

Paul Ortiz: Now, you and your husband, you originally, the first place you lived at was the Veterans Projects?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right.

Paul Ortiz: And were you both at that time beginning to teach here?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No. We both were in school. My husband finished. He got his BS degree that summer, and then he got a job teaching in Macon County at a place called Prairie Farms.

Paul Ortiz: Prairie Farms?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Mm-hmm. And I was going to school, and he taught there, I think, for 15 years, 14 or 15 years. And I would go— See, I was having children in between this time, and I would go to school during the semester. No, Tuskegee was on a quarter basis then. And I would go to school during the summer, and maybe a quarter, until I finally got my BS. That's what I did.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Brown, during those years in Tuskegee, was there a sense that there were different parts of town that people live in? I guess different neighborhoods, different—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: During that time?

Paul Ortiz: Yes. 1950, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: The people lived in Tuskegee during that time, the area that they lived in, this is back in the early fifties, right?

Paul Ortiz: Yes.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: That's bad, but I can't say. I don't know.

Paul Ortiz: Because some people, I just started to hear about different areas. Like people have mentioned Green Fork, Rockefeller—

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Rockefeller Hill.

Paul Ortiz: Yes.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: All right. Yes. It seemed to be around here close that they lived in a place called, well, Green Fork. Green Fork is in this area, in, I'm saying kind of this area. And there's a place called

Greenwood. Greenwood, which is kind of over here in another section. Greenwood.

Paul Ortiz: And that's closer to the Institute?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes, it is.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And then there was a place called, there's a street called Bibb Street, but I don't know what section. It's close to the campus. I don't know what you'd call it, where a lot of people who worked at the Institute and the VA lived, in that particular area. But other sections at that time, seemed to me, was scattered out. Now, in this section right here, there may have been one or two houses right here in this section, but that's all. And to see how things have changed, how things have built up, we have another section of town, two, three other sections of town, people have just built houses. Houses. I was telling you about houses, about the only thing that goes here. And, oh, they have some beautiful mansions around in some sections now, but at that time, at that time, no, they were not there.

Paul Ortiz: I see. Now, what would have been there where those mansions were? Now, that's around the lakefront. What—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, you might see that. What was there?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Nothing.

Paul Ortiz: Nothing?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No trees. Well, yeah. Trees. Trees. Trees and wooded areas. And that's as far as I know.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. So where was your next stop, you and your husband, in terms of living? You were living in the Veterans Project, and now what came next?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Where did I go next?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Okay. Now, there was the Veterans Project, and right here from the Veteran Project was known as the Washington Project. And that's where we moved. From the Veteran Project to the Washington Project.

Paul Ortiz: Now, were both of these privately-owned?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They were owned, like I said, the land was owned by Tuskegee Institute, and the houses, they were owned by the government. So Tuskegee Institute wanted their land, so the government had to sell the houses. They sold the houses.

Paul Ortiz: I see. And then the Washington Project, was there any particular reason that you moved from the Veterans Project to the Washington's Project? Was that—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, yes. One reason. The main reason was, we didn't have gas heat in the Veterans Project. Now, that was one of my main reasons. We had to have wood heat or coal heat that we was heated by. And we didn't stay there long. We didn't stay there long. We stayed there about seven, eight months, six months, something like that. And we moved to the Washington Project. Washington Project had gas heat and gas stove. And that was a big change.

Paul Ortiz: Now, was it crowded? Were there crowded conditions, say, at the Veterans Project?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah. You got to get on a waiting list, and you would stay on the people who were in charge, and you'd put your name on the waiting list. Because people that worked in this area, you had students living in those projects, and you had people who worked in this area living in those projects. So students, when they'd finished, they'd be leaving. And sometimes people who had jobs would get jobs maybe other places, and they would be leaving. So for that reason, you had people coming and going, and you had to get on a waiting list, until you could get— And that's what happened to us. That was the main reason we lived in the Veteran Project, because we had to be on the waiting list for the Washington Project.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, I see.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And we got there, and then we stayed in the Washington Project for, I guess, about two years. Let's see. Three years. Three years. And we moved in a house on the other end of town, which is over on Gautier Street. Was it Gautier Street? Yeah. Gautier Street, which is across town from the campus.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, I see. Oh, that's on the other side of campus. Is that on Montgomery Highway?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No. Oh, well, yes. Across the highway. I'll point to it.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: It's back over that way. You know where the downtown area is?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Okay. It's back from the downtown area. Gautier Street.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay. It's like on the way out to Highway 81, or on that side, or, I was told—

Cordelia Manuel Brown: 81. Oh, yeah, it's on the other side of Highway 80.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. And then this was your first house?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, in the Washington Project, they had houses, individual houses. We lived in a house in the Washington Project. And yeah, this was a house we lived in over there on Gautier Street. I didn't tell you this. I never wanted to live in Alabama, but I told my husband, "We're not going to live here." He had put down a payment on a house here in Tuskegee, and I said, "This is not my thing. I never wanted to live in Tuskegee." But as time went on, this is about five years later, I said, "If we're going to live here, we might as well have a house rather than pay rent. It doesn't make sense." Because he was teaching then, and he did go back to school and get his Master's, so he could go to school at night and work on his master's, and he could teach during the day. Plus I could go back and work on my degree. Now, that made sense to me.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: But I did say, "If we're going to live here, we might as well get a house of our own instead of paying rent." So he finally got this lot out here, and we scrapped and saved to build a house out in this area.

Paul Ortiz: But initially you didn't want to really live in Tuskegee. Was there any reason? Were you hoping to go back to Tennessee, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, my husband told me, he said, "If there's any place in this country that you want to live, just let me know. And that's where we'll go." Now, I think this is just something that was in my mind, but I realized that in having children, and my husband had a job, it didn't make sense to go someplace looking for a job and finding a place to live. And no, I didn't have any particular place in mind. I wasn't going back to Greeneville to live. I mean, that's my home. I would go back, but that wasn't my desire, to go back.

Paul Ortiz: Right.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And I certainly wasn't going to Mississippi to live. And I also felt that in having a family, it is important to have a place that you can call your own, and the children can feel comfortable in knowing that they don't have to get up and move, or I don't have to move because somebody says, "You've got to move. I want my house." Now, that's the way it was in the project. That put a lot of people out, to get their own homes. Because when Tuskegee Institute said they wanted their land, the government had to sell those houses and get them off that land. Now the land is vacant. There's nothing there.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, did that happen in the early fifties, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah. It was during the fifties.

Paul Ortiz: And they wanted to clear out that land.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Mm-hmm. So a lot of people who were living there then, they bought houses or had houses built. And at that time, the reason we got out from over there, we had to get out. That's when we had to get out, and we moved over on Gautier Street. And we stayed over there, well, a couple of years, I guess. And I didn't see my husband going anyplace, and I didn't see myself going anyplace else, because I didn't know where I wanted to go. And we talked about it, and we talked about it, and we realized that this was a nice place, we thought, to bring up our children. And he had a job, and I was working toward my degree, still working towards that degree. And I, at one day, would be teaching, and we would just find a place to build a house of our own. So he went searching for our land, and he found this lot out here that was vacant, and he bought this spot. And this is where we've been ever since.

Paul Ortiz: So you moved into this house on North Josephine during the 1950s, or later?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No. That came later. Much later. Let me see.

Paul Ortiz: Sixties?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Let's see now. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Right, right, right. Sixties. Early sixties. Maybe '59 or '60, something like that.

Paul Ortiz: What was social life like here in Tuskegee during the fifties?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: For me?

Paul Ortiz: Mm-hmm.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, I'm really not an outgoing person. I'm not. Never have been. But the social life, well, one thing you find here, you do find different organizations. They have different things. And most of the— Well, you always have churches, who may have different social gatherings and whatnot. But right here in Tuskegee, at that time, back in those days, I know there was a movie downtown. Used to have a movie downtown. And then the other social gatherings would be related to the Tuskegee Institute, because they did have things. And then different social organizations from the campus.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They would have social gatherings, or if you want call it that, where the public would be invited sometime, and sometimes it would be invitation, but that's about it. Then if you wanted go someplace else, you'd go to Atlanta. If you want to go someplace for social life, to socialize, you'd go to Atlanta, to Montgomery. Some people even went to Birmingham. So there was a choice of an outlet. Of course, we seldom, seldom we ever went. I'm not going someplace. I've got all these children to raise now, you know? I didn't tell—

Paul Ortiz: Right. Were there women's clubs in Tuskegee?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah. Yes. There was a women's organization here. What did they call it? Women United, I believe. United Women. United Women. They have that. And then each church— Well, I can't speak for any church except my own. We have a women's organization of our church, but I can't speak for other churches, but I think they do. And sometimes church, they will have different things. Banquets, and socials, and that sort of thing.

Paul Ortiz: Which church were you going to at that time?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: At what time?

Paul Ortiz: During the fifties.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Before our church was organized?

Paul Ortiz: Yes.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: We usually went to the chapel.

Paul Ortiz: The chapel on [indistinct 00:15:30]?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Usually the chapel.

Paul Ortiz: Did you ever think about, or did you know anybody who thought about trying to go to the White Presbyterian church in town?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Not really. Not really. No. No. I can't say that I did. There may have been some, but I can't say that. I only know that you'd recognize the church by just seeing it when I passed by.

Paul Ortiz: But there was a sense that that church was strictly for White Presbyterians?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Oh, yes. All these churches were for Whites. Yes. And I don't know of any Blacks that went there. I don't know of any.

Paul Ortiz: Were there other— Now, you said all of the churches outside of the Institute were strictly for Whites. Was the segregation here different than it was in Greeneville?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, segregation is segregation wherever you go. But when you speak of it being different, I tell you, I didn't see as much here, because my connection was with Blacks. Most of my connection, most of what I come in contact with was Blacks. And of course, the stores were White, and the political arena, as you call it, was White, and that. And you knew it was White. And you knew they had a White public school, and they had a Black public school, and Black public county schools. We knew that.

And knowing that if they were all Black, they were segregated. When there were Whites going other places to school, you knew that.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: But most of my contact with people were Black here. I'd never been in contact with all that many Black people until I came here. And I didn't see as much of it close. But when you began to spread out, and you see everything else is run by Whites, everything is done by Whites, and the Blacks are just running around here, you began to wonder why. Why is it that you've got all these Blacks, and then you've got these Whites out here running everything? Like the stores are run by White. Whatever else you come in contact is run by Whites. The government, the Board of Education, all the board members are White, and all that. And some people just began to take a stand, and began to get into the political arena, and run for these things, and began to set up little businesses of their own.

Paul Ortiz: How would people begin to take a stand? [indistinct 00:19:10]?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: For what? For integration? For what? Whatever?

Paul Ortiz: Well, simply for challenging, I guess, White control of the area.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Run for public office. I don't know how to get on the list to run. I don't know the requirements there. I don't know the requirements. But in order for things to begin to change, I think that's the beginning, in my point of view, of having them. You've got the city council, the mayor, and whatever these other county offices are, for people to run for those office. Now, sometimes a White would win, a lot of times, even in voting. And then gradually, you had more Blacks applying for these office, different office. And then eventually, you had Blacks winning. And then I think when you found out where Blacks can win in these particular office, you can have Blacks winning in other areas. And I think that was one of the big beginning of the changes.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And then I think another big change was the integration of the schools. Because we had this big White high school downtown, and all Black kids down around the school and over in different areas close by the school, would have to either walk or be bused to other schools. And so people were saying, "Why do they have this big White school down there?" And I understand they didn't have a— The enrollment wasn't all that great. They had it great enough to have a school, but it wasn't all that great.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And so some of the Black kids decided to go there. And of course they had a hassle. They had a hassle, but they didn't back off. They went. And whereas you'd find two going, the next time, you'd find two more going. You'd find two more going. But it was done very, as far as I know, I'm on the outside looking at this, it was very peaceful. And by the time my children went there, they went there shortly after that, though. It was totally integrated by the time my children got there.

Paul Ortiz: Now, you had already been registered to vote in Greeneville?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right.

Paul Ortiz: So did you immediately register to vote here?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I had to become a registered voter here before I could vote. Yes, I did. And I was here several years before I became a registered voter. You have to live in a place for two years before you can become a registered voter, I believe.

Paul Ortiz: As a resident here.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Okay. And it didn't phase me. I didn't get into voting. I didn't get into that. And one of my neighbors lived up on the hill from here. He was very political-minded, and very instrumental in getting people to vote. And all of this voting registration was going on throughout the South then, whereas they didn't want the Blacks to vote. And even here in Macon County, they didn't want you to vote, and they didn't want you to register to vote.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: So my neighbor across the street, Mrs. Rogers, told me that, I believe she was one who told me. They had had this civic meeting, and they were trying to get the Blacks who were not registered to vote here in Macon County to become registered voters. And she asked me if I was a registered voter in Macon County. I said, "No. I haven't become a registered voter in Macon County." And she told me, she said, "Well, now I'm going to take you down to the courthouse so you can become a registered voter." So she did.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And when I went, there were several Blacks there, and they put us all in a room and gave us something to write. I think we had to write the Preamble, seems to me like it was the Preamble of the Constitution. But they gave us a copy or a book with it in it, or something. I believe it was the Preamble of the Constitution. I'm not sure. Something. Anyway, I wrote it and I turned it in. I don't even think the folks even looked at it. And these were White officers, but, now, they have had a strong civic organization here, plus they had the NAACP, and they knew that they had to open up the courthouse for these Blacks to register. They were down on them for that during that time.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And Mr. Davis was the man that lived up on the hill. He was getting all the Blacks that he could, and of course, he had a group working with him to get Blacks interested in becoming registered voters. And then my neighbor across the street told me, she said, "Well, have you become a registered voter in Macon County?" And I said, "No, I haven't." And she said, "Well, I'm going to take you down."

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, there were only certain times that you could go down and register. She said, "I'm going to take you down to become a registered voter." I said, "All right. You take me down, I'll go." So I went, and they took us in this room where we had to, like I said, write all this and turn it in. And then we had to take it down to another— I think we had to show it to the man who was there, who was given this. And then we had to take it down to another office and leave it, I guess, for our registration. And then after that, that was it. That was it.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: But up to that time, they tell me that a lot of people had tried to become— And they gave them all kinds of reasons and things that they couldn't become registered voters. If they'd go, the White folks would close the poll up. They would close so they couldn't register. And so this is when the other organizations got down on them, that they would have to see to it that they would hold these polls open, so they could. And then they started giving them, like I said, we had to write this, I believe it was the Preamble of the Constitution. Had to write something. And they felt that there were a lot of Blacks who wouldn't be able to do that, and I'm sure there were. There were. But those of us that were in there at that time, I don't know if everybody finished it or not, but I know I did. And I came on out and gave the man my thing, and took it on down to the other lady.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: You have a lot of Blacks in the rural area at that time, they could write their names. Some of them couldn't even write their names, but some could write their names. And they felt that by them having to have this for them to write, they wouldn't be able to do it. And if you couldn't write it, you couldn't become a registered voter.

Paul Ortiz: And so you first register, this would've been, say, early sixties that you first registered?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I'm speculating the early sixties.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. It would have been after the boycott here?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: It might have been during that time. I don't recall those dates. It might have been during that time. Because it was a pretty heated time, pretty heated time. I don't know. But Blacks, they were undergoing quite a bit at that time, and we had a lot of Blacks leaving here, going other places to participate in demonstrations and that sort of thing, and helping other people to become registered voters. And so I think they found out. And I think when you begin the mass people to vote, that's what changes the political structure, as to whether or not we are going to get people in there that we want. And that's how you got all these— You got a lot. I won't say all of these. You got a lot of Blacks into political office, and government office, was through getting Blacks to register to vote.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And that has played a great part, not only in Macon County, but throughout these counties. And I don't think one was any better than the other when it come to Blacks voting. Even if you were a registered voter, for some reason, they wouldn't let you vote. I still don't quite understand that. I don't quite understand that. But that's the way it was. It seems to me like you would have had Whites out there wanting Blacks to vote because you wanted them to vote for you.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, I see.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: But it didn't seem to be— Anything that seemed like that Whites could do to keep Blacks down or to keep them back, they did it, because I think the main thing was that they felt that Blacks was a threat to their power. And I guess that was a thing. And it's not so much the color, as to who's going to

have the power. Who's going to do what with the power when they get it?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And this is one thing, I think the Blacks thought that if they were in the political arena, that at least they would know what's going on. Because why is it that Blacks not getting service that they need in their community? And it's because really they didn't know. You didn't know. And then too, in some areas, you found out if you had Black people in these office, would it be any better? But I tell you, when I came to Tuskegee, I can think about all the money roads around in Tuskegee. I think that's how it was paved, and the street downtown, and maybe one or two other streets, but the others were not paved until we got a Black mayor in there, Johnny Ford.

Paul Ortiz: Back in '72.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah. Then these streets began to— And then you began to get Black political councilmen in there, and you began to get the streets paved. When we moved out here, this street wasn't paved. Of course it's got a blacktop on it, but hey, it's better walking in the mud. But it didn't have blacktop. And most of these streets, these side streets around here, they didn't have blacktop, and didn't have names on them. Didn't have names on the street. If I told you about coming to North Josephine Street, I would just have to give you all kinds of directions. But you'd be looking everywhere to doomsday to find a name. There were no names on the streets.

Paul Ortiz: How did you get the mail?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I don't know how folks got the mail. At that time, we got our mail, we had a post office box on the campus, and that's how we got our mail.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, so you had to go to the Institute post office?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Post office. Right. Right.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right. But now I understand that all lots have a number. It's a number. And I don't know how people got mail, to tell you the truth, at that time.

Paul Ortiz: In the fifties, though, there were no signs?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right. You wouldn't know Josephine Street from Adams Street. You'd never find it. No. There were no signs here. I don't even think there was any signs going to Tuskegee Institute. There may have been a sign someplace.

Paul Ortiz: Were there signs, do you know, where White people lived, in Tuskegee?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: You want to know the truth? I don't even know where the White people lived. I don't even know where they lived, except, I say, except right downtown. The downtown area was where the White folks lived, as far as I know. And I had no connection with downtown other than just to go to the store and back. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.

Paul Ortiz: What kind of impact did Tuskegee Institute have on the Black community? You mentioned earlier that that was the one place, in recreational terms, that you could go to if you were Black. But were there other areas of impact, or did it seem that the Institute had an impact on the Black community, if you were not a student?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Oh, yes. Yes it did. I think it did, because I think Tuskegee Institute has always had an impact on people if they were not students. Because it seemed to me like whatever activity they may have had on the campus, the Blacks always knew they could come. You had a place to go to, as far as I know. And like I said, they would have things on the campus like concerts, plays, or whatever. And then of course, they always had the chapel there. A lot of people in the community go to the chapel. That's where we went when we first married. We would go to the chapel for service. And they were always having something, and they still do. And the people in the community, yeah, they always felt free to go.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And you have people out in the country who would come into Tuskegee Institute. When the notice got out there's certain people coming in, or they're having something on the campus, people would come. And I think that that's been good for this area, because most people, they do know about Tuskegee. I mean, they may not know about Tuskegee, but they know about Tuskegee Institute.

Paul Ortiz: Right.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: We still have a problem getting used to Tuskegee University, because it just become a university a few years ago. So we still refer to it as Tuskegee Institute.

Paul Ortiz: Where did you teach during the fifties? You were teaching in town, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I didn't. See, I didn't have my degree then.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, no, I didn't have my degree then. I didn't get my degree until '63.

Paul Ortiz: '63. Okay. So you were busy raising your—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right. Right.

Paul Ortiz: Was Tuskegee an easy place to raise a family? Or was it a—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, when I look back on it, I don't know of any other place I would rather have brought my children up in. I really don't. Because it's been my main concern that the children, like I told you, the children first have a home. They have a home. We'd go to church. We'd go to church, and they'd go to school. Now, my social life was centered around my home and my children. So whatever the children would be involved in at school, that's where my interests would be. And that was enough for them to do, and enough for them to go. And occasionally, we'd go to Montgomery. We'd go to Montgomery to shop a lot, and occasionally we'd go to Atlanta.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And I can't think of any other place. Haven't been every place, but I can't think of any place I would rather— When I look back over it, to have brought my children up in, because Tuskegee was a place where there was a lot of social life going on out there, I'm sure, but there wasn't a lot to draw my children into that I would have rebelled against. Because wherever they went or whatever they went to, I knew about it. And if I'd been someplace else, things might have been different. There was enough going on for them to be involved in.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: To say that there was nothing for them to do— Of course, when they come home, now they say there's nothing in Tuskegee. But when they were coming up as children, I think the role that they chose, or the role I guess that my husband and I chose for them, being at home, going to school, going to church, and they had their friends to socialize with. They had their friends, but it was kind of a close-knitted thing. You knew who their friends were. You knew who their classmates were. And families knew each other. And that kept you in contact of knowing where your children were, and knew just about what they're doing. And if I was someplace else, I'm not sure it would have been quite like that, because children like to do what their peers do, go where their peers go. And didn't have too much of that for my children to be involved in. And that was good, I thought.

Paul Ortiz: Now, I believe that you and your husband were founding members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church during the fifties. At that time, I mean, there really wasn't a Presbyterian church for Black people in Tuskegee.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right.

Paul Ortiz: So did you think at the time there might have been a possibility that you might even have to change the denominations? Or were you thinking about trying to found a church all along, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I think my husband, when he was in Mississippi, his parents, I think they were Methodists, but I was a Presbyterian, and my husband did attend the Methodist church. Sometimes. Sometimes he did. But our basic attendance would have been the chapel. And after I had been here a year, I met the chaplain at the VA, Chaplain Pole, who was a Presbyterian, and I hadn't been here a year when I met him. And a very lovely person. Met him and his wife. And he was a chaplain at the VA. He was a Presbyterian chaplain, and we talked about Presbyterians.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And he told me, he said, "Well, you know, we had thought about,"—and I don't

know who his "we" were—"organizing a Presbyterian church here in Tuskegee." And he said, "You know, there's quite a few Presbyterians here." And I said, "Really?" And he told me that they had planned to get together, and I think he and a few other Presbyterians got together, and they decided to have a meeting of all Presbyterians that they could gather to come together, and we did. And that was the very first beginning of the church.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And I was looking at that list the other night. I think there was 36 of us, 30-something of us in the beginning, and it has weaned down, I think, to about 10. But Chaplain Pole was very instrumental in getting it started, and he was a lovely person. And we gradually grew from there.

Paul Ortiz: In the beginning, you were meeting at the chapel at the Institute for Religious Services?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: We never met at the chapel.

Paul Ortiz: You never met at the chapel?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: We met on the campus.

Paul Ortiz: On the campus.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah. Right. We met on the campus. We surely did meet on the campus. There was a little place there that the Institute had called the Little Theater. And we met there for quite some time. We started having church, and we had Sunday school, and a couple of programs there. And I think for some reason or another, we were there one year and we didn't have— For one reason or another, we had to move out. I don't know if it was because of the heating problem or what. We moved into one of the buildings there on the campus, which was called the— I don't know what that building was called. It was some building that they let us use for church purposes for about a few years. Not a few years. A few months. A few months. Because at that time, I started building a church out on Franklin Road, had started building the church, and they let us use that particular building until our church was finished, and we moved in it.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: But now, the Institute was very nice and very cooperative in letting us use their building, but we didn't use the chapel at that time. And we began to pick up a few members, and when word got around that we were Presbyterians and seeking more Presbyterians, those who were Presbyterians came in, and we grew. Not big. Presbyterians are, I don't think you ever find a bigger number, but that's where we had our beginning.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Have you met, of course Mrs. Baldwin's a Presbyterian. Did you meet a lady by the name of— No. You didn't meet her. K.B. Young?

Paul Ortiz: Yes.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: You met Mr. Young? You did? Okay. He was one of the first instrumental persons to

get us started too.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, I keep pointing in directions. He lives over here, not too far from here.

Paul Ortiz: Yeah. Where was that? Off of Azalea, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Azalea. Azalea. Right. Right. Right. He surely was. And he was very good, and instrumental through the years in getting us started, keep things going. And you met Mrs. Baldwin. Did you meet Wilhelmina Jones?

Paul Ortiz: Yes, ma'am.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Oh, you did? All right. Thinking of some of those other old members. Mr. Goodman, Bob Goodman? He lives right across from Wilhelmina Jones.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. He's on our list of people to talk with.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Okay.

Paul Ortiz: I think one of our other researchers [indistinct 00:44:22].

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Okay. Right. Now, both of them would be interesting to talk to. He's in construction, and in fact, he's the one that built our church, Mr. Goodwin.

Paul Ortiz: Now, how did you do— Speaking of building the church, where did the funds, where did they come from primarily? Did you raise them yourselves, or—?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I think the Presbytery, I don't know if they gave us funds or they lent us funds, but we raised funds too, to help pay for that church. But just where you had the initial funds, I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I'm sure it came from the Presbytery, because we were only a few people. We didn't have enough money to build no church. They helped us, and helped us to keep going, until we finally got able to support ourselves. And now we're self-supported, I think that's pretty good, for a handful. And that's where we go from there.

Paul Ortiz: If you were writing your autobiography, and you came to the conclusion or the concluding point, and you had to kind of sum up your life, and try to sort out some of the maybe events, or experiences, or things that have inspired you, and you had to draw a lesson of your life, what would it be?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I don't know if I could or not. Really just drawing a plan of my life from the beginning, up to now? Well, I would just say—