

Interviewee: Mrs. George Mitchell

Interviewer: Henry ?

Date:

Q: I was just coming from New Orleans, I went from Madison to New Orleans for the historical convention. I was doing some work, mainly at **Dillard University**, using the **Rosenwald** papers, which they have on microfilm. I found in the correspondence of **Will Alexander** some references to your husband and to the Michell family. I wish I had it, but I just couldn't carry it around. If you're interested, I could send you a copy. He was evaluating George for one thing or another. It was kind of a very candid exclamation.

M: George did a job for **Rosenwald** before all of this. When he was teaching at Columbia, he went one summer and one fall, _____, to do the research for the book that he and **Horris Keaton** wrote on blacks represented in unions. Maybe that was when **Dr. Will** recommended him for that. Do you suppose it was?

Q: I think this was a little bit later. When was that book written? About 1936 or something like that? It was in the 1930s wasn't it?

M: It was in the 1930s. We were married in 1933, and he did that I guess in 1934 and 1935, and made it in 1936.

Q: It seems to me that this was either right at the start of the war or just shortly after. Even the Southern Regional Council was formed, _____. The one comment that I remember is that _____ Mitchell was comparing George and _____, and he said that George was the left softy of the two. That's the kind of letter it was. I'd be glad to make another and I can just send you a copy of it. I think you'd find it interesting.

M: I'd love to have it. Yes, thank you. We were all very fond of **Dr. Will**. George worked in

the government before he went to the Southern Regional Council. **Dr. Will** had been one of the founders of the Southern Regional Council. In fact, before it was the Southern Regional Council it was called . . .

Q: **Commission of Interracial Cooperation.**

M: That's right, and **Dr. Will** really started that.

Q: That's really where I begin my interest, although I go back to people like **George Washington Cable**. In fact I'm calling the thing "The Search for the Silent Sound." Of course Cable back in the 1880s, wrote a book called The Silent Sound. What he was saying was in regard to the racial situation and the tightening segregation and things which were at that time just really kind of getting started in a way that they came to know them later. He referred to this thing called the silent sound, that somehow if the right people spoke up this wouldn't happen. [It was] basically this [idea that] the South isn't this bad, this is wrong, and we're going off on the wrong track. He mentioned **Horris Keaton**. I don't know if you know how someone like me, with my background, got interested in the South, but I worked for a man named **William C. Haygood**, who used to be one of the executive directors of the **Rosenwald Fund** in charge of fellowships. He was a very close friend of **Horris Keaton** and **Lillian Smith** and some others.

M: I'm trying to remember if I didn't meet him when George and I were in Chicago for the last bit of that work on that book that he and Horris did together.

Q: In fact Horris Keaton just recently died.

M: Did he? I didn't even know.

Q: He did [die]. It was, I think, maybe a year or less. Bill was the one that mentioned it to me and he started talking about [his involvement]. I hadn't even known. He's editor of the Wisconsin magazine *History*, which is put out by the state historical society, which every state kind of has one. I'm his editorial assistant. Just by getting to know him more and more and more, he's the one that kind of got me interested in this whole thing to start with. He said what a close friend **Horris Keaton** was.

M: I wish you could have known Horris. He was really something. **Horris Keaton** was George's and my, I don't know about George but I think it's almost true, that he was our first real close Negro friend. **Rosenwald** asked George [to help with] this book. [The book] was about black workers, but obviously in those days you couldn't send a black man into society, mill executives and people like that. [He] just wouldn't have gotten the information and they would have been suspicious of him if he attended union meetings and things like that. So what they did was that Horris worked the unions, he got the information on the factory unions in the North, and George got the information on black people and unions in the South. That's why he spoke with somebody just sitting [up on porch]. That's a true tale, sitting up on the porch at **Union Manor**.

Q: This is in Birmingham.

M: Yes, [that was in Birmingham]. So George agreed to do this thing, but he had never met Horris, and Horris came on from Chicago to New York to talk to George about how they would work their plans out. George said to me, and of course we hadn't been long married, [so] I don't think George knew exactly how I would be about all of this, but he

said, now Horris is coming to talk and we'll probably talk all morning. [He said] there isn't any place up here around Columbia where Horris and I could eat, he would have to go down and eat _____. He said, I think we'll have to have him for lunch, and how do you feel about that? I said, I'm perfectly all right [with that]. My only fear about the whole thing was that I wouldn't know how to make Horris feel at home. I just didn't know for sure that he would know that I didn't at all object to having him for lunch.

Q: I bet that was a tough position.

M: _____ Horris and just never for a single minute [thought] why are you eating, [or] considered any of that. I didn't even know what color Horris was _____. After all that business we split, and then the two men split off and Horris did his work that summer and then George did his work that summer. Then in the fall we went to Chicago and rented an apartment, and then Horris and George worked together on it until a certain term started when we went back to Columbia. So during that time in Chicago we saw quite a lot of Horris. In fact, he had a nervous breakdown while we were there and we drove him. The doctor said that he didn't really need anything so much as he needed to get out and have real exercise and fresh air. We found our place calming most of the times. George called him up and asked him, it was past the season for that time and visitors, and they said Horris could come up if he wanted to. They'd let him saw wood and just sleep late.

Q: Where was this at?

M: [This was in] Canada. We got the car _____. George did all the driving and Horris and I sang every known song all the way up. He really was a great guy. He kept shoving

books at me to read while we were there in Chicago, and I didn't have a thing to do. I didn't know anybody and they were busy and couldn't go anywhere, so I just stayed home all day and concocted a meals, but otherwise read books. Horris kept shoving all kinds of things at me. Most of them I couldn't even _____, until finally I just said, Horris, don't give me anymore, I can't stand it. I never once have thought about, what are you thinking when I say thus and so? But after reading all these things? I made the Negro reaction to whatever the white man said. Just the very words you use are something, [but] here's then a different slant on them. Now I sit and wonder, did I say something wrong when I was with Horris? Did I make the wrong choice of words? Did he get the wrong impression? I'm sick of it! I don't want to have to think all the time about whether I'm doing the wrong thing with you! He just laughed. He was a great guy. He was a very interesting person. **Henry** started out as a _____.

Q: I didn't know that. I know he came from the west or something.

M: He did [come from the west]. Another very interesting thing, I thought, just an absolutely great coincidence, was that we discovered that Horris' grandfather and George's grandfather came from the same plantation hunk of Mississippi. Wasn't that funny? [They were from] the same plantation so to speak. George's grandfather was something or another and Horris' grandfather was on that plantation. When the war was over they both lost everything, of course Horris' grandfather didn't have anything to lose, he [just] got his freedom. He shoved as far away from it as he could and went to the state of Washington, I believe, or something on the west coast. George's grandfather, that

Mitchell grandfather, went to Texas I believe.

Q: Is that where George was born?

M: No, George was born in Richmond, because his father was here at the University of Richmond. [He] was one of the greatest teachers you could ever imagine. Dr. Mitchell's got some good teaching sons, but there ain't any of them with quite his same [method]. [They are] different, and maybe just as effective in different ways, but Dr. Mitchell was a most powerful source in classroom lecture.

Q: What was his subject? History?

M: Yes, [he taught history]. When he started out, he was really trained as a Baptist minister. Quite early on, before there was ever any such thing in the world as a chair of history, he decided that history was for him. He asked the University of Richmond if he could leave a bachelor's to go to the University of Chicago, where he had to study history _____. When he came back, he said nobody teaches history.

Q: When was this about?

M: Golly, I don't know, I don't know when it was. But he insisted on it and said that if they wouldn't give him a sabbatical on pay he'd just go in by himself. I'm sure about that. They did take him on after he came back. So he taught at the University of Richmond for many, many years. [Then he] went down to South Carolina as president of that university and [then] went to Delaware as the president of that university. Then decided that he really didn't like administrative work as much as he liked teaching. _____ turned that man off from students, and so he came back in his latter years at the University of

Richmond, where he taught right straight through the war. He was eighty-two when he stopped teaching.

Q: That's pretty good.

M: He was really powerful. _____ is a good teacher too. I don't have any doubt, but I never heard him give a classroom lecture. Have you read any of _____ books?

Q: I haven't read any, but I am familiar with [it]. I've read parts, I think, of **Alexander Hamilton**?

M: Yes, and he early on wrote some text books on economics.

Q: Right, [he wrote on] industrialism in the South.

M: One of his textbooks was reviewed by a university review. I can't remember which one it was, but the person who was reviewing it _____ by saying that it was a strange thing to find under one cover, I don't remember the quote, but the idea was that under the cover of one book he found Carl and Harpo Marx together. He was always making cracks, which I think he thought _____, jokes to make things funny.

Q: I take it quite a few of them must have been off color in certain circumstances.

M: I don't know that they were really off color, _____, not the way we think of it today anyhow.

Q: You mentioned before that **Roy Odum** was big inspiration in terms of this film and the ideas presented.

M: I think **Joe Joyes** gave **Odum** the credit for his hand **encompassing** this idea of the South, in that kind of a picture in the South being divided up geographically by state

lines.

Q: It may have been before you met him, but when did George first become committed to the idea that the racial situation in the South, as it existed then, was wrong and needed to be changed?

M: I think he was born in bed with it with his father, as far as that goes. The idea was always there, the belief was always there, but he didn't actively enter into it until he got into the Southern Regional Council. Of course I guess his government job that he had with the old **Farmer's Security Administration** was the first time he really had a chance to put anything into it. [It was] just theorized as long as he was a professor, and that's a right far removed thing, you know, from _____. I think the government job did George a lot of good. I think [for] people in universities, teachers, it's an uncompromising purist thing with them, but when you're right at putting it into practice, you realize you've got to compromise and give a little in order to get any work [done]. I think that government bit did help George on that to know if you're going to get anything across, that [you've got] to give a little here.

Q: So even before he was in with the government his ideas were even more radical than at the Southern Regional Council?

M: All I'm trying to say is that as long as he was just teaching it, it looked as if he could use a straight line on what you believe. When you really come right into it, if you're dealing with people, there isn't any such thing really as a straight line. You've just got to go around this one a little bit and go around that one to get yonder. I think having the

government job first taught him that. [It] broke down that uncompromising ideal that you might have as a professor of how things could work. When he left the government, he first did a job for the Southern Regional Council. At the end of World War II, when all the black veterans were coming back, the council decided that a good way to keep any racial riots from developing was to get these youngins that came in and try to help them know what their opportunities were and [know] what the government had ready for them.

Q: These are the black G.I.'s?

M: [Yes], the black G.I.'s. So that they wouldn't come home and just beat their heads and then explode, you see, or fight for democracy when they came back to the South and found there wasn't any. So the council set up a special job, [and] George headed that. I don't know how many [he had, but it was] quite a number of young black veterans who _____ into Southern counties to make dead sure that those county people knew that they had to come up with what the government was ready to offer them, to the G.I.'s. The G.I.'s didn't know it, and the local little county offices didn't really know them well. They may have known it was there, but unless somebody asked for it they weren't going to [tell them]. So they did a right good job on that I think, but when the job was over it was over. So he did that, and then he worked for a CORP _____ for awhile.

Q: When did he work for the Southern Regional Council?

M: [When did he go] into the Southern Regional Council? When he went with that it was in that summer just after _____ Day and just before **VJ Day**.

Q: And that's when he was with the Southern Regional Council's _____?

M: He was with them until he retired in 1957. He was with them for twelve years, so that makes 1945-1957, and then he retired and went to Scotland _____. We were there for five years and he _____. [I wish there was more I could remember to tell you.] I don't know much.

Q: I'm sure that there is lots more. I wish I was a better interviewer. You know you sit down and you use books all day in and day out. It's like you say, and again, it's all theory. You have this idea and that idea, but when you actually sit down and talk to someone that's been there and been through it, you come off with just a totally different feeling. I think this way I've just learned a lot more. I had heard of the George Mitchell and **Horris Keaton** book, but somehow I never associated George Mitchell as being the brother of **Broddis Mitchell**, who I heard of. As a history student I've had to read these excerpts from some of his books because he's an important historian.

M: Have you ever seen **Broddis**?

Q: No, [I have never seen him].

M: Well if you ever go to New York to visit us, then [you'll have to meet him]. He's a great old guy. **Broddis** was the oldest one of the Mitchell children, there were five of them. He was at **Hopkins** for many, many years, and thrown out of Hopkins really for interracial **reasons** because he insisted that that university ought to open up for blacks.

Q: Now when was this?

M: Oh no, I never know dates.

Q: Will you just roughly guess?

M: That was roughly about 1935 or somewhere along in there. George and I were already married. He was _____. They had all kinds of reasons. He was much too radical. He was always _____. I don't know which was the final blow, but it very definitely was his preaching at them all the time to open up to blacks. That was one of the main [reasons they fired him]. Then he also ran for the socialist government for mayor _____, and I don't think they liked that. Of course he knew he wouldn't win, but he tried anyway.

Broddis was the kind of man, I say was because I don't think he's quite this full of barbs any more, [but] he had the best command of words. He never laughed [except] at just the right one. If he wanted to be nice to me, nobody could say nicer things than **Broddis**.

And if he wanted to cut you down, nobody could run that race. He used to be really quick about running it too. But age is mellowing, and he's much gentler and kinder.

Q: How old is **Broddis** now?

M: Well let's see. George was born in 1902, so that would make him what, sixty-nine?

Broddis is seventy-nine, **Broddis** is ten years older.

Q: I guess my topic is such. I've just had such excellent response from just the type of things I've written, just kind of bashing right in and jumping right in. I guess it's something that the people who I'm writing to take kind of a personal interest in and have had some experience themselves. I've had some other comments like that, that you want to talk to me. I wrote a librarian who said, come talk to my Uncle Harry when you're in town, and stuff like this. People have just been coming up to me like that, and that's really been the nicest part of the whole thing because it's been just a wealth of the type of information

that I'm going to be able to come up with that you just don't come up with in a research library.

M: You know, there was somebody [that] took down a tape, if I'm not mistaken, [of] Dr. Will's memoirs.

Q: Yeah, they're at Columbia University. They have an oral history project. Eventually I'd like to see them, but I just don't have immediate plans for going to New York. I don't know if you're familiar with it, but there's a book by **Dikeman**, a biography of **Will Alexander**. It was done about the early 1960s. It's called The Seeds of Southern Change, and they use that extensively. So I've already seen some of the things that you can expect to find in it.

M: I just remember when Dr. Will was dictating it. Anyway, the stenographer who had to turn it into paper had his buddies all the time doing it because people here in Georgia know that accent, but if you're not used to it, you missed lots of things. Now in any of your things are you doing anything about **Ms. Dixie-Mason**?

Q: I've run across her name of course. She is more interested in the labor thing, which touches on my thing, but . . .

M: You're really steering clear of that. You can't get spread too thin.

Q: Right. For my purposes I think I'm going to certainly mention [her]. I've found some interesting letters from her in some of the stuff I was looking at with the **Rosenwald** papers, which are a fascinating collection, as you can well imagine. Here's all their files that they've applied for fellowships and things like that. We found some really interesting

things in there. I found one from when she would be organizing in some Southern town and she'd get arrested, and then she'd say her name and be released.

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Q: See in my period again, especially during the 1940s and during the war, for many reasons that we were fighting fascism abroad and the way that blacks were treated in the South seemed to be a contradiction of what we were fighting for. It suddenly dawned on a lot of white Southerners and influenced them very much. Many people at this time who had called themselves the so-called liberals of the South were suddenly faced with the issue that finally the whole segregation/Jim Crow thing was going to be challenged directly. Before that there were issues like lynching, which took up a lot of attention, and even later the poll taxing and suffrage questions. You had a lot of people, white Southerners at this time, that just felt that challenging segregation would do more harm for the blacks than it would do good in terms of forcing off the Ku Klux Klan types and actually impeding progress. I just wonder if your husband had any feelings like that. Was he always committed to a type of Jim Crow was wrong and that it should be challenged idea, or when did he shift or move with the time and feel that time is here to actually confront the whole Jim Crow system directly? In other words, there were a lot of people that basically took the position of being separate but equalers. They were basically emphasizing the equality of education but maintaining a separate school system for blacks. I think the best example of someone, you've probably heard of this, is Virginia's _____, who for many years wrote lots of books about liberals from the South. His

position was that the Supreme Court decision was wrong because it's going to raise all sorts of evil forces. He supported the resistance movement, the massive resistance in Virginia.

M: I don't know, but I like _____. I can tell you right now that I've heard George and Ms. Lucy sit in Atlanta and talk about how _____ had sold out and he wasn't living up to what he was at **Duke**. I don't ever remember a time when George didn't think that they ought to have equal everything. I don't know about any transition period at all. I think he grew enormously as the years went by with all the things [that happened]. He had an appreciation for all of them. When he was a little younger the opportunities weren't so much, but he certainly had been brought up to believe, and as the opportunities presented themselves, he put it into practice. He did lots of good cause things.

Q: I think in the case of the Mitchell brothers, the fact of what type of family they came from is probably very important.

M: Of course it is, you just can't get away from that.

Q: A lot of the sources that I'm using now are people like **Lilian Smith**, who will be a classic example of someone who kind of had to go through a whole conversion experience because somehow everything that she was taught by her parents suddenly just seemed so wrong and terrible to her. You love your parents, but how do you tell them that what they believe in is wrong?

M: When you don't have to buck your whole upbringing on it, it's a lot easier I'm sure.

Q: Right, and to some degree **Bill Haykitt** was very much like this too. He said that until he

was a young man in his twenties, he had never had any contact with blacks other than as a servant.

M: Although as a child I don't suppose George ever did either. He played with the little black children in South Carolina, like all the other white children did, but then they went up to Delaware, and I suppose there wasn't any blacks. Then [he went] back to Richmond, and there certainly weren't any opportunities to work together or be thrown together at a college level in those days [because] they weren't there. Certainly at **Hopkins** he wouldn't have had any. Maybe at **Baylor**, yes. Then back to New York, yes, but not even so much then, you know. Think of the fact that **Horris Keaton** wouldn't have been able to eat anywhere in the _____ neighborhood in the 1930s, not anywhere. That doesn't seem so long ago to me, but actually it is a long time. Forty years, isn't it.

Q: Again, until I was in New Orleans last week I'd never been in the South before at all. I had very little contact with Southerners and my images were what I've read and seen on TV. I was kind of growing up through this and I can remember the Little Rock thing as a kid. This is really like my formative years, and that's why I guess I'm very much concerned about race relations because I grew up when this was the only thing everyone talked about. It's changed somewhat now, but that's where I am in my head. We had to drive through Mississippi and everything, and I thought I was going to have to be ducking bullets and stuff like that. And God, if I ever got stopped by someone, it's going to be all over. This was my impression of what the South was like. In the back of my

mind I knew it was probably exaggerated, but this was my image.

M: But it isn't so exaggerated you know. Of course, you can ride through the South and never see the things that you could _____. You can still see exactly all these old things all over again if you go far enough back into the backwoods. They're still not out of those woods yet. The reports of the Southern Regional Council as they come to you now are still that there's a lot left to be done.

Q: My impression with New Orleans was that while Negroes might have been getting the short end of the stick there now, it certainly was no different than Chicago, which is where I'm from. In many ways, their position there now is preferable to the position of Chicago blacks in terms of you don't have this one continuous, horrible, slum ghetto around there.

M: I don't know anything about it. I haven't been in New Orleans in so many years. Oh well. We've come a long way and I do think if we could ever get over this hump and learn how to live together, that probably the Negroes would still feel more at home in the South. We are the same kind of people! I mean Southerners, be they black or white, really have so much the same kind of everything. But of course the blacks are not very interested now to own up to any of that. I think, Henry, if I could just live long enough, I don't want to live a long time, but if I did live long enough, I'd see it. When they get over all the bitterness, if we ever learn to all live together, we can all be happy about it.

Q: I'm going to school at Wisconsin in medicine. It struck me when I first saw it, it's just something I hadn't been used to seeing, but now there's a lot of interracial dating going

on where it's both the black guys and white girls think it's cool to be dating someone, especially for a white girl to be dating a black guy. It sort of enhances her own image and the black guy likes to date the white girl because it enhances him. It's something you don't even notice anymore. You say, so what, if that's what bothered so many people, what's the big deal about it? This is one thing I didn't see in New Orleans.

M: It'll be a while for New Orleans, and yet it goes on. I've seen [interracial dating] at **BCU**. I've seen a black boy and a white girl walking down the street, so I'm sure it goes on. Of course that's whole human cry that the white South raised. I don't want my daughter doing that. There was a little bit of that at the school at first, and you still see a lot of the girls sitting at the tables with the white boys, and obviously enjoying themselves. But by and large they seem to prefer their own. There has been a little debating.

Q: I'm trying to gauge somebody who is obviously a racial liberal, but did this ever bother someone like your husband personally? Did he have anything to say? Can you speak for him, or even for yourself maybe, that there's something personally, if not just undesirable, about it?

M: [I'm] just really glad that both my daughters didn't end up with a mixed match. I remember saying to George, in the **Horris Keaton** era, that I really thought the only solution for the race business was in a marriage. I think that's the only way, eventually, we could all just get to be the same color. We wouldn't worry about any of this anymore. However, I am glad that with all of our acquaintances and things and our teaching and what not, that I could just see our two daughters not end up with a black husband. I am

very glad that they didn't for the simple reason that I just happen to feel that marriage is a complicated situation under the best circumstances. It's not impossible for that to work out happily, but it's a lot harder, and it's harder on the children too, I feel, until we get over the hump of it. Theoretically I have no problems with it, [but] practically I have a lot.

Q: I see. The reason I ask that is not to try and get too personal or prying, but it just seems to me that this was the issue that was always thrown in the face of people like your husband.

M: It was always thrown at him and they would say, and what would you say if your daughter wanted to date a black man or a black man asked her to marry him? He always said, well she could say no. Nobody has to make that, but if that decision was yes, then we'd stand behind her. [Did you see] that movie that Katherine Hepburn did, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?"

Q: No, I didn't particularly see that, but I know what it's about.

M: Well that was a real good movie, and I think that would be just about the way that many white parents would [act]. It would be something you'd have to swallow twice over maybe. I'm pretty sure it is something that you do have [to adjust to]. **Broddis'** daughter married a Negro, and they have a darling little boy whom she named **George Sinclair Mitchell-Byer**. So we've got in the family. I did meet Jim. I can't remember whether they were engaged or already married when I met him, I just briefly went out to meet him. They came in and I was there. He's an awfully nice young man that **Dora** met at **Cornell**. They met at _____ somebody _____. I think _____. What's the

other [one]?

Q: Urban League.

M: Urban League. I believe he was Urban League. Anyway, that seems to be a very happy marriage, and **Broddis** and Louise absolutely dote on that child. But I think, between you and me, Louise and Broddis swallowed once or twice over that. (Laughing)

Q: I know how my own family felt about that too, so I don't think it's something that's unique to just Southerners.

M: No, I don't think so at all. You know the old adage, I'm sure, that the South always says it doesn't matter how high they rise, we don't care how high up they get, as long as they don't get too close. The South says, don't care how close they get as long as long as they don't rise up _____.

Q: No, I hadn't heard that.

M: There's a lot to that I think. I was surprised when I went to live in New York with George that things weren't any better than they were up there. We were all used to having what we called good friends. I know it was paternalistic, but we all did have really good friends amongst the colored people that worked for us. Now you see that sort of thing is gone from the South. You don't have that close relationship anymore because colored people don't work for you in the main, and if they do, they are indifferent. They are a different thing all together. There used to be some absolute devotion there in those relationships that you don't have under the present situations. I think the end result is going to be much better. It's much better to have a friend who is your own equal than a

friend who isn't your own equal. In those days we felt we had something in common, which I think is nice.[At] **Araca** last year [they] did away with all the black schools, and in absorbing the teachers and so forth they tried to spread them around. I don't think they tried very hard, but anyway, we got some of them. We got the librarian who had been librarian for the **Virginia Randolph High School** that had been eliminated, the black high school in _____ County. She is a lovely girl from Charlottesville and trained at **Virginia Union University** in the library where she was. She was all that, she is all that, but she isn't with us anymore. She went back up to Virginia Union University to get her master's in media. We just didn't have any difficulties whatever [communicating]. She's just a great girl, young, she was twenty-six, younger than my children really, but not for one single solid instant did she be anything but what she was. [She was] fully trained [and] fully capable, she didn't throw over on you, but you knew [what she] was and she stood on that. She didn't act subservient in any way, and neither did she have to be hoity toity to make up for it. That whole school really would give anything to get her back. When she left the principal said, after one year, I've never heard anyone give this nice a speech and telling everybody about her. He just hopes to this good day that she's going to come back. I know she's not.

Q: This is at your school?

M: [This is at] our school. She just talked perfectly naturally about her mother and her father and how her father is a mechanic over there in Charlottesville. Her mother works for a white woman and always has done that sort of work. **Audrey** is of another [make up],

and yet she doesn't belittle any of that. I'd rather have that kind of person for a _____ friend than a washwoman. She was a great gal.

Q: Sydney, I hate to cut you off. It's been fascinating for me personally just to sit here and talk.

M: Well I don't feel that I've given you anything. I wish I could think of something that would help you, but I just haven't got anything.

Q: I suppose I could have found some of the factual material just of when George was with the council and what years.

M: Well you can find all those things written up.

Q: Right, but after seeing that movie especially and then talking with you, and then knowing what I do about some of the other people, I feel like I've gotten an interesting line that hadn't had before.

M: There are lots of people who ought to be able to tell you that you've probably got more people to see than you can see. You are going to Atlanta [right]?

Q: Yes, I'm going.

M: And you will go to the Southern Regional Council [right]? An awfully nice young man is head of it now. There's another young man there, I think he's still with the council, **Emory Vaughn**, who would be good to talk to.

Q: My immediate plans are I'm going to be going to Washington tomorrow. I'm going to be there for a couple days, and while I'm there I'm going to talk to **Raper**, who again was both actively involved. Was he good friends with George?

M: Yes, he was [good friends with George].

Q: Originally I got his name, of course, from my reading and stuff like that, but I also understood from someone else that he's a very nice man.

M: He is a very nice man.

Q: He has papers of his own in his home in **Oakden**, Virginia, and said that he'd be delighted to have someone come by and look at them. I just wrote him a similar letter that I did to you and he said come out. So I'm looking forward to that very much. In Atlanta I'm going to be down both at Emory and Atlanta University under the Southern Regional Council. Atlanta is probably the place I'll have to be the longest. I just came to Richmond the day before yesterday from New Orleans. It's convenient because I have a place to stay here, which makes things really nice. I'm going up to Washington, coming back to Richmond, and then going to Charlottesville to look at the **Virginia Stanley** papers. Again, it's interesting from a point of view as a dropout. He's still alive I take it.

M: Is he?

Q: I just don't know.

M: You know I don't know either, though I should. I think he's dead now.

Q: It's quite possible.

M: I'm not real sure about that. Of course **Ralph McGill** is gone. He's another one [that would have been good to interview].

Q: Well I originally wanted to use **McGill** as a representative. What I'm doing is I'm taking several institutional representatives of liberals, like someone from the church, someone

from the university, and someone from the press. I find that most of these people in the South, somehow, there is kind of a group consciousness about them and they need some sort of institutional set up where they can work out of and sort of be accepted by the rest of the community at large, and thus I'm taking these institutional representatives. One of these [is] McGill. His papers are now at Emory, but they're closed and they're working on them and they won't be ready for awhile. I think **Stanley** would make an interesting example because of the fact that he did shift. Actually, he was consistent.

M: He may have been. I think he shifted, but I'm not real sure about that because George and Ms. Lucy, when they were talking about him, always thought that he got off to a right start but he didn't ever grow any. They just felt he went back on what his potential was. How justified they were in that I don't know. With **Ralph McGill** they had great doubts about it one time whether he was really going to come through, but boy, he came through. There was a real changing in him if you could ever dig that out. There was a time back then when everybody who was liberal in Atlanta kept saying, but **Ralph McGill**, what is wrong with Ralph McGill that he doesn't come out now? Some people excused him by saying that his paper wouldn't allow it or he would be thrown off if he did take a stand at some point in time, but he eventually came through it with flying colors where his daddy never did. McGill gave the kind of leadership that **Virginia Stanley** never achieved.

Q: That's right. McGill opposed [the desegregation] while the school cases were in the courts, he said it would be wrong, but apparently once he said ultimately it's the law, [he

said] we should obey it.

M: Then when he changed he really came out strong on the other side and really lit it in that paper. He really gave some strong leadership. I think he actually did really change and grow. At a certain point being there you just cut off, so far no problem and that was it. [But] you can't just stop. You slide back or you go forward, [but] nobody stands still.

Q: I think that's it. It's not that he changed, it's that he stopped.

M: He just stopped.

Q: He refused to change any further. That's one of the points I'm trying to make, that the issues that tested the white Southerners in their racial attitudes changed through the years. First it was just education of blacks, and **Lauren** was considered quite a traumatic step and it took some courage to stand out for it. Then came the lynching. At first to take a stand against lynching meant that you would ruin all the white women of the South, and finally some people took a very strong stand on lynching. And again the issue changes to something else and it's not lynching but voting rights, and some of the people drop by. Then it's now to all these other things and it's the actual segregation issue itself. You've got to keep either moving with it or dropping behind.

[end of interview on side B3]