time, and sometimes came to work in a wheel chair. Like her daughter, she was said to be uncomplaining, with high spirits and concern about other people.¹³⁵

After her death on December 7, 1980, at age fifty-four, about 150 people attended a special memorial service for her in the chamber of the Florida House of Representatives. A large funeral service was also held at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Jacksonville. The new Senior Citizens Center in Jacksonville was named the Mary L. Singleton Senior Citizens Center in January 1981.¹³⁶

¹³⁵Madden interview; Ashworth interview; NacNamara interview; Dr. Freddie L. Groomes to author, October 30, 1985, Tallahassee, Fla.

¹³⁶MacNamara interview; FTU, December 8, 1980, p. A-1; FTU, December 12, 1980, p. C-1; Jacksonville City Council: Resolution 81-109-36.

CHAPTER X
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The black community in Jacksonville, where Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton grew up and worked, played a very significant role in their lives. After the Civil War, blacks in Jacksonville worked to develop their own organizations and maintained a thriving black community life throughout the following decades. In spite of considerable white prejudice and discrimination, and the segregation which increased after 1890, black men and women demonstrated positive leadership and cooperative action in meeting the needs of the black community. They participated in the wider community when allowed to do so. In these actions they provided role models of effort and achievement to inspire future community leaders, including Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton.

Although most blacks were still unskilled laborers and most lived in poverty conditions, a small percentage of Jacksonville blacks were able to found small businesses or achieve professional or other regular employment and live in middle-class neighborhoods. By the turn of the century, Jacksonville blacks had made definite economic gains at all levels, but their gains were considerably less than those of whites, due to a lower level of skills and experience and to

competition and hindrances from whites. Generally excluded from white organizations, black men and women founded churches, schools and charitable, self-help and social organizations to meet the needs of their community. Black leaders taught the values of hard work, self-help, education, personal morality and black pride.

In the political arena, blacks tried to use the influence of their votes, and black men were elected and appointed to public positions at the local and state levels for a longer period in Jacksonville than in most Southern cities. Even though this political influence had largely disappeared by 1907, some blacks continued to register and vote as Republicans or Independents. Some blacks continued to be leaders in the Republican party, which was by then weak in the South. Always influential in the community, black women became voters in 1920. Blacks in Jacksonville could take pride in their leaders and achievements since the Civil War.

As their political opportunities lessened and racial segregation increased by the late nineteenth century, blacks put even more of their efforts into the development of their own institutions. In 1901 and 1905, Jacksonville blacks tried peaceful protest against increasing segregation by boycotting the recently segregated streetcars. The 1901 boycott was so effective that the city authorities ceased enforcing it, but these efforts were ended by segregation

and other Jacksonville blacks were friends of cooperative whites who gave considerable support to black programs through the years.

Black people in Jacksonville were not isolated. Another female role model with close ties to Jacksonville blacks was Mary McCleod Bethune who founded what became Bethune-Cookman College at Daytona Beach, Florida, and achieved national prominence in the black women's club movement and in the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In contact with other black leaders in Florida and the rest of the nation, Jacksonville blacks could also take pride in seeing national prominence achieved by men raised in Jacksonville: T. Thomas Fortune, James Weldon Johnson and A. Philip Randolph.

In the 1940's there were some signs of improvement in the status of blacks. In 1942 Mary Blocker won the court suit that enabled blacks teachers in Duval County to receive pay equal to that of white teachers, although she lost her job in the process. In 1944 Rev. Dallas J. Graham won the local court suit that ended the exclusion of blacks from the Democratic party and primaries. Blacks were soon registered as Democrats in Duval County, were admitted to the Duval County Democratic Executive Committee, and helped set precinct lines in the black community. A few religious and civic groups were having harmonious, integrated meetings by the 1940's.

However, after a near victory by a black candidate for the Jacksonville City Council from a mostly-black district, the Florida legislature was persuaded to change the voting system in Jacksonville to a city-wide, at-large, voting system to deny the possibility for blacks to get elected. Although Jacksonville blacks, including Mary Singleton's husband, campaigned repeatedly for elective positions, none were elected until the victories of Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton in 1967.

Yet, with their growing voting power in the Democratic primaries, Jacksonville blacks were courted by white politicians who wanted to control their votes. Some black leaders established voter organizations and distributed voting tickets recommending certain candidates--sometimes in exchange for expenses or promises of certain benefits for the black community. Isadore Singleton was respected for his influence in recommending candidates whom he thought were the best at the time for the black community's interests. Thus, in spite of the severe difficulties facing them, blacks in Jacksonville left an impressive heritage of positive leadership and cooperative action to inspire future generations.

Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton were born into this seemingly quiet but active black community. Both grew up in stable, respected, middle-class, extended families which were active in community organizations. Both

grew up participating in churches, schools and other organizations which taught values of hard work, personal morality, education and service to the community, with the support and challenge of religious beliefs. Both had parents who sacrificed to help their daughters obtain college educations, so that they could become teachers. Neither grew up in impoverished households, but they were aware that many people, blacks especially, suffered from economic hardships. Although these two young women were aware of the humiliations of segregation for all blacks, Mary Littlejohn's grandfather had developed friendships with numerous whites through his business, and both she and Sallye Brooks were respected by blacks and whites who knew them and their families.

As adults, Sallye Brooks Mathis and Mary Littlejohn Singleton performed competently, gained experience and became more widely known. Sallye Mathis obtained a master's degree and had a twenty-eight year career as a teacher, counselor and dean of girls. She was also an active volunteer in her church, sorority and various community service activities. Her husband was a respected businessman who also volunteered in community activities. After her husband's death, Sally Mathis retired from her school career and had more time for volunteer work. She was a leader in the integration of the Y.W.C.A. and the League of Women Voters and helped launch several programs for low-income

people and other service projects. She was also visible as a leader in the N.A.A.C.P.'s efforts for voter registration and the desegregation of the public schools, city government and other aspects of society. She became known as a courageous advocate of black rights and yet one who could work graciously with cooperative whites in solving problems.

After over four years of teaching, Mary Littlejohn Singleton was bookkeeper of her husband's business, a housewife, mother and hostess while her husband became influential with blacks and whites in political circles. She was known to Jacksonville whites through the activities of her grandfather, father and husband and through her own contacts in the Catholic church. In the three years after her husband's death, Mary Singleton ran the five barbeque businesses, raised her two children and began to participate in political activities. She had just begun to accept public leadership positions--on the Local Government Study Commission of Duval County in 1965 and on the Jacksonville's Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals in 1966. She was known as a friendly and sensible person who could mediate between people.

Thus, although their activities and experiences varied, both Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were known and respected by 1967. Freed from most of their earlier responsibilities, they had the potential for further contributions to society.

In the spring election for the Jacksonville City Council in 1967, several factors converged to aid Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton in their victories. Many blacks felt an urgency to get black representation in city government decision-making in order to meet the needs of black people. Blacks were encouraged by the rise in their percentage of the city's voting population to about 40 percent and many were willing to work hard in the campaign. Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were selected and encouraged to run by influential black men who had failed to get a black man elected and thought that a black woman might be more acceptable to the white community. There were models of leadership by black women in black community organizations, and whites had previous experiences of working with black women on community projects. Since bids for office by black men had not been successful, the election of the black women did not involve replacing black men already in public office.

Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were both well educated, had leadership experience and many friendships with both blacks and whites, shared the heritage and concerns for meeting the needs of blacks and other low-income people, were aware of the deficiencies in the current local government officials and were religiously motivated to help people. While both women at first rejected the idea of running for political office--previously thought to be a

man's field, and a corrupted field at that--with encouragement they agreed to run.

There was also a spirit of reform sweeping through Duval County in 1967, as the inefficiencies of local government structure and the indictment of various local officials led to a desire for new faces in government and a new governmental structure. This thrust led to the consolidation of Jacksonville and Duval County, which passed a county referendum on August 8, 1967, and took effect on October 1, 1968. Part of the spirit of reform included white receptivity to the election of blacks in city government--especially since the national civil rights legislation had made many aspects of segregation illegal and some whites had been embarrassed by local incidents of open prejudice against blacks. Another incentive towards consolidation was fear on the part of some whites that Jacksonville would soon become a majority-black city. Some whites and blacks feared that without the income base of affluent whites in the suburbs, Jacksonville would not be able to afford governmental services needed in the core city. This drive for reform no doubt aided the vote for not only Sallye Mathis, who worked in favor of consolidation, but also for Mary Singleton, even though she opposed the plan. In the second primary, Sally Mathis had a slightly higher vote than Mary Singleton in the more affluent, majority-white precincts where the vote for consolidation was highest. Black women

may have been more acceptable than black men to whites-- especially to white women, with women the majority of voters in most precincts of the city.

Another factor aiding their election was that Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were individuals with high visibility among blacks and whites, and they were respected as persons of integrity, ability dedication and congenial personalities. They campaigned hard and convinced voters that they were more qualified than the other candidates and that they would represent all the citizens--especially needy people. Sallye Mathis had the particular support of the blacks in the N.A.A.C.P. network and the whites she had worked with in various community service organizations, while Mary Singleton was especially helped by family friends and the established black and white political networks.

Thus, two black women with high qualifications and visibility ran for office at a time when a drive for governmental reform and change and a softening of racial attitudes aided their acceptability. Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton received more votes than any other candidates in their respective first primary races. In the second primary, around 30 percent of the white votes were added to the heavy black vote for them. Mary Singleton won her election in the second primary since she was unopposed in the general election. Sallye Mathis received 33 percent of the majority-white precinct vote, along with a heavy black

vote, in the General Election against a Republican candidate.

As members of the Jacksonville City Council, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton served as role models as they symbolized the growing political power of blacks and women. Although they sometimes felt negative attitudes from some government officials, they helped break down stereotypes as they proved their competence at the job and developed respectful relationships and frequent friendships with other council members. They increased the consciousness of other city officials of the needs of low-income people and their rights to a share of government attention and expenditures. They spoke out when they thought black or other people's rights were being violated. They encouraged the appointment of blacks in public positions and urged people to voice their concerns to government and to get involved in public life.

While dealing with the varied duties of the city council, including the time-consuming meshing of county and city governments at the start of the consolidated government, the two councilwomen worked primarily to meet the long-neglected needs of low-income people, many of whom were blacks. They tried to limit fees for city services and obtained significant improvement in the roads, sewers, fire protection, lighting and recreation in their districts, although not as much as they felt their low-income areas

deserved. They tried to improve the services and treatment of clients offered by health and welfare agencies. They worked with other agencies on the organization of mostly federally-funded programs and lobbied for support of these programs by the city council. Sallye Mathis took initiative in the establishment of programs for senior citizens and worked closely with the massive Housing and Urban Development projects to see that people living in the renewal areas were treated fairly. She helped a group of mostly-black home owners to be allowed to remain in their homes. Mary Singleton took leadership in the establishment of county programs for delinquent youths and of a county coordinated child care program--considered new at the time.

Only occasionally did councilwomen Mathis and Singleton work on issues that involved blacks specifically. They supported a weak fair employment bill, which passed the city council, but failed to get passed either their bill for a downtown location of the four-year state university or Mary Singleton's fair housing bill. On numerous occasions of disagreements or complaints by blacks of unfair treatment by city officials, frequently by law enforcement personnel, the black council members played a mediating role--trying to explain black perspectives to white leaders and advocating the concerns of blacks. When black complaints seemed to go unheeded in 1971, Sallye Mathis helped organize the inter-racial Council of Leadership for Community Advancement

(C.O.L.C.A.) to deal with black concerns. During her fifteen years on the council she also worked with the N.A.A.C.P. in its efforts on school desegregation and improvement of conditions in the county prison farm and jail. She got the city council to honor several deceased, notable blacks, and helped with a committee to turn Stanton Vocational High School into a college--preparatory school.

While encouraging all citizens, especially blacks and other women, to participate in all levels of community affairs, and educating them on how to deal with governmental procedures, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton were examples of their own advice as they served on numerous community service organizations and boards. In 1978 Sallye Mathis founded the Minority Women's Coalition and in 1980 she helped organize the Black Leadership Council.

Thus, while they could not obtain council approval for all they wished to do, they clearly had important accomplishments both in their council duties and as influential people in other aspects of community life. That they both received numerous honors for their many contributions shows the appreciation and pride felt towards them by many black and white citizens of Jacksonville.

Mary Singleton had a more varied career between 1973 and 1980 than did Sallye Mathis, who remained on the Jacksonville City Council until her death in 1982. After a redistricting of the Florida House of Representative seats

in 1972, Mary Singleton was easily elected to that body from a northern district of Duval County--the third black elected to the Florida Legislature in the twentieth century and the first woman from Northeast Florida. Representative Singleton focused on bills to help "everybody," rather than just blacks. She was very influential in the passage of the Early Childhood Education Act of 1974. In 1976 her bills for school discipline codes and for requiring functional literacy exams prior to completion of grades three, eight and twelve were passed. She was successful with other bills (sometimes as companion bills) dealing with robberies, restitution to victims of crime, moderate regulation of abortion and aid to fishermen. Some of her bills which did not pass until later years were intended to establish an "open university" allowing disabled people to take college credit courses via television, require proof of financial responsibility for registration of a motor vehicle, and restrict the use of lists of registered voters.

Representative Singleton was known as an able and congenial legislator. Through regular dinners at her apartment, she helped ease tensions between people and helped the Duval County delegation work well together. She was well liked by many other legislators, and served on numerous public services groups.

In May 1976 Mary Singleton was appointed Director of the Florida Division of Elections--the highest level

government post held by a black in Florida at the time. In this position she helped with a major revision of Florida's election codes and had no trouble dealing with problems of the various county supervisors of election as she led training conferences for them around the state. In 1978 she ran (unsuccessfully) for Lt. Governor of Florida as a running mate of former governor Claude Kirk, and then worked in administrative positions in the state comptroller's office until her death in December 1980.

In the 1967 elections, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton became the first blacks on the Jacksonville City Council since 1907. They were also the first women on the council. However, only a small part of the contributions of these two able and energetic women were focused on blacks or women specifically. Many of their efforts and successes involved meeting the needs of low-income people, including blacks and other women, as well as legislation that was considered good for the population in general. Besides giving pride to blacks, women and many others in Jacksonville, Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton brought an unusual sensitivity to the concerns of people with various hardships, as well as an unending determination to meet those needs. It is fortunate that a majority of Jacksonville voters at last realized in 1967 that they could no longer afford to deny elective leadership to blacks and women. These two dedicated public servants did not let them down.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Special Collections:

"Conference on Jacksonville History" Special Collection. Thomas G. Carpenter Library, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.

"Eartha Mary Magdalene White" Special Collection. Thomas G. Carpenter Library, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.

"Eartha Mary Magdalene White Memorial Art and Historical Resource Center." Clara White Mission, Jacksonville, Fla.

"Florida Collection." Hayden Burns Public Library, Jacksonville, Fla.

Personal files of:

Dr. James B. Crooks. Jacksonville, Fla.
Willye F. Dennis. Jacksonville, Fla.
Isadore Singleton (Jr.). Jacksonville, Fla.
Grace Brooks Solomon. Jacksonville, Fla.

Adams, Russel L. Great Negroes Past and Present, 3rd ed. Chicago: AFRO-AM Publ. Co., 1969.

The Afro-American Encyclopedia. 10 vols. North Miami, Fla.: Educational Book Publishing, 1974.

Akin, Edward N. "When a Minority Becomes a Majority: Blacks in Jacksonville Politics, 1887-1907." Florida Historical Quarterly 53 (October 1974): 123-145.

Anderson, Jervis. A. Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972.

Bartley, Numan V. The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969.

Bartley, Numan V., and Graham, Hugh C. Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975.

- Bass, Jack, and DeVries, Walter. The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequences Since 1945. New York: Basic Books, 1976.
- Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. 130th Anniversary of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church. Jacksonville, Fla.: Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, 1968.
- Bishop Kenney High School. The Crusader, 1966 (yearbook). Jacksonville, Fla.: Bishop Kenney High School, 1966.
- Bold View. Jacksonville, Fla.: City of Jacksonville, Florida, 1967-1976.
- Broderick, Francis L., and Meier, August, eds. Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965.
- Brown, Raiford, transcribed interview by Paul Weaver, October 28, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- Buie, Sampson, Jr. "The Emergence Process of Black Elected Leadership in North Carolina." Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, N.C., 1983.
- Burnett, Gene. "The Nation's First Prominent Black Militant Was a Floridian." Florida Trend 22 (May 1979): 87-90.
- Burt, John, Jr. "Black Political Participation in Florida: A Test of Three Explanations." Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1982.
- Button, James. "Blacks." In Florida's Politics and Government. Edited by Manning J. Dauer. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980, pp. 286-293.
- Cannon, Katie Geneva. "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness." In Feminist Interpretations of the Bible. Edited by Letty M. Russell. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985, pp. 30-40.
- Carleton, William G. "Negro Politics in Florida: Another Middle Class Revolution." South Atlantic Quarterly 57 (Autumn 1958): 419-432.
- Carver, Joan. "Responsiveness and Consolidation: A Case Study." Urban Affairs Quarterly 9 (December 1973): 211-250.

- Child Care Study Commission. Guidebook For Establishing Day Care Centers. Jacksonville, Fla.: Child Care Study Commission, 1971.
- Child Care Study Commission. Interim Report on Licensed Day Care Programs in Jacksonville. Jacksonville, Fla.: Child Care Study Commission, 1971.
- Chisholm, Shirley. Unbought and Unbossed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970.
- Chronicle. Jacksonville, Fla., July 6-12, 1973.
- "Church Women United in Greater Jacksonville." Pamphlet. Jacksonville, Fla.: Church Women United in Greater Jacksonville, Florida, Inc., 1984.
- Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County. "Still Separate--Still Unequal--A Study Specifically Related to Discrimination and Inequities in the Duval County Public School System by the Citizens Committee for Better Education in Duval County." Jacksonville, Fla.: Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County, 1965. In personal files of Grace B. Solomon, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Citizen's Committee for Better Education in Duval County. "Questionnaire." Jacksonville, Fla., February 5, 1965. In Solomon files.
- Citizens on the Duval County Suspension Policy. Minutes of Meeting, April 16, 1972. Jacksonville, Fla. In Solomon files.
- City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. Program. Jacksonville, Fla.: City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1913. In Eartha White Collection, Thomas G. Carpenter Library, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla., folder Z-2.
- Colburn, David R. Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Colburn, David R., and Sher, Richard K. "Florida Politics in the Twentieth Century." In Florida's Politics and Government. Edited by Manning J. Dauer. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1980, pp. 35-53.
- Colburn, David R., and Sher, Richard K. Florida's Gubernatorial Politics in the Twentieth Century. Tallahassee, Fla.: University Presses of Florida, 1980.

- Colburn, David R., and Sher, Richard K. "Race Relations and Florida Gubernatorial Politics Since the Brown Decision." Florida Historical Quarterly 55 (October 1976): 153-169.
- Colored Citizens' Protective League. Speech at meeting, n.d. In Eartha White Collection, folder F-A-5.
- The Communicator--Newsletter of the Florida Administrative and Supervisory Association. 1 (June 1976): 5. Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida Administrative and Supervisory Association.
- Community Development UPDATE 7 (September 1982). Jacksonville, Fla.: City of Jacksonville, Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans. Raleigh, N.C.: American Biographical Institute, 1975, p. 799.
- Community Planning Council, Inc. Minutes of Meetings, 1971-1974, Jacksonville, Fla. In files of Jacksonville Community Council, Inc., Jacksonville, Fla.
- Community Relations Commission: Fourth Annual Report. Jacksonville, Fla.: Community Relations Commission, 1971.
- Community Relations Committee. "First Report of the Hearing of Public Expression Subcommittee of the Community Relations Committee, April 8, 1964, Jacksonville, Florida." Jacksonville, Fla.: Community Relations Committee, 1964.
- Conference on Race Relations. List of Members. Jacksonville, Fla., [Fall] 1971. In Solomon files.
- Council of Leadership for Community Advancement (C.O.L.C.A.). Minutes of Meetings, 1972. Jacksonville, Fla. In Solomon files.
- Council of Social Agencies. "Jacksonville Looks At Its Negro Community--A Survey of Conditions Affecting the Negro Population in Jacksonville in Duval County, Florida." Jacksonville, Fla.: Council of Social Agencies, 1946.
- Council of Social Agencies, Bi-Racial Follow-Up Committee, Jacksonville, Florida, "Jacksonville Looks at Its Negro Community: Brief Report of the Bi-Racial Follow Up Committee." Jacksonville, Fla.: Council of Social Agencies, 1948.

- Council on Interracial Books for Children. Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions in U. S. History Textbooks. New York: Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977.
- Courtesy Committee, National Baptist Convention, Inc. (Eartha M. M. White, chairman). "A 'Thumb-nail' Sketch of Colored Jacksonville, Florida." Jacksonville, Fla.: Courtesy Committee, National Baptist Convention, Inc., 1936. In Eartha White collection, folder Y-1.
- The Crisis. New York: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1942-1971.
- Crooks, James B. "Changing Face of Jacksonville, Florida: 1900-1910." Florida Historical Quarterly 62 (April 1984): 439-463.
- _____. "Jacksonville in the Progressive Era: Responses to Urban Growth." Florida Historical Quarterly 65 (July 1986): 52-71.
- Darden, Joe T. "Black Political Underrepresentation in Majority Black Places." Journal of Black Studies 15 (September 1984): 101-116.
- Davis, Daniel S. Mr. Black Labor: The Story of A. Philip Randolph, Father of the Civil Rights Movement. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1972.
- Davis, Edward D. A Half Century of Struggle For Freedom in Florida. Orlando, Fla.: Drake's Publ. Co., 1981.
- Davis, T. Frederick. History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity: 1513 to 1924. St. Augustine, Fla., 1925; reprint ed., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Delta. Washington, D.C., Fall, 1978.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Jacksonville chapter. "1964-1965 Committee List." Jacksonville, Fla. In Solomon files.
- Dictionary of International Biography, 7th ed. Vol. 10, Part 3. Cambridge: Melrose Press, Ltd. 1974.
- Duval County, Florida, Office of Clerk of Court. Chancery Progress Docket. Vol. 95. Jacksonville, Fla.: Duval County, Fla., Case 78867-E, 1951.

- Duval County, Florida, Office of Clerk of Court. General Index to Court Files, 1927-1958 (5 vols.). Vol. 5; Box 3941, File 1855 AP.
- Duval County, Florida, Office of Supervisor of Elections. Jacksonville, Fla.
- Duval County School Board. Missing Pages in the Jacksonville Story: Curriculum Revision Program--Multi-Ethnic Studies Project. Jacksonville, Fla.: Duval County School Board, 1972-1973.
- Duval County Teachers' Association. Directory of the Duval County Teachers' Association. Jacksonville, Fla.: Duval County Teachers' Association, 1952. In Eartha White Collection, folder J-1.
- Dymally, Mervyn M. The Black Politician: His Struggle for Power. Belmont, Cal.: Duxbury Press, 1971.
- Ebony. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1966-1981.
- Editors of Ebony. Ebony Success Library. 3 vols. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1973.
- Ellis, Mary Carolyn, and Joanne V. Hawks. "Creating a Different Pattern: Florida's Women Legislators, 1928-1986." Florida Historical Quarterly 66 (July 1987): 68-83.
- Engstrom, Richard L. and McDonald, Michael F. "The Election of Blacks to City Councils: Clarifying the Impact of Electoral Arrangements on the Seats/Population Relationships." American Political Science Review 75 (June 1981): 344-354.
- Farmer, James. Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement. New York: Arbor House, 1985.
- Federal Writers Project, Florida. Duval County Marriage Records. Part 1, 4 vols. Jacksonville, Fla.: Statewide Rare Books Project, Florida Works Project Administration, 1940.
- Felton, Harold W. James Weldon Johnson. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1971.
- Fishel, Leslie H., Jr., and Benjamin Quarles. The Black American: A Brief Documentary History. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1967.

- Florida. The Legislation of Florida, 1947. 2 vols. Vol. 2: Special Acts Adopted by the Legislature of Florida, 1947, Part 1. Tallahassee, Fla., 1947.
- Florida, House of Representatives. Journal, 1973. Tallahassee, Fla., 1973.
- Florida, House of Representatives. Journal, 1974. Tallahassee, Fla., 1974.
- Florida, House of Representatives. Journal, 1975. Tallahassee, Fla., 1975.
- Florida, House of Representatives. Journal, 1976. Tallahassee, Fla., 1976.
- Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee. Laws of Florida, 1973. 2 vols. Tallahassee, Fla., 1973.
- Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee. Laws of Florida, 1974. 2 vols. Tallahassee, Fla., 1974.
- Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee. Laws of Florida, 1975. 2 vols. Tallahassee, Fla., 1975.
- Florida, Joint Legislative Management Committee. Laws of Florida, 1976. 2 vols. Tallahassee, Fla., 1976.
- Florida, Legislative Information Division. History of Legislation, 1973. Tallahassee, Fla., 1973.
- Florida, Legislative Information Division. History of Legislation, 1974. Tallahassee, Fla., 1974.
- Florida, Legislative Information Division. History of Legislation, 1975. Tallahassee, Fla., 1975.
- Florida, Legislative Information Division. History of Legislation, 1976. Tallahassee, Fla., 1976.
- The Florida Democrat. Tallahassee, Florida, March 1975.
- Florida Federation of Colored Women. Program. Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Federation of Colored Women, 1910. In Eartha White Collection, folder Q-4.
- Florida Flambeau. Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida State University, April 24, 1975.
- Florida Star. Jacksonville, Fla., 1955 to 1987.
- Florida Tattler. Jacksonville, Fla., August 19, 1944.

- Florida Times-Union (herein cited as FTU). Jacksonville, Fla., 1887-1987.
- Franklin, John Hope. From Slavery to Freedom. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.
- Gainesville Voice. Gainesville, Fla., January 22, 1988.
- Gibson, Harold. "My Most Unforgettable Character." Readers' Digest 105 (December 1974): 123-127.
- Giddings, Paula. When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1984.
- Girardeau, Arnett E. "Blacks and the Democratic Party." In Status of Blacks in Jacksonville, 1985: Twenty-first Annual Report. Jacksonville Urban League, Jacksonville, 1985, pp. 9-11.
- Glendening, Parris N., and White, John Wesley. "The Politics of Metropolitan Reorganization: The Black Vote." In Controversies of State and Local Political Systems. Edited by Mavis Mann Reeves and Parrish N. Glendening. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1972, pp. 215-223.
- Gold, Pleasant Daniel. History of Duval County. St. Augustine, Fla.: The Record Co., 1929.
- Grant, Joanne, ed. Black Protest: History, Documents, and Analyses: 1619 to the Present. 2nd ed. New York: Fawcett Premier, 1974.
- Griffin, Noah W. "Education." The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 7-18.
- Harley, Sharon, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, eds. The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1978.
- Harper, Roland. "Ante-Bellum Census Enumerations in Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly 6 (July 1927): 42-52.
- Harper, Samuel. "Negro Labor in Jacksonville." The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 13, 18..
- Harris, William H. "A. Philip Randolph As a Charismatic Leader, 1925-1941." Journal of Negro History 64 (Fall 1979): 301-315.
- Hill, Robert B. The Strengths of Black Families. New York: Emerson Hall Publ., 1972.

Jackson, Ernest. Transcribed interview by Paul Weaver, October 30, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.

Jacksonville, Florida, City Directory. New York: W. S. Webb & Co., 1876.

_____. New York: Webb Brothers & Co., 1882.

_____. Jacksonville, Fla.: Wanton S. Webb, 1887.

_____. Columbus, Ohio: The Wiggins Directories Publishing Co., 1903.

_____. Jacksonville, Fla.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1905-1943.

_____. Richmond, Va.: R. L. Polk & Co., 1944-1974.

Jacksonville Advocate. Jacksonville, Fla., 1967-1987.

Jacksonville Chronicle. Jacksonville, Fla., 1973.

Jacksonville City Council. Minutes of Meetings, Ordinances and Resolutions. Jacksonville, Fla., 1966-1982.

Jacksonville City Council Research Department. Files on "Sallye B. Mathis" and Mary L. Singleton. Jacksonville, Fla., 1967-1982.

Jacksonville Journal (herein cited as JJ). Jacksonville, Fla., 1905-1988.

Jacksonville League of Women Voters Asks the Questions: The Candidates Reply. Jacksonville, Fla.: League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida, [Spring] 1967.

Jacksonville Magazine. Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce, 1967-1974.

Jacksonville Metropolis. Jacksonville, Fla., 1905.

Jacksonville Urban League, Inc. A Comprehensive Look at the Jacksonville Urban League, 1956-1957. Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Urban League, Inc., 1957.

Jacksonville Young Women's Christian Association. "A Short History of Jacksonville Young Women's Christian Association." Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Young Women's Christian Association, 1982.

Jacquette, Jane S., ed. Women in Politics. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.

- Johnson, James Weldon. Along This Way: The Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson. New York: The Viking Press, 1933; reprint edition, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973.
- Johnson, Kenneth R. "Florida Women Get the Vote." Florida Historical Quarterly 48 (January 1970): 299-312.
- _____. "White Racial Attitudes as a Factor in the Arguments Against the Nineteenth Amendment." PHYLON 31 (Spring 1970): 31-37.
- Joint Center for Political Studies. The National Roster of Black Elected Officials. Washington, D.C.: Joint Center for Political Studies, 1974.
- Jones, Beverly W. "Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901." The Journal of Negro History 67 (Spring, 1982): 20-33.
- Jones, Clinton B. "The Impact of Local Election Systems on Black Political Representation." Urban Affairs Quarterly 11 (March 1976): 345-356.
- Jones, Gwendola. Speech at Minority Women's Coalition program, May 18, 1986. Jacksonville, Fla.
- Karenga, Maulana. Introduction to Black Studies. Los Angeles, Cal.: Kawaida Publ., 1982.
- Key, V. O., Jr. Southern Politics in State and Nation. New York: Vintage Books, 1949.
- Kharif, Wali R. "Black Reaction to Segregation and Discrimination in Post-Reconstruction Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly 64 (October 1985): 162-165.
- King, Mac C. "The Political Role of the Stereotyped Image of the Black Woman." In Black Political Scientists and Black Survival: Essays in Honor of a Black Scholar. Edited by Shelby Smith. Detroit: Balamp Publ., 1977.
- Kirby, Jack Temple. Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1972.
- Klingman, Peter. Neither Dies Nor Surrenders: A History of the Republican Party in Florida, 1870-1970. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1984.
- Ladd, E. C. Negro Political Leadership in the South. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966.

- Ladner, Joyce A., ed. The Death of White Sociology. New York: Random House, 1973.
- League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida. Board of Directors. Minutes of Meetings, 1962 to 1964. In files of League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Fla., Jacksonville, Fla.
- League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Florida. "Membership List, 1964." In files of League of Women Voters of Jacksonville, Fla., Jacksonville, Fla.
- Leavy, Walter. "Jacksonville: The Gateway to Florida." Ebony 36 (April 1981): 64-66.
- Lee, Howard N. "The Black Elected Official and Southern Politics." In The Black Politician: His Struggle for Power. Compiled by Mervyn M. Dymally. Belmont, Cal.: Duxbury Press, 1971, pp. 73-89.
- Lemmon, Sarah M. "Transportation Segregation in Federal Courts Since 1865." Journal of Negro History 38 (January 53): 174-195.
- Lerner, Gerda. Black Women in White America: A Documentary History. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.
- Levine, Lawrence W. Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-MAmerican Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- _____. "The Concept of the New Negro and the Realities of Black Culture." In Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience, Vol. 2. Edited by Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel M. Fox. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971, pp. 125-147.
- Levy, Eugene. "James Weldon Johnson and the Development of the NAACP." In Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century. Edited by John Hope Franklin and August Meier. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982, pp. 84-103.
- _____. James Weldon Johnson: Black Leader, Black Voice. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Lincoln Memorial Association. "Tri-Celebration--1863-1913--Lincoln, Douglass, Fifty Years of Freedom." Program. Jacksonville, Florida, February 12, 1913. In Eartha White Collection, folder O-2.

Local Government Study Commission of Duval County. Blueprint for Improvement. Jacksonville, Fla.: Local Government Study Commission of Duval County, 1965.

Mandel, Ruth B. In the Running: The New Woman Candidate. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1981.

Martin, Richard A. The City Makers. Jacksonville: Convention Press, 1972.

_____. Consolidation: Jacksonville: The Dynamics of Urban Political Reform. Jacksonville, Fla.: Jacksonville Convention Press, 1968.

Martin, Richard A., with Schafer, Daniel L. Jacksonville's Ordeal by Fire: A Civil War History. Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Publishing Co., 1984.

Mathis, Sallye Brooks. Campaign letter. Jacksonville, Fla., May 26, 1967. In Solomon files.

_____. "Jacksonville's 1960 Black History." Speech at Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, Fla., 1976. In Solomon files.

_____. "Resume: Mrs. Sallye Brooks Mathis." Jacksonville, Fla., [ca.] 1972. In Solomon files.

_____. "Resume: Sallye Brooks Mathis." Jacksonville, Fla., 1979. In Solomon files.

_____. "Rutledge H. Pearson: 'The Man For the Crisis.'" In "Intercom." Flier. Human Relations Council of Greater Jacksonville. Jacksonville, Fla., c. 1966.

_____. "Sallye B. Mathis." Press release. Jacksonville, Fla., July 25, 1967.

_____. "Sallye Brooks Mathis." Campaign flier. Jacksonville, Fla., 1971. In Solomon files.

_____. "Sallye Mathis Reports." Radio show scripts. December 18, 1972; January 13, 1978. Jacksonville, Fla.

_____. "A Study Report: Morning Star School." Jacksonville, Fla., August 18, 1971.

_____. Tape-recorded speech at meeting of Jacksonville City Council, August 24, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. In Solomon files.

_____. Transcribed interview by James S. English. August 20, 1975, Jacksonville, Fla. Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.

_____. "Why Treatment for Severely Emotionally Disturbed Children?" Jacksonville, Fla., 1973.

Matthews, Donald R., and Prothro, James W. Negroes and the New Southern Politics. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1966.

Maultsby, Eleanor Jackson. "Jacksonville Society." The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 34.

Meier, August. Negro Thought in America, 1880 to 1915. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968.

Meier, August, and Rudwick, Elliott. From Plantation to Ghetto: An Interpretive History of American Negroes, 3rd ed. New York: Hill & Wang, 1976.

Meier, August, and Rudwick, Elliott, eds. The Making of Black America. Vol. 2: The Black Community in Modern America. New York: Atheneum Publ., 1969.

Meier, August, and Rudwick, Elliott. "Negro Boycotts of Segregated Streetcars in Florida, 1901-1905." The South Atlantic Quarterly 69 (Autumn 1970):525-533.

Meltzer, Milton. Mary McLeod Bethune: Voice of Black Hope. New York: Viking Kestrel, 1987.

Miller, Damon C. "The Jacksonville Consolidation: The Process of Metropolitan Reform." B.A. thesis, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1968.

Minority Women's Coalition [Jacksonville, Fla.]. "Constitution" [1978]. Minutes; Correspondence; Programs. Jacksonville, Fla., 1978-1987.

Modern Federal Practice Digest. Vol. 10. St. Paul, Mn.: West Publishing Co., 1969.

Moody, Anne. Coming of Age in Mississippi. New York: Dell Publ. Co., 1968.

Morris, Allen, comp. The People of Lawmaking in Florida, 1822-1985. Tallahassee, Fla.: Florida, House of Representatives, 1985.

Morris, Milton D. The Politics of Black America. New York: Harper & Row, Publ., 1975.

Ms. Magazine. New York, 1979-1987.

Nash, Gary B. Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early America, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982.

National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Report (known as the Kerner Report). New York: Bantam Books, 1968.

National Association of Social Workers News. Silver Spring, Md.: National Association of Social Workers, July 1974.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Florida State Conference. "Historical Sketch of Our State President." Program. Tallahassee, Fla.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Florida State Conference, November 12, 1964.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jacksonville Branch. "N.A.A.C.P.--Please Do Not Shop Downtown Until Our Grievances Are Met." Flier. Jacksonville, Fla., n.d. In Solomon files.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jacksonville Branch. "Ten Year Memorial to Rutledge H. Pearson, Sr., 1929-1967." Program. Jacksonville, Fla.: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jacksonville Branch, December 16, 1977.

"The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc." National Black Monitor 11 (March 1986): 4-11 (New York). Supplement to Jacksonville Advocate, March 1986 (Jacksonville, Fla.).

"The Need for a Conference on Race Relations: A Rationale" Jacksonville, Fla., (Fall) 1971. In Solomon files.

Negro State Business League of Florida. "Programme of the Sixth Annual Session of the Negro State Business League of Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, July 30th-31st, 1913." Jacksonville, Fla.: Negro State Business League of Florida, 1913. In Eartha White Collection, folder B-3.

New York Times. New York, 1941-1946.

Neyland, Leedell. Twelve Black Floridians. Tallahassee: Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Foundation, 1970.

Northeast Florida Advocate. Jacksonville, Fla., 1987.

- Oates, Stephen B. Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr. New York: Harper & Row Publ., 1982.
- "Oscar Earl Mathis." Funeral program. Jacksonville, Fla., November 1961. In Solomon files.
- Pacemaker 15 (July-September 1982). Jacksonville, Fla.: Methodist Hospital.
- Palm Beach Post-Times. Palm Beach, Fla., October 10, 1975.
- Pearson, Lloyd, Jr. Transcribed interview by Paul Weaver, October 5, 1976, Jacksonville, Fla. Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- Pearson, Lloyd, Jr. Speech at Minority Women's Coalition program. May 18, 1986, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Personalities of the South. 5th ed., 1972; 7th ed., 1974; 9th ed., 1977. Raleigh, N. C.: American Biographical Institute, 1972.
- Pittsburgh Courier. Pittsburgh, Pa., 1959-1960.
- Ploski, Harry A., and Marr, Warren III. The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the Afro-American, 3rd ed. New York: Bellwether Publ., 1976. S.v. "T. Thomas Fortune: 1865-1928," p. 240.
- Powell, George W. "Business in Jacksonville." The Crisis 49 (January 1942): 9-10.
- Price, Hugh Douglas. The Negro and Southern Politics: A Chapter of Florida History. New York: New York University, 1957; reprint ed., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973.
- Quarles, Benjamin. "A. Philip Randolph: Labor Leader at Large." In Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century. Edited by John Hope Franklin and August Meier. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982.
- Rabby, Glenda Alice. "Out of the Past: The Civil Rights Movement in Tallahassee, Florida." Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Fla., 1984.
- Randolph, A. Philip. "Why Should We March?" (1942). In The Negro in 20th Century America: A Reader on the Struggle for Civil Rights. Edited by John Hope Franklin and Isidore Starr. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

Record News. Jacksonville, Fla., June 6, 1974.

Republican Executive Committee of Duval County. Minutes of Meeting. November 6, 1920, Jacksonville, Fla. In Eartha White Collection, folder C-4.

Richardson, Barbara. "Decades of Disappointment: A History of Blacks in Jacksonville, Florida, 1860-1895." D.A. dissertation, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1975; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International.

Richardson, Joe M. The Negro in the Reconstruction of Florida, 1865-1877. Tallahassee: Florida State University Research Council, 1965; reprint ed., Tampa: Trend House, 1973.

Rosenbaum, Walter A., and Kammerer, Gladys M. Against Long Odds: The Theory and Practice of Successful Governmental Consolidation. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage Publ., 1974.

Ross, B. Joyce. "Mary McLeod Bethune." In Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century. Edited by John Hope Franklin and August Meier. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1982, pp. 191-220.

St. Petersburg Times. St. Petersburg, Fla., September 14, 1972.

Sanders, Councilman Johnny. Speech at "Eve" awards event. Jacksonville, Fla., September 1974.

Schafer, Daniel L. "Eartha M. M. White: The Early Years of a Jacksonville Humanitarian." Unpublished paper. University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla., May 1976.

_____. "Eartha Mary Magdalene White." In Notable American Women: The Modern Period. Edited by Barbara Sicherman and Carol Hurd Green with Ilene Kantrov and Harriette Walker. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1980, pp. 726-728.

_____. From Scratch Pads To Dreams: A Ten Year History of the University of North Florida. Jacksonville, Fla.: University of North Florida, 1982.

- _____. "Voluntarism in Twentieth Century Jacksonville, Florida: Civic Involvement in Health, Welfare and Planning Councils." Paper presented at the First Conference on Jacksonville History, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, February 8, 1977. In "Conference on Jacksonville History" Special Collection, Thomas G. Carpenter Library, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Scheiner, Seth M. Negro Mecca: A History of the Negro in New York City, 1865-1920. New York: New York University Press, 1965.
- Schwartz, Gerald. "An Integrated Free School in Civil War Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly 61 (October 1982), 155-161.
- Scott, Anne Firor. The Southern Lady: From Pedastal to Politics 1830-1930. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Scott, J. Irving E. The Education of Black People in Florida. Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1974.
- "Seventy-fifth Diamond Birthday Observance of the Useful Life of Eartha Mary Magdalene White, 'Doctor of Humanities,' Jacksonville, Florida, 1951." Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs and Associated Citizens' Committee of One Hundred., 1951. In Eartha M. M. White Memorial Art and Resource Center, at Clara White Mission, Jacksonville, Fla.
- Shofner, Jerrell H. "Custom, Law and History: The Enduring Influence of Florida's Black Codes." Florida Historical Quarterly 55 (January 1977): 277-298.
- _____. "The Labor League of Jacksonville: A Negro Union and White Strikebreakers." Florida Historical Quarterly 50 (January 1972): 278-282.
- _____. Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1974.
- _____. "Political Reconstruction in Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly 45 (October 1976): 145-170.
- Singleton, Mary L. "Councilman Mary L. Singleton's Report: Disturbance at City Prison Farm--Friday Night, August 6, 1971." Jacksonville, Fla., 1971. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.

- _____. "Keep Mary Singleton Working For You." Campaign flier. Jacksonville, Fla., 1972. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- _____. "Mary Littlejohn Singleton" Press release. December 31, 1970. Jacksonville, Fla. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- _____. "Report on the Parental Home For Negro Girls, to the committee on Health and Welfare, Subcommittee on Child Services, Jacksonville City Council." Jacksonville, Fla., 1968. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- _____. "Resume: Mrs. Mary Littlejohn Singleton." Ca. 1974, Jacksonville, Fla. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- _____. Speech. 1969, Jacksonville, Fla. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- _____. Speech to Jacksonville Baptist Association, May 7, 1970, Jacksonville, Fla. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- _____. Tape recorded interview by Daniel L. Schafer, February 2, 1977, Tallahassee, Fla.
- _____. Transcribed interview by James Button, October 7, 1975, Tallahassee, Fla. Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- _____. "Up With People." Speech. June 12, 1968, Jacksonville, Fla. In "Singleton" file, Jacksonville City Council Research Department.
- Singleton, Roy, Jr. "History Making Blacks in the Jacksonville Area." In 1985 Black History Committee, University of North Florida--Black History: The Facts. Jacksonville, Fla.: 1985 Black History Committee, University of North Florida, 1985.
- Sloan, Lee and French, Robert M. "Race and Governmental Consolidation in Jacksonville." The Negro Educational Review 21 (April-July 1970): 72-78.
- Southeast Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. "On to Memphis, Tennessee, July 3, 4, 5, 1923." Program, n.p., Southeast Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1923. In Eartha White Collection, folder G.
- Southern Courier. Montgomery, Ala., August 26-27, 1967.

- Sparks, Maxine Dora. "Black Political Leadership in America: A Content Analysis of Selected Journal Articles." Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, Cal., 1981.
- Spradling, Mary Mace, ed. In Black and White--A Guide to Magazine Articles, and Books Concerning More Than Fifteen Thousand Black Individuals and Groups. 3rd ed. 2 vols. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1980.
- Sterling, Dorothy, ed. The Trouble They Seen: Black People Tell the Story of Reconstruction. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1976.
- Stone, Chuck. Black Political Power in America. Rev. ed. New York: Dell Publ. Co., 1970.
- Tallahassee Democrat. Tallahassee, Fla., 1974-1975.
- Taylor, A. Elizabeth. "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Florida." Florida Historical Quarterly 36 (July 1957): 42-60.
- Tebeau, Charlton W. A History of Florida. Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1971.
- Terborn-Penn, Rosalyn. "Black Male Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century Woman." In The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images. Edited by Sharon Harley and Terborg-Penn, Rosalyn. Port Washington, N. Y.: Kennikat Press, 1978, pp. 281-42.
- Thomas, J. A. "The Present Day Story of the Negro in Jacksonville." In The National Negro Blue Book, North Florida Edition. Jacksonville, Fla.: Florida Blue Book Publishing Co., 1926.
- Thomas, Robert T. "Interracial Relations." The Crisis, January 1942, pp. 19, 27.
- Thornbrough, Emma Lou. "T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Editor in the Age of Accomodation." In Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century. Edited by John Hope Franklin and August Meier. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982, pp. 19-37.
- Truth in Politics. Jacksonville, Fla., 1982-1984.
- U. S., Bureau of the Census. Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the U. S., 1900. 3rd ed. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1904.

- U. S., Census Office. 1830 U. S. Census: Duval County, Florida. Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm, series M-19.
- U. S., Census Office. 1860 U. S. Census: Duval County, Florida. Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm, series M-653.
- U. S., Bureau of the Census. Fourteenth Census of the U. S., 1920: State Compendium: Florida. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1924.
- U. S., Census Office. Compendium of the Tenth Census, 1880, Part 1. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1976.
- U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. Political Participation. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, May 1968.
- Viera, Edward. Transcribed interview by Paul Weaver, October 29, 1976. Oral History Archives, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.
- Walker, Thomas H. B. "The Story of the Negro in Jacksonville From the Pioneer Days to the Present." In The National Negro Blue Book, North Florida Edition. Jacksonville: Florida Blue Book Publishing Co., 1926.
- Ward, James R. Old Hickory's Town. Jacksonville: Florida Publishing Co., 1982.
- Watters, Pat and Reece Cleghorn. Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Arrival of Negroes in Southern Politics. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967.
- Wells, Audrey Siess, and Smeal, Eleanor Cutrie. "Women's Attitudes Towards Women in Politics: A Survey of Urban Registered Voters and Party Committeemen." In Women in Politics. Edited by Jane S. Jacqueline. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974, pp. 54-72.
- White, Arthur O. "State Leadership in Black Education in Florida, 1876-1976." PHYLON 42 (June 1981): 168-179.
- White, Eartha M. M. "Biography: James Weldon Johnson." In Eartha White Collection, folder G-2.
- _____, ed. "Pictorial Sketch of the Negro Business League (now the National Business League) and the Housewives League." National Business League, 1960. In Eartha White Collection, folder B-3.

_____. Photo of Eartha White and others at Mass Meeting of N.A.A.C.P., Jacksonville, Fla., 1952. In Eartha White Collection, folder H-5, no. 2671.

_____, comp. "Who is Who in Jacksonville, Florida." Jacksonville, Fla., n.p., 1958. In Eartha White Collection, folder I-5.

Who's Who Among Black Americans. 1st ed. (1976); 2nd ed. (1978); 3rd ed. (1981). Northbrook, Ill.: Who's Who Among Black Americans, 1978.

Who's Who in American Politics. 4th ed. (1973); 5th edition (1975); 6th edition (1977). New York: R. R. Bowker Co.

Who's Who in Florida, 1973/74. Lexington, Ky.: Names of Distinction, 1974.

Who's Who in Government. 2nd ed. (1975); 3rd ed. (1977). Chicago: Marquis Who's Who.

Who's Who in the South and Southwest. 15th ed. (1976); 16th ed. (1978). Chicago: Marquis Who's Who.

Who's Who of American Women. 8th ed. (1974); 9th ed. (1975); 10th ed. (1977). Chicago: Marquis Who's Who.

Williams, William K. "Jacksonville Experience Is Another Costly Lesson." New South (Atlanta, Ga.: Southern Regional Council) 15 (December 1960): 3-8.

"Your Community Chest, February 14-20, 1926." Pamphlet. Jacksonville, Fla.: Community Chest, 1926. In Eartha White Collection, folder B-1.

Zangrando, Robert L. The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Barbara Hunter Walch was born in [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and lived in Kenmore, New York, where she attended public schools. In 1942 she and her family moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where she attended public schools from 1942-1946 and then Tower Hill School from 1946-1951. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree, with a major in history, from Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, graduating cum laude in 1955.


She was employed as Director of Teen-age Program at the Young Women's Christian Association in New Bedford, Massachusetts, from 1955-1957 and as director of religious education at All Saints Episcopal Church in Bayside, New York, from 1959-1960. She was awarded a Master of Religious Education degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 1960.

After living with her husband and children on Sioux Indian reservations in South Dakota from 1962-1969, Ms. Walch lived in Rapid City, South Dakota, where she developed a curriculum on Sioux Indian values, history and culture that was adopted by the Rapid City public school system. In 1972, she and her family moved to Fargo, North Dakota, where she coordinated and wrote reviews of the social studies


textbooks in the Fargo and Moorhead (Minnesota) public school systems in regard to stereotypes, history and perspectives of Native Americans in the texts.

Ms. Walch moved with her family to Williston, Florida, in 1975 and to Jacksonville, Florida, in 1978. From 1980-1985 she taught history and sociology continuously as a part-time instructor at Florida Junior College in Jacksonville. She was a member of the Duval County Instructional Materials Council for Elementary social studies from 1979-1981 and a co-writer of an ethnic studies course under a National Endowment for the Humanities grant at Florida Junior College. She has been active in a number of public service organizations.


I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.


Daniel L. Schafer, Chairman
Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.


Bertram Wyatt-Brown
Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.


Charles E. Owens
Professor of Criminal Justice
and Social Welfare