Lucinda Gulledge: Now, I was reared and born in Hernando, Mississippi.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what year were you born?

Lucinda Gulledge: Hmm?

Paul Ortiz: What year were you born?

Lucinda Gulledge: In Hernando, Mississippi.

Paul Ortiz: Yes, ma'am. When were you born?

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, June the 30th, 1913.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what was the Black community like in Hernando?

Lucinda Gulledge: That community was fine. That was in the hills. That was up in the hills. That wasn't like down in the Delta.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: It was fine.

Paul Ortiz: Can you describe it for me? Was it a farming community?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, farming community. Right. Mm-hmm, farming community. Everybody was farming at that time. That's been down through the years.

Paul Ortiz: Would Black families share with other Black families—

Lucinda Gulledge: Right. And white families would share with other Black families. They shared together. At that time, they shared together.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, had your family always lived in Hernando, your grandparents or great grandparents?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, always lived in Hernando.
Paul Ortiz: Did stories about your grandparents pass down?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes. He used to tell me some stories about my granddaddy. That's what you're talking about? When he was in slavery, he was a slave.

Paul Ortiz: Your grandparents would talk about that?

Lucinda Gulledge: Would talk about that, right. That little old girl—I never forget I used to be down on the floor, and they would be sitting around the fire in yester years, talking about what happened in that day and how the old master did them. They had to go to the field and work and the wives had to stay at the house, like that. Sure did.

Lucinda Gulledge: At that time, I studied that when I was going to school, too, back down through the years. They were sold. You remember? They were sold. This old master over here would buy so many slaves, you see, and that one over yonder would buy so many slaves. That's the way my grandparents come up. They was bought and sold. He would talk to us about that. Then when I growed up, I came down to the Delta here, and I married.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, how old were you when you moved to the Delta?

Lucinda Gulledge: I was about 20.

Paul Ortiz: 20?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, can you tell me what kinds of values did your parents and grandparents teach you when you were growing up?

Lucinda Gulledge: Nothing, but they farmed. They was farmers, that's all. The farmers, we just farmed. He wasn't teaching thing. He was just talking about how he was brought up back down—he was a slave. You know, slavery.

Paul Ortiz: Your father?

Lucinda Gulledge: My father wasn't.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, he wasn't?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, he wasn't. He was just a farmer, that's all. Wasn't nothing like that going on when he come along. Sure wasn't. They had done freed the slaves. I used to could remember my history book, but I done forgot that when the slaves was free. I don't. Can you remember? Did you have history of it?
Paul Ortiz: 1865.

Lucinda Gulledge: Was it? Yeah. I used to I had a history of it, but I can't remember that far back. Sure can't.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what are your earliest memories of childhood growing up?

Lucinda Gulledge: My earliest memories of childhood was going to school. Really it was just segregated in that. You know how that was. The Blacks didn't have nothing to do with the whites. The whites didn't have nothing to do with the Blacks in that day, and on and on until the '60s, see. That run a long time. It was in the '60s before this thing broke down. Can you remember that?

Paul Ortiz: I've read about it. I was born during the '60s so—

Lucinda Gulledge: You read about it. Anyway, you read about it. But it was in the '60s before this thing broke down. Sure was. Yeah, it was in the '60s. People came down from Chicago, came down from Detroit and New York, down here in Mississippi, and they got this thing to going. Really did. They got it to going. Now, everybody, brothers and sisters look like now. Everybody happy. You got to the school. Just as many Blacks there as there is the whites. Everything is just fine in the way of being segregated.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what was it like back in the older days before that time? When you first came to the Delta, what were race relations like then?

Lucinda Gulledge: It was rough then. Yeah, it was rough then. Sure was. It was rough then. You didn't see no Blacks working in these stores and nothing of the kind. It was rough then. The business of it, when I came to the Delta, it wasn't nothing but farming because the people would leave town, go to the country and work, because they couldn't even get no jobs here.

Paul Ortiz: Were you living in Greenwood, Mrs. Gulledge, when you first moved?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, I was here. I've been here. I've been here in Greenwood ever since 1942.

Paul Ortiz: 1942?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. That's when the movement first started. People what knew me—just like I had some friends in Jackson around—they would call me. People would want to come down. The white people were really scared. They had to have a place to stay when they come down like that. People in Jackson would call me and tell me so-and-so and so-and-so would be down. They got to have somewhere to stay. I said, "Send them on to my house." I was right here. I said, "Send them on to my house. Send them on."

Lucinda Gulledge: This man I was telling you about a while ago did this writeup. I'm going to show it to you before you go. He stayed right here two week, right here in my house. Two weeks, right here. He got the
notice to come here. You see what I mean? See, he had other contact. The other people he contact, they told him to come here. I said, "Oh, he can come to my house." See, I wasn't like the rest of the Colored people, scared. "No, he ain't coming to my house." A lot of them didn't let them come in their houses. I said, "They can come here." They come here, and I ain't never did have to trouble. They stayed as long as they want. Stayed all night. Yeah, they stayed all night. Sure did. When I didn't cook for them, they would get up and go in there, and fix something their self. Even I had some white ladies to come. Sure did. It was rough, but we made it through. Yeah, we made it through. It was kind of rough.

Johnny Matthews: [Indistinct 00:09:00]

Lucinda Gulledge: Johnny?

Johnny Matthews: Huh?

Lucinda Gulledge: This is the young man is—

Paul Ortiz: Hi, sir.

Johnny Matthews: Fine. How you doing?

Paul Ortiz: Thank you. Fine.

Johnny Matthews: Matthew.

Paul Ortiz: Paul Ortiz. Pleased to meet you.

Johnny Matthews: Glad to meet you.

Lucinda Gulledge: He come from out of state. He stayed with Dr. Kennard and them.

Johnny Matthews: Oh, yeah? You're talking to the right lady here. She can give you information. Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: What were we talking about. Oh, yeah, the people coming in.

Paul Ortiz: Okay, from Jackson and—

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, how would people in Jackson know to contact you?

Lucinda Gulledge: These people, they would tell them down there. The people here would come through by my house and talk to me. See, they had problems in Jackson. They would go on down there, and they would
tell them down there.

Paul Ortiz: The headquarters of—

Lucinda Gulledge: Mississippi. You know Jackson, Mississippi? That's the capital of Mississippi.

Paul Ortiz: It was the headquarters of the NAACP?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, just that's the capital of Mississippi, see. They would come down. They would go to Jackson, see, to come and join all of them. You know what I mean? They was in Jackson. Lots of them had to go get the information down there.

Paul Ortiz: Is that students and-

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, all that was in it, too. Yeah, all that was in it, the integration. All that was in it, too.

Paul Ortiz: How did you first get in contact with people in Jackson?

Lucinda Gulledge: It was people here working. People was here working. Then when they go to Jackson, they give them my name. Then whenever they want something here, they would contact me.

Paul Ortiz: I see. Mrs. Gulledge, do you remember who some of those people were that would—

Lucinda Gulledge: Lift that and give me that brown envelope right in this drawer right here. Right there. That's it. All right, let me see can I call their names somewhere. This here is '67. One of them was Chip Seward. He was up from up north. But [indistinct 00:11:50] and Paul, and Ronny and Laura. Greenwood, Leflore County. I'm looking for some of these leaders now.

Lucinda Gulledge: Let's see. He was back over here on the front page, I think. His name is over here on this front page. These people would come down here to work on welfare. Colored people wasn't getting any welfare. This is welfare people come down to go to the—they went to the welfare office downtown, you see, and contacted the welfare folks up there, so the poor people here could get some help. Let's see.

Lucinda Gulledge: Right here where they said, "They should be sent." Look in there. Lucinda Gulledge. They got this. See right here? Look in there. So I was one of them. "They should be sent," right there on that bottom line. That's when they would send them down. You see that, don't you?

Paul Ortiz: Okay, right here.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Johnny Matthews: You got the paper?
Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, I had the paper. It must be back over here. [inaudible 00:14:31] You can look right there, now. You can look. There it is right there.

Johnny Matthews: Excuse me.

Lucinda Gulledge: One of these ladies is Marian Wright, attorney at law.

Paul Ortiz: Called Marian Wright?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: Is she Marian Evelyn Wright?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: That's her. And Mildred Leventhal. Leventhal. And Paul Brest.

Paul Ortiz: They would just come and stay here?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, working.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, did you have people stay here before that time, during earlier times?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah.

Paul Ortiz: Before 1967?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, when they come here.

Paul Ortiz: When did you start hosting people in your house?

Lucinda Gulledge: It was '60s. During the '60s.

Paul Ortiz: Did you ever host people on voting rights, people who were trying to do that?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah. Sure did. I had two lawyers here one time. Paul Brest, that man there, he's one of them. But Marian Wright, she stopped by, but she went on into Jackson. You see those names on there?

Paul Ortiz: Yes. Mrs. Gulledge, when did you first begin getting active?
Lucinda Gulledge: When those leaders come in, telling us what to do, what they wanted us to do. I think the first thing is when we—let me see. I think the first thing I did—they went to boycotting these stores, these all white stores. We went over there and boycotted Liberty Cash store, right over there on Main Street.

Paul Ortiz: Liberty Cash store?

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh, huh. Over there on Main. Liberty Cash grocery store.

Paul Ortiz: Why were you boycotting the store?

Lucinda Gulledge: Because it was segregated, no Blacks.

Paul Ortiz: No Blacks working?

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh, uh. No Blacks were.

Paul Ortiz: The goal was—

Lucinda Gulledge: When we got through with that, the Black was a manager.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, really?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, sure was.

Paul Ortiz: Your goal was to try to get Black people equal-

Lucinda Gulledge: That's right. Equality. Right. That's what the whole thing was about.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, who were some of the—

Lucinda Gulledge: Want to get that?

Paul Ortiz: Who were some of the local activists here in Greenwood, local people who are important?


Johnny Matthew: Yeah?

Lucinda Gulledge: Come here. He wants to know, just when it first started, who were some of the important people. I told him myself and you.
Johnny Matthews: I came from North in '62, at just about when it began here. It was going a long time before that, but we really got started in '62. Now, Sam Block, Willie Peacock, Bob Moses.

Lucinda Gulledge: Jake McGee.

Paul Ortiz: Okay, I've heard some of those names before.

Johnny Matthews: Yeah, I'm sure you have. They was the leaders. Bob Moses was our director here. And Peacock I'm sure you heard of him now. Bob Moses, I think it was Bob Moses was [INTERRUPTION] right now. But those were the main persons. They were what you call SNCC. I was with SCLC, which was Dr. Martin Luther King, but we always coincide together. But SNCC really got it—Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, that's what that came to do. We was in SCLC—which that is still in existence, SCLC in Atlanta, Georgia—under direction of Martin Luther King Jr., at that time.

Johnny Matthews: So I worked directly with Dr. Martin Luther King through, but I would—I guess I could say I worked with both of them, SNCC and Dr. Martin Luther King, because I was very more or less in voter registration. At that time, we just couldn't vote. They would ask you how many bubbles in a bar of soap, you'd get up to the registrar, or how many windows in the courthouse. All those things we had to go through with before we—I think they had a poll tax one time. They want us to pay a poll tax to get to register to vote.

Johnny Matthews: It was just fearful for us down here. The ones that had jobs, they would lose them and then attempt to vote. A lot of farmers got kicked off their farm. That went along with Medgar Evers. That's the one got killed down there in Jackson. Then I worked along with his brother, Charles Evers. He came in right after. But way back before that time, Medgar Evers was NAACP. We had three organizations at that time, NAACP, SNCC, and SCLC they called SCLC, but SCLC.

Lucinda Gulledge: Southern Leader—

Johnny Matthews: Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Lucinda Gulledge: That's what—

Johnny Matthews: That's the way that come about. Really, when they came into Greenwood, as far as we're concerned—someone by the name of Willie Peacock and Sam Block, those were the directors. Now, those were the ones really went through hell. We all did, of course, but they were spearheading things, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, they were.

Johnny Matthews: Our information came—we had the legality part came through Jackson, from Washington through Jackson, to us. We had direct contact with somebody in Washington. That's direct contact, but you had to use your head down here because not have a lot of [indistinct 00:22:10] that we
took. I think I got to started headed out. I was working with Bill Goins for a while. [Indistinct 00:22:16] down there for a long time. But those are the leaders we had. But it was just impossible, you might say, to register—getting to vote, a lot of people did.

Lucinda Gulledge: Now, the way we had to register, wasn't nobody voting here for nobody. They would send some people from Washington.

Johnny Matthews: Registrars came in.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah. We got down in the basement of the old post office. Those people registered us in the old post office and carried our name back to Washington, and then sent them back to the county.

Johnny Matthews: Yeah. What she's saying, we had a mock campaign. We wasn't really legal. We'd set up over at churches who wanted to register to vote.

Lucinda Gulledge: That's right.

Johnny Matthews: We would get all the names of people and compile them and send that to Washington, letting them know that we wanted to register to vote. That was where it started the registration, voting. All that went along with the integrating of our restrooms, and that's when we went and got in jail. We got—

Lucinda Gulledge: In the schools.

Johnny Matthews: In schools and stuff. But we really got it started right here in Greenwood.

Lucinda Gulledge: Sure got it started. That started heavy, too.

Johnny Matthews: Just filled with a lot of people back in the shed house. She had a lot of white lawyers staying with her. But you couldn't even think. If you were sitting down like this when they first came here, man, that was just out of the question. You'd have to work here and get your ass back to Jackson before dark. I mean for your safety. We were already scared under the bed somewhere, but we're talking about your safety. They would call you white trash. Now, you know that. We were marching from here up to the courthouse. When they first got here, we just had to get people like her. I wasn't stationed there. I just came in here from North, but this is my home here. But I came here in '62, back from the North. I was born here. [Ambient sounds]. The ones that did stuff were people like her. They had something to lose. Myself, I lived with my mother at that time. They couldn't bother nothing but put me in jail.

Paul Ortiz: Mr. Matthews, do you have time later on in the week? Maybe I could sit down with you and—

Johnny Matthews: Of course.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.
Johnny Matthews: Tomorrow at 2:00? What time do you come back? We had a—

Paul Ortiz: Tomorrow I'm going to be out at Indian Knoll up at—are you busy Thursday, say about two o'clock?

Johnny Matthews: All right. Come by Thursday about 2:00.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Johnny Matthews: That will be fine. I'm glad to talk to you.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. I'll just come here?

Johnny Matthews: Yeah, just come right here.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Johnny Matthews: We used to have to say, "Wait till dark to get here," but now we have a little better days. You can come now.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Johnny Matthews: Fine.

Paul Ortiz: I don't want to take too much of your time today.

Johnny Matthews: All right then. Go right ahead, you all.

Lucinda Gulledge: There's time to take time now.

Johnny Matthews: Yeah.

Lucinda Gulledge: There's time to take time. Yeah, time to take time.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, earlier you were saying you moved to the Delta when you were about 20. What was the first area that you moved into? What was the first county?

Lucinda Gulledge: Grenada.

Paul Ortiz: Grenada?
Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Could you describe-

Lucinda Gulledge: My auntie lived there, and I just stopped there with her and lived there with her. That's where I married at, in Grenada County, my first marriage, in Grenada County.

Paul Ortiz: I haven't talked to anybody in Grenada County yet. Can you tell me what the Black community was like in Grenada County?

Lucinda Gulledge: It was all right. Yeah, it was all right. It was fine. Then when I left there, I come here. It was better there. I don't know what [inaudible 00:26:37] better there than it was here, because that's in the hills. The hill people look like they was more civilized or something than Delta folks. But these people down here, they come to be [inaudible 00:26:55]. They are all right now.

Paul Ortiz: Back in the older days, there was a lot of differences in people.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, it was. Right. Yes, it was.

Paul Ortiz: Was there a difference in how long you would work, your work hours?

Lucinda Gulledge: When? You talking about back in the old days?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, it was—the time we'd go to field, like that? Yeah, we would be in the field about 6:00 in the morning and work till about 7:00 that evening. But we would stop off for dinner and everything. Yeah, we would stop off at dinner.

Paul Ortiz: When you were young, when you were growing up, did you work a lot in the field?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, I did. I worked in the field, farming. Sure did.

Paul Ortiz: What kind of crops did you family raise when you were growing up?

Lucinda Gulledge: They raised fine crops. They raised cotton, and corn, and sweet potatoes, and sorghum, and peanuts. Just anything growed, they planted it and they raised that stuff. They had sorghum mills. Carried the sorghum to the mill and grind the sorghum, make molasses.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. Was your family farming on halves?

Lucinda Gulledge: You talking about my father? No, he had his own land. He had his own land.
Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what role did church play in your family’s life when you were growing up?

Lucinda Gulledge: They let them come to the church and have meetings. They let them come to the church and have meetings. That's where they could go. Mm-hmm, going to the church and have meetings and pray and sing.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, now when you moved to Grenada and you got married, what were you doing to make a living?

Lucinda Gulledge: Farming.

Paul Ortiz: You were still farming?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, still farming.

Paul Ortiz: What were the differences between farming in the Delta and farming in the hills?

Lucinda Gulledge: It was a lot different, because you could make more in the Delta. You couldn't make as much in the hills as you could make in the Delta. It looked like the crop would grow better in the Delta than they did in the hills. Yeah, they would.

Paul Ortiz: So it was you might take one step forward and two steps back.

Lucinda Gulledge: Right.

Paul Ortiz: Your crops grew better in the Delta-

Lucinda Gulledge: That's right.

Paul Ortiz: —but race relations were worse.

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, yeah. They was worse. Now, you're talking. The race relation wasn't worth nothing. Sure wasn't no more than what the Black man was doing for that white man, was working. You know what I mean? That's all. That's all it was worth.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, when you came to Grenada, during your time there, were there cases of white racial violence?

Lucinda Gulledge: No. No, everybody it looked like was—in the hills. That's in the hills. It looked like everybody was just doing better in the hills, were down in the Delta at that time. Because most the time in the Delta, the white man owned everything. They owned all the land, all the plantations. You know. You
done read about it. We, as we workers, anyway we weren't nothing but slaves, see. You had a time to go to field and time to work and everything. We weren't nothing but slaves. Just had to work for the white man. That's just the way it is. You had to work for the white man. Then when you pick your cotton, carry it to the gin, he give you what you want you to have. He ain't never tell you what you made. He'd go tell you what he liked. That's the way that went.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what would happen if a Black sharecropper said to the land owner, "I think I should be making more on this crop"?

Lucinda Gulledge: He would tell him to move. Put him off the place. Put him off the place. Tell him to move. Put him off the place. I know a man on number seven, between here and Grenada. That man made, one year, 30 bales of cotton. Then when the man settled with him, he told him he had come out in the hole. He said, "But you can get anything you want for Christmas." All that kind of stuff.

Paul Ortiz: So there were a lot of company stores?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: The Blacks just didn't have no say-so over nothing. Didn't have no say-so over nothing in them days. They had a store. They called it commissary store, a store. You had to go there and get what you want to eat or get a bunch of groceries you want. Get a wagon load. But the man putting it on the book. Then when time comes and you pick that cotton, you ain't getting nothing. That's true. They can tell, "What you want? Get it." He's putting it on the book. But when he settled with you, you ain't getting nothing, but he will tell you that you can get anything you want. You're still in debt. You're still in debt. Getting in debt for another year.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, how did you as the head of a household, how did you deal with that situation? How did you even try to make ends meet?

Lucinda Gulledge: Working by the day. Working by the day. Oh, man, I have chopped corn for 60 cents a day. I go to church right now. I'm a Sunday school teacher in my church. Sometimes, when I'll be teaching Sunday school, I'll cut in through there and tell them that I have chopped cotton for 60 a day. That's right. But we made it though. We lived. 60 cents a day. That's right. I have picked cotton for 35 cents a hundred. Sure have. That was back in that day.

Lucinda Gulledge: On down through time when the civil rights movement come on into Greenwood, Dr. King and all them, I had a friend. I was back here in the house just like I am now. I heard a car horn blowing, and I went to the door to see who it was. He said, "Come on." I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "We're going to meet Dr. King." I said, "Where he at?" Said, "He leaving Grenada." Man, I got in that car and went on up that road. You talk about people. They was on that highway, marching with Dr. King. He was coming this
way. He said, "Come on, let's go meet him." So we went and met him. He come on here. I was so tired on that highway.

Lucinda Gulledge: One man in the movement, he come up to me. See, they would watch you, your accident, everything, so you get tired or sick or something. He looked at me. He said, "Lady, ain't you tired?" I said, "No, I ain't tired." I was so tired I couldn't hardly hold myself up. He said, "All right." Marched on, coming to Greenwood, coming on down the highway. He come to me again. He said, "Lady," he said, "I suspect you better go get in the car with the doctor." So I got in the car with the doctor then, come on to this Greenwood playground right here. That's where they rested for a while. That was the day Dr. King was to speak here. He spoke at the courthouse downtown. So he was coming in. We all met him. He already had some with him. He came on to the playground. He said, "We'll go rest, eat lunch, and then we'll go to the courthouse."

Lucinda Gulledge: After we ate lunch, it wasn't long before two motorcades come in. Police come in to where we were to escort him up to the courthouse. We went on up to the courthouse. Got up there. Some white man told him, said, "Dr. King," said, "We don't mind you speaking, but you got to speak on the ground." There's a little balcony up there. You can walk the steps and stand up on. "Don't mind you speaking, but you got to speak on the ground." Dr. King said, "I'm going to speak up here on these steps," and he did. Sure did. Wanted step, to be down here, and they didn't want him to get up there on the courthouse. So he said, "Everything around this courthouse belongs to us today." That was the county. See what I mean? That wasn't the city. That was the county. When we left there, then they marched on to Morgan City, on down. Went on through [indistinct 00:38:28], on back to Jackson, but I didn't. I come on home. I was tired.

Lucinda Gulledge: That was a very, very nice thing they did, because he had a right to speak there, because that's where we vote. You voted at the courthouse. That's why they weren't allowing so many folks to go vote. But after that happened and everything, anybody who registered could vote.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, can you tell me about your first experience in trying to register to vote?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, sure I can. We couldn't go to the courthouse. We had to go to the old post office, to the basement. They didn't allow us up there to the courthouse. We had to go to the old post office, in the basement. Some white man came down from Washington, and he had a table set up here on my porch. People was coming across town over here to vote. You see what I mean? You know what kind of voting it was it, just to get your name down so they know how many people can vote. That's what that was all about.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, that was the Freedom Vote?

Lucinda Gulledge: Right. Yes. See how many people can vote. But those names was carried in though. Those names was carried in, because they were in line up there to vote. You see what I'm talking about? They were in lining up there. These people come in from Washington to set up all that, and they had them names in. When we did get where we could register, we had to go down in the basement. These people was from Washington, came down. I got my receipt right now. We had to go down in the basement at the old post
office to register before we could go to the courthouse and vote.

Paul Ortiz: But you had a table in front of our house?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, on the porch.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. So people from the neighborhood could come and—

Lucinda Gulledge: Right. Folk from Carrolls County was coming over here.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay. Were there other people that also opened up their house to that?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, they were scared, man. They were scared.

Paul Ortiz: You were the only person in Greenwood?

Lucinda Gulledge: Only in this block.

Paul Ortiz: In this block? Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, only person in this block. I think it was a couple more across town somewhere. It's over one of them cafés over there somewhere. Yeah, in this block, I'm the only one over here. Sure am.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, would you go out and do canvasing, go from door to door and try to get Black people to sign up?

Lucinda Gulledge: After they got the news, they come on here. I didn't have to go.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. They just would come.

Lucinda Gulledge: After they found out what I was doing here, they came on here. They was glad to get here to put their name on that book. Now, they can go over there to the courthouse and vote. All that's done away with now. You can go vote if you want to. Yeah, there was a time they wouldn't allow them to vote. Wouldn't allow anybody to vote but the white man.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what would happen when, say, a Black person tried to vote, went to the courthouse or something and tried to vote? Earlier you were talking a little bit about one of the questions they would ask you, some kind of question about bubbles and soap.

Lucinda Gulledge: No, they didn't ask—bubbles and soap? What did you say then?

Paul Ortiz: I heard that the registrar would ask questions that no one could answer when you would try to
Lucinda Gulledge: No, they didn't do us like that. They didn't do us like that. All they wanted to do is you just like you got that book. I'm going to come in here and come to you, and tell you I want to register. You ask me what my name, and you put my name down. That's all. You carry my name into the courthouse. That's all. Wasn't none of those questions and things like that asked here.

Paul Ortiz: So you could just vote?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, you could just vote after you registered.

Paul Ortiz: No, I mean before that.

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh. I don't know, because I didn't fool with them until I got where I could do it.

Paul Ortiz: When did you decide that you were ready?

Lucinda Gulledge: That's when those people come in here. Those people come in here, because you couldn't do it till they come in here, not no Black people. Those people from Washington had to come in. We had several registrars. We had several registrars. We had several registrars out there at the post office.

Paul Ortiz: Post office.

Lucinda Gulledge: There were several people down there registered me and a lot more of them. They couldn't nothing about that.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, when you had your table set up here, would whites ever come in and monitor?

Lucinda Gulledge: I'll tell you what did happen, I think, around here in this place right here. We call this Baptist Town. I think there's a lady down on the end of the street back down there. She used to have a café. I think she had one around there. They set up one around there, and they went around and made her take it down.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, they made her take it down?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: By their store?

Lucinda Gulledge: By the café.

Paul Ortiz: By the café.
Lucinda Gulledge: They made her take it down. Then we put one out here on my porch. I said, "I think they ain't going to bother this one," and they didn't. They didn't. They didn't bother it and didn't bother me. I ain't never had no trouble there. Sure ain't.

Paul Ortiz: I wonder why they bothered the café but they didn't bother here. Why-

Lucinda Gulledge: They sure didn't.

Paul Ortiz: Why was that?

Lucinda Gulledge: I don't know why it was, but they didn't. They really didn't. The rest of these men—which Johnny talked about some of them—these coordinators and all, Jackson, they would go to Jackson and tell the people down there, "Contact Mrs. Gulledge." People called me from Jackson. White people called me from Jackson. I don't know them today. They would just call me and tell me what they wanted me to do.