

Margaret Sampson Rogers: My father's father was White, Irish, and my father had a half brother who's a lawyer here. He had a half brother who was in the Senate, and the family lived up in Duplin County near Warsaw. And so we used to go to visit these people all the time.

Kara Miles: And they claimed—

Margaret Sampson Rogers: They would claim me—

Kara Miles: Were they claiming you as family?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Right in that group. It was not widely known because as an adult, when I needed congressional intervention, because I'm a firm believer, and I'll write the president, I'll even call the White House. I have the number. I would call John Bright and say, "Look, I need a favor and I'm not getting anywhere." So he'll say, "Well, tell you what you do. Call Sam J. Irwin. You tell him that your mother was our maid for 25, 30 years, and I told you to call." And see can he help you? And this is what we would do. I'd call and say that my mom worked for John Bright. My husband was overseas. We were trying to get a compassionate reassignment because there were a lot of medical problems and was saying it couldn't be done. And so I called John Bright. John Bright had me to call Sam J. Sam J called Lyndon Johnson.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: So that's what I'm saying. See, I just used the stuff. I didn't let the anger and stuff embed itself. They have the means. So I learned from them how to do what you have to do to get what you want, and that's what they do. So, I took all of that stuff when I was in their houses, and they were talking to their friends and associates on the phone and whatever. I was quiet as a church mouse because I was listening to everything they were saying. And then when it came time that I could use some of this stuff, then I brought it back, and that's what I'm saying now. We can catch more flies with honey, stop fighting, look at what they're doing and then see how you can use it. And that's what we need to do. That's exactly what we need to do. That's what I did, and that's what I still do, still to this day.

Kara Miles: Did your father grow up with—

Margaret Sampson Rogers: He grew up on that plantation is more or less what it was because he was born in 1891. So he grew up right there. His mother's name was Sally, and they grew up there. At '18, he left and went to work for the Atlantic Coastline.

Kara Miles: But his father claimed him as—

Margaret Sampson Rogers: As his child in certain groups.

Kara Miles: Okay.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Yeah. It wasn't widely known because when John Bright died, I was determined finally to say something. So I didn't go to the funeral. I wrote a letter to the family and told them how sad I was that he had died, and I hoped they would donate his papers to the museum. I said, as I did with my father, I'd like to remember the good things about him. I said, the one thing I do remember is the day John Bright spanked me, and I was 16 years old and couldn't tell anybody. I had borrowed the family car. I could drive, and I had too many people in it.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: My mother had gone to work. She refused to stay home, she had to work, and that much I took after her. She says, "I don't care how much money your father gives me." I have to have my own money coming in. Okay. I live by that. I have to have my own. She had gone to work. Daddy had gone to church, and I didn't go. I picked up a few of my friends, and we went down to Sea Breeze. Coming back from Sea Breeze, because I knew what time I had to be back to pick my father up, he would not come out of that church until church service was over. Once he went in, he stayed, the police officer stopped me. Well, he stopped me mainly because I had a lot of people in the car.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And so I decided, hey, now's the time to use it. I said I'm on my way to my uncle's house. He said, "So what difference does that make?" I said, "It's John Bright Hill." He looked at me and he said, "Lying will get you nowhere, nigger." I said, "Call on your radio down to the police station. We can all find out. Tell the chief to call over to John Bright's house." And he did. And he told him, "Do not give that young lady a ticket, escort her to my house after she gets rid of all the people in that car." He made everybody get out, and he escorted me to his house at Third and Greenfield. John Bright took me into the house. He took off his belt and he told me up through those slacks I had on. He said, "Now you take that car home." He said, "The officer is going to see that you're taken home."

Margaret Sampson Rogers: He said, "I'll see that Hayward gets from church. We'll come up with some excuse." Took that car home, put it in the garage, rake the yard. Now see, I'm still not smart enough to realize if my mom were thinking, she'd look at the odometer. Rake the yard, put the keys back. Mama came steadily walking the floor. She says, "I wish you would sit down somewhere because you are getting on my nerves." The very last thing in the world I wanted to do was sit down. And we talked about that about a year before he died because I would take the kids whenever we came back to Wilmington to meet him, and he was a very elderly man by the time he died. I think he was about 90, and he would always tell him, "Did your mama tell you about that time I beat her butt?" I couldn't say a word. Couldn't say a word. My mother didn't find out about it until 1974, I believe, and I finally told it.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: But I knew I had been driving. She taught me to drive. I had been driving since I was 13. I just didn't have license, but I used that thing. So when I wrote the family, when he died, I told him, that I will always remember the spanking, that Uncle John gave me. So I don't know how he went over with the family because none of them ever said anything to me about it. But whenever I was downtown, I used to always go by his office, and sometimes we'd sit and have lunch. We'd sit and talk about up on the farm in Duplin County, and I'd ask him about the family because I would just like to know who all these people are. And that was the way it was when I confronted my real mother, my biological mother. As I told her, I didn't

want anything from her, period, ever.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I just wanted to see what she looked like. I just wanted to know who you were and to see if the story they told me was true. And then she admitted it, and I cussed her out and left. And then that was the end of that. I tried to tell my foster mother, you don't have to worry about me going to this person. This lady never did anything for me, but I feel I should know who she is, and I can point her and her family out to my children. That way you don't have intermarriages. You don't know who your relatives are. You need to know. And that was all I wanted from her. And that was all I wanted with John Bright. I just wanted to know who they were. It didn't matter.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I have since found out that the basketball player Ralph Samson was my father's nephew, grandnephew. His father, Ralphs Samson's father was my father's nephew. They had the same brothers. Robert was my father's brother, and Robert's son was Ralph's grandfather. So that's how they go. And I also wanted to contact him simply to get names and places and dates. But celebrities have a problem. They feel as soon as you contact them you want something. So I've hesitated, but he looks exactly like his grandfather. He looks just like him. I remember him well.

Kara Miles: With your mother and the way she would talk about color and class, given that you weren't fair, how did that make you feel when she would talk about dark-skinned people?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I was very angry.

Kara Miles: Did she know?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: It didn't matter. As she taught me, you don't live in a democracy. Our family's not a democracy. That's it. But she was that way. She was very bigoted. And people would tell her, "I saw you, I waved at you when you were driving down the street the other day." And she said, "well, child, I didn't see you. I was just looking straight ahead. I didn't see a soul." Yes, she did. Yes, she did. My mother was not welcome in neighbor's homes. There were a couple, but my father was welcome in everybody's house, but she was very bigoted that way, and I didn't like it. And that was one of the problems we had because I got slapped in the mouth a lot because she'd make statements, and it just came out. But I didn't see it because I felt that we were having enough problem with the Whites. Why do we have to have this problem within the race? And we still have it today. We still have it today, but it was bad.

Kara Miles: Was that widespread?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Widespread. Very widespread. Very, very widespread.

Kara Miles: Can you give me specifics?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: The fair-skinned Blacks, especially the fair-skinned Blacks with long hair were very much disliked by the darker skinned. They didn't like to associate with them, and a lot of them were

very nice people. They really were. But they were made to feel it was the jealousy, and the reason being back during the thirties, especially in Harlem, during the Renaissance, the Cotton Club and all of that. Okay, you could dance as well as anybody, but if you were not, as they put it, light bright, damn near White, you didn't get to be in the shows. You were taught. It was perpetuated down through the generations that the lighter, the fairer were the more intelligent, the more talented, and that's why you had a lot of Blacks who tried to pass because if you were dark, you weren't given the same considerations. And somehow it just kept going. And then the children would pick it up from the adults, and it just kept going and going even to today.

Kara Miles: So would your teachers—

Margaret Sampson Rogers: In some cases.

Kara Miles: Would they play favorites?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: In some cases, the teachers played favorites because of color. The teachers played favorites because of occupations. The doctor's children's and the lawyer's children were treated differently. The very fair-skinned were treated differently.

Kara Miles: Were treated better?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And a lot of instances, when they had the beauty pageants within the schools and whatever, Ms. Williston or whatever, the fairer skinned girls were usually the first ones considered. It just went on, and it wasn't something that any thought was given to. It was just an assumption. This is the way it's going to be. And I always remembered a remark Mr. Sidney Jones made. He said that the Black race—You have the most beautiful race in the world because you have them as White as you want, and you have them as Black as you want. He said, "Not a race, we're just White." Which is true, you're just White. But you can. And it's not color. I don't care. I don't care about your color. I care about your personality.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I dated a guy in college for about four months before I found out he was White. I didn't know. A jealous classmate found out he was White and told the administration. Well, this was during the fifties. They called me in and said, "You get rid of him in 24 hours, or we are expelling you from school." And if I had been expelled and sent home, my mother would've killed me, graveyard dead. Yes. There was no doubt in my military mind. This lady would've killed me. And I did not have the nerve. I could not find it within me to go to this boy and tell him the school says I can't date you anymore because you're White. I thought he was Puerto Rican, really is what I thought.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And how it came out. The guy who came to stop the Coca-Cola machine saw us and made the statement to one of the girls standing there that he used to come to see his daughter. We had been invited to the president's house for dinner. This is how well liked he was. At homecoming, he sat with the president and his wife during the game. He would be on campus after curfew. He was a well-educated person. His mother was a college professor, and his doctor was a physician. They were from Arizona, I

believe. He was stationed at Fort Bragg. He was in the Army, staff sergeant. I had a habit of talking to the military men. As I explained to my college classmates, you're going to school just like I am. You're broke. They get paid at least once a month. I know I'm not going to eat in the dining hall. I'm going to have dinner at least once a month. That's the whole thing.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I had money. My parents had money, and they sent me money, but sometimes my mother would get testy, and she said, "You don't need this, and I'm not giving it to you." Okay. Then I just have to figure out something else here. So I would date the serviceman. They could take me to the movies. They had the money. Most of the college kids were like college kids today. They don't have a lot of money. So, once they found out he was White, I could not come right out and tell him that these people are so prejudiced at this period of time, they said I can't date you. So I found a buddy.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I love football, so I have a lot of male friends that are just football buddies. And I found this buddy, and I had told the guy that I couldn't see him that day. I had to work because I did have part-time job on campus, and he was on campus anyway. So when I saw him, then I grabbed a buddy, and we used to walk past, and I was all over this guy, like quite on rice, because I knew it would upset him. And I walked over to another dorm, and then when he got ready to go, my buddy turned around to go, and I just jumped up, kissed him on the jaw and left. And so the guy did, he got upset. And so he called me later and was asking me about it. I said, "Hey, well, that's how to cook in crumbles." And that was fun. We had fun. It was great.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: He said, "I can't believe this." And he actually went AWOL. It was a mess. But I knew that I could not bring that White man home. I knew I could not let the school expel me for dating this White man because my mom would not have allowed it. She didn't like dark-skinned Black people, but there was no way in the world I could bring a White man in that house. Not never planned to come back in there, but she was. But as I said, it is just generally accepted.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Black people are prejudiced against each other still to this day. And I told a colonel when we were in Mannheim, West Germany, that the best way I know to describe the Black race was a barrel of crabs, because as soon as one gets up, another one will reach up and snatch him down instead of reaching up to try to help him. And we still do that, but during that time, that really was the way it was a lot. It was bad, and it's still bad, and it shouldn't be. We should have grown past that.

Kara Miles: When did you go to West Germany.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: First or second time? Well, my youngest son is 21, and he was born in Heidelberg in 1971. I won a trip to Europe in 1959, and I went to Paris and Prestwick, Scotland and Copenhagen, Denmark, and that was something. You talk about prejudice in this country. I was in Paris on the Champs Elysee, as a matter of fact, and this little French girl ran up to me and asked me to show her my tail. They had been told by White GIs that Black Americans had tails like monkeys, and we curled them up inside of our clothing. The little girl's mother ran, grabbed her and started hitting this child. And I stopped her, and I said, "Somebody had to tell her this. You shouldn't spank her. You should explain."

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I said, "Do you mind if I talk to her?" And I told her, I said, "We do not have tails. We're not monkeys. We are people just like you with just different color." And the child is looking at me because this is not what the White GIs had told them. And so the mother's crying. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I don't know—Yes, you know where she got it from. You just need to tell somebody to stop it. We were the only two Blacks. It was interesting. We were the only two Blacks in the hotel. When we went to Copenhagen, we were the only two Black people for three days in the city. And we want to do that again.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I didn't realize it until people started telling us where we had been. We went to see the changing of the guard, and there was a West Indian lady who was from England, and she was so glad to see us that she wanted to pay our way to Sweden. She wanted to take us to Switzerland. She wanted us to go everywhere with her so she wouldn't be by herself. And I kept saying, "I don't know this person. I'm not going anywhere." So we left the change in the garden, came back to an apartment store and went in a restaurant to eat pancakes. The greatest pancakes I've ever had in my life. They're very, very thin. They're almost like crepes with all kinds of fruits. You got to had them with strawberries, with blueberries, with raspberries. And we walked in the door of that department store, four-story department store, and the people started asking us, "Where was the other one?"

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I said, "What are you talking about?" "When you went that way, there were three of you. Where's the other one?" That's when we realized that everybody was watching us. You turn and you look, people are just standing there. And I had a habit of looking, is there something wrong with my clothing? Is my hair all right? What? Why? And finally, the manager of hotel told us, "You are the only two here." Okay. And I fell in love with the ice cream. I ate \$14 worth of ice cream in two days, and they gave it to me because that was not part of the trip. He was just so fascinated with my—They skimmed the cream off of the milk and the ice cream is made from that cream. No milk.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: They gave it to me. But I enjoyed the trip, and I enjoyed the fascination. We went to the follies in Paris. I was very much embarrassed because I had never been exposed to nudity. 1959, we were the only two Black people in there. I was very naive. I didn't know why the men were leaving with their overcoats tied around them backward. And I always believed that the only stupid question is the one you don't ask. So I asked. I was always taught that if you don't know, ask, and folks say, you're right. You are a junior in college, and you don't know what—No, I don't know. Why? And when they discovered, I could turn red, oh my God, I looked up and saw 50 women come in on the stage all basically the same height and size with cheese strings and nothing else.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: They were basically about 42-44. I mean, we talking huge here. I started turning red, and then everybody started pointing. What? Black, red. And then the lady sitting next to me, one of them came down off the stage and sat in a man's lap, and his wife slapped him. And he said, "I didn't ask her. She did it on all." He said, "You didn't have to look like you were enjoying it," because when she sat in his lap, then all this stuff was in his face. There's nothing he could do. It was interesting to watch how the Europeans looked at American Blacks at that period of time. Then when we went to Germany in the late sixties, early seventies, the Germans were fascinated with the Black children.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And the German women didn't like the Black women because they said we kept them from getting the Black GIs. The Germans loved the Black women. All of them loved the children. And you had a few instances where few would come up and touch the children. And I used to tell them, it won't come off. Rub some more. Rub. And I was fortunate enough to have attractive children. So the week before payday, still getting paid once a month, I'd dress them up, and we'd catch the Strauss and go downtown because they'd give them money, they'd give them candy, they'd give them fruit. We'd have no money. We'd take them downtown, and they just walk up, all this, oh darling, and they'd give them money, but they still looked at the Blacks then comparing it to what the White GIs had told them. So it was widespread. It really was. It was widespread. But just like I said, there's nobody better than me.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And that's the way I've always done it, and that's what I tried to instill in my children. You have the education, you have the means of the education, you get the education, and you remember you can be anything you want to be, but it's up to you. You can do it unless you decide to let your friends keep you from doing it. I didn't have a lot of friends because I was determined, I was an honor roll student all through school. I was on the dean's list all through college. I was determined to be. And as my sons would say, the kids don't want to associate with me because I'm on the honor rolls, and that's the way I felt in college. When that list comes out, my name's going to be on there. I have done this, I can do this, and I did.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And at State, during that time, during the fifties—Because I went three years, got married, stayed out three years, had three children, went back and graduated. During the fifties, on the semester, they were won semester for a while, and then they were on quarter, if you maintained A average, then you didn't have to take the finals. So you know what I did. Yeah. So, then while everybody is in the dorm cramming and studying, I'm being dentist to menace. I would drag chains down the hall two and three o'clock in the morning with a sheet over my head. The folks look out, and they think it's a ghost. Rolled soda bottles. I had serious eye problems, and I couldn't go to the movies. I couldn't watch films in class. So, whenever they had films or they went to the movies, I had to be in the dorm.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: So, I'd go around sheeting people's beds, putting Dutch cleanse in it and sewing the bed spreads and sheets together. I had to have something to do. I didn't have to study, so I had to have something to do. So I would do this kind of stuff. But I was always there as far as studies or anything. If there was something I could do to help, I used to do people's turn papers. I did. And change a few paragraphs around me, pass them in. I know you're going to get an A. I got an A on it. I just changed it around. I didn't have money problems, so I'd call my parents and say I needed this and that.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And a lot of times they just stopped to think that they were paying my bills by the semester or the quarter. And if I call and say, I have to have \$80 by tomorrow, I can't go to class, mom wouldn't stop and think. She'd either jump in the car and drive to Fayetteville or wire it to me. And it's somebody who needed something, and I'd go and give it to them. I didn't need it, so it didn't matter. But I guess sometimes I said, maybe I did that because I wanted them to think I was just like everybody else because I felt like I was like everybody else, but a lot of times I was treated differently because they said my

parents had money. So you were being treated differently because of your color. You were being treated differently because of your background. You were being treated differently because of what you had. So, in the Black race, you had all of that stuff to put up with.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I had a lot of my clothes stolen at one time, and I didn't know they were going until I happened to see a girl with a suit on, and I liked the suit. And I said I like that. That is sharp. It was a velvet suit. The skirt had high waist with suspenders, and the jacket was velvet. The lining of the jacket was the same color as the blouse. And I saw this girl in this thing. I said, "That is nasty. I like that." So I said, "Could I try the jacket on?" So, she said, "Yeah." She said her aunt sent it to her from DC. I said, "Oh, I'm going to have to call my mama because I got to have one of these." And when I got ready to take it off to give it back to her, I was looking at the lining and stuff so I could really tell her what it was. Pull the lining up, and there was my name stamped all inside her.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: So, I told her, I gave her 48 hours to get it to the cleaners and back in my room because I was so—I had my own room. I had to pay double monthly bill because I had my own room. Major reason I had my own room was I needed the closet space. So when I got back to the dorm, I was still talking about that. So, I went in the office and got on the PA system, and I mentioned the fact that I had found somebody walking around with a suit of mine. I said I don't know if anything else is missing, but if everything is not back in my room by nine o'clock in the morning, I'm not going to the college president. I'm going downtown Fayetteville to the police department, and I'm taking out a warrant, and I'm having this campus searched until I find my belongings. And I woke up the next morning, there was a bed full of clothes and two boxes of shoes.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I never missed it because I had enough clothes. I could change clothes three or four times a day for three or four weeks without wearing the same thing. So, I took two trunks and a complete set of Samsonite luggage up in September. And then when I came back for Thanksgiving, I brought all that back, and then I took some more. So I didn't miss it, but when I looked and saw all this—I had no idea because I didn't lock the doors. The valuable stuff I had, the dormitory major had in her room, and my gowns. So they can't think about the rest of it. And I looked and saw all that stuff. I looked crazy.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And the dormitory major told my mother, "She doesn't need it anyway. She doesn't have no business with it up here." That's why they took it. So mama told her, "Until you start buying it, don't you worry about it. She can have what she wants." And in fact, if that's not enough, we'll get some more because she was like that. My mother felt that no matter how she treated a person or what she said, as long as she could buy you something or give you money, then that made up for it. Because when she was very abusive, that's what she would do. She'd go out and buy me a complete outfit, two or three of them, shoes, everything had to match. I had to have the hat, the bag, the shoes, the under clothes to go with that particular outfit. Stupid. But there were a lot of Black people around here during that time who were prejudice against each other that enhanced what the Whites were doing to you.

Kara Miles: So, were there areas here in Wilmington that your mother would say, no, you can't go to that area?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Oh, yes. And people's houses I could not go to. Almost definitely. One of my dear friends lived on the street around the corner from me, but our backyards connected, but I couldn't go to her house because her mother was not married. And she said she had a bunch of bastard youngins. So I played with Hattie anyway. Whenever my mother left me home, and she went out in the car, and I'd go out in the backyard, hopped the fence and go play with Hattie. And when the kids would whistle and let me know when they saw that Buick coming, then I'd scramble back in the backyard. She came home. I'm out in the backyard playing. Yeah.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Like I said, I'd use my mind. There were always ways to get around it. Then there were people she wanted me to associate with, and I would overhear saying, "We don't want to be bothered with her," but every time you turn around, her mama is saying you can't go unless you go with this one or you go with that one. I'm telling her I'm not going, and that way I won't have to worry about her going with me. And I used to try to tell her this when she'd say, "Well, you can go if you go with so-and-so." And I'm saying, "They don't want to be bothered with me." "Oh, you just say that because you don't want to be with decent people."

Margaret Sampson Rogers: What she kept bringing up to me was the fact that I was an illegitimate child. I was constantly told this. This was something that Black people did too, which does not help the children. But she was telling me I was going to grow up and have a bunch of bastard youngins just like my mama. And so being as stubborn as I was, I figured out there was one sure way not to have any. And so I didn't have sex until I was married, but it was not because I did not want to. Let's clear that fact up. I was so stubborn and determined that knowing me, I probably would have sex once and get pregnant, that the only way to prove to my mother I was not going to do this was not to have sex. And I had all the opportunities in the world because she liked to go.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: She would come by school and tell me, I'm going to Jacksonville to do some shopping. You got your key. Yeah. We are not talking to 50 miles Jacksonville, North Carolina. We're talking in Florida. But then she'd go, she'd drive all that way and wouldn't buy anything. Oh, I went window-shop. So she's gone a couple of days, which means I'm in that house by myself, which I could have done anything I wanted to do, but I was determined that I wouldn't do that. And Black children were told things like that a lot. You can't go to that person's house. His daddy ain't nothing but an alcoholic. His uncle's a wino. He's one of them denature drinkers.

Kara Miles: One of those what?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Denature drinkers. That's a good one for you. They drank canned sternal, canned heat and paint thinner. They mixed the stuff together, and the people called them denature drinkers. I don't know. That's what they were called. And those were our "winos" more or less, that you might find on the corner somewhere drunk. But even still, you grew up in neighborhoods, and these people weren't allowed to continually be out there.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Somebody got them up, gave them some coffee, gave them a bath, sent them somewhere, took them home, gave them a meal. They didn't sleep out like that unless they got drunk in the middle of the night and laid out somewhere. But this was the thing you were told. I remember a classmate gave me a beautiful necklace, earrings, a bracelet for Christmas. I was 15. And when I told her who it was, she told me who his uncle was, and you get on the phone, and you call him and tell him to come and get this trash because you can't have it. And I don't want you having anything to do with them people.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I said, "This will not work." And she finally conceded that the more I try to make you a bigot, the further you go into the other side. And that's what I did. No, as long as you treat me as I want to be treated, I'll treat you the same way I want you to treat me, then we get along fine. But as far as who your parents are, what color you are, that doesn't mean anything to me. Never has. And it never will. And that's what I try to instill in my children. And thank my youngest daughter is 29, and the first day she went to headstart in the sixties, she came home crying, and I was ready to go to school to find out what has happened. And I said, you just tell me exactly what happened. I mean exactly word for word. She said, "The teacher called me a Negro. I am not a Negro. I'm not a Negro, am I."

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And I couldn't do anything but laughing, and she was really upset because I laughed, but I never made race distinctions in my family. And so she didn't know what a Negro was. She really didn't. And she was upset behind this, I'm not a Negro. I said, "Oh, yes, you are. Yes, you are." But by being military, they had a chance to live some of in and everywhere and meet all kinds of people. And that's the way they are. They judge people by the way they behave, not by their color. It is nothing unusual to see Blacks, Latins, Orientals, all of them in our house at one time. Everybody's eating, drinking, sleeping, whatever. It's no big deal. It was just never that way. I never looked at it that way. And I tried to get them to teach their children the same way because that's the way it has to go. Somebody has to stop this stuff.

Kara Miles: You said your mother did some domestic work?

Margaret Sampson Rogers: Yeah.

Kara Miles: That surprises me because what you said about her.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: That's what she did because she wasn't an educated person, and so this was what she had to do to work. She was a very good cook. For a while, she was the baker, the dessert baker at one of the school cafeterias. Other than that, she worked in prominent family homes as their maid, as their cook more than the maid. She did most of the cooking. And I was thrilled with it because it afforded me the chance to get in that house and to see what they had and to read the books that they had and to hear their stories. And so I loved every bit of it. I enjoyed it. I did not feel insulted or degraded or anything because she worked in these people's houses. There was only one incident with working with them.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: She worked for the Grissons, and the little girl wanted me to play with her dolls, and her brother had trains, and I refused to play with the dolls. I was playing with the trains, and the little girl spit in my face, and I slapped her. And at three years of age, I was given an emerald birthstone. And then

the ring—Every five years, I got a bigger one because I got bigger. So I was in high school. So this was about the size ring I would have had as an adult. And being left-handed, I slapped backward. So when I did, yes, I tore that face up. So, my mother had a fit. "Oh my god, these people are going to kill us all." And I'm saying, "Nobody's going to do anything to me. She had no business spitting on me. Nobody spits on me." Slap me, you may get away with it. You spit on me, I'll kill you. Simple as that. So, it so happened while she's putting the ice and everything on his child's face to try and get the mark off, the parents walked in. The mother had a fit.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: "You slapped my child?" I said, "Yes, I did, and I'll slap you if you spit in my face." And my mom was going, "Oh, Jesus." Her husband says, "Wait a minute, wait just a minute." And little girl's name was Bonnie said, "Did you actually spit in this child's face." "Yes, I spit in my face. She wouldn't play with me." That man snatched her up off the floor, and he started tearing her behind up. His wife started—He told her, "You be quiet because I come get you next." He said, "She's not spitting on anybody ever, and I'll see to that." So he told Mama, "Don't worry about her face." He said, "Don't worry about your job, and nothing's going to happen to Margaret. I'm glad she slapped her. She should have slapped her twice."

Margaret Sampson Rogers: But like I said, no, it does not matter what color you are. I'm not going to treat you any way I don't want you to treat me. I'm a firm believer in the golden rule. I will not do anything to you I don't want you to do to me. And I'm not going to spit on you. You spit on me, I'm going to hurt you. Simple as that. I had a thing about being hit on the behind. Never have liked that. My husband couldn't hit me on my behind. Don't do that. Just don't do that. Slapped a White guy for that.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: No, I slapped the band director for that at Fayetteville State. I don't play that. Just don't do that. And because you are White, and you feel you can put your hand—No, you can't put your hand on me because you are White. Nobody puts his hand on me unless I want it done. And where you hear of the Blacks during the Jim Crow era who let Whites do all sorts of—No, they wouldn't do that to me and get away with it. I might have been punished for it, but I simply would not have allowed it to happen. That's why I say I couldn't have grown up in Mississippi, and I couldn't have been a slave because the very first time somebody told me, go get in a bed so I could be a bed warmer, I wouldn't have made it to puberty. They would've killed me before—I never would've made it that far. I would not have made it that far. I just wouldn't have made it that far.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And that's why I admire those people. They were dynamite people. They took stuff—There's no way because I wouldn't take it here, and I wouldn't take it here. And everybody says, "You're from North Carolina? Well, didn't this happen to you?" No, it didn't happen to me. And on a lot of instances, a lot of things happened to people because they allowed it to happen. They knew. Like today, in classrooms, I still say that, students know which teachers. I didn't have discipline problems. In fact, I was so hung up on soap operas back in the sixties, when I first started teaching, until I always scheduled some type of quiet activity at one o'clock so I could go to the lounge and watch all my children.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: I'm so glad I—I hate them. I just stopped. Like I stopped drinking. I stopped drinking one day. I wanted to stop. I was drinking one day, and the next day I didn't drink. Now I'm still

around people who drink, and I let them enjoy themselves. I have no problem with that. That's what you want to do. That's fine. I don't choose to do it anymore. But I would leave my class and go and watch the soap operas. And nobody never knew I was out of class. And it was not physical punishment, it was intellectual punishment. I had a habit of putting one long division problem on a chalkboard, and that one problem would cover that entire board. That was it. Like I told, don't think I won't check this because I will. I'm going to check it, and it would take seven or eight pages to complete this problem. Yes. So I didn't have problems. For Christmas, I gave 14 and 15 page assignments for Christmas holidays.

Kara Miles: I'm sure you were a very well liked teacher.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: They talked about me like a dog. But just as soon as I said I was leaving, everybody was upset. No, no, because I went to Williston where the teachers demanded, and you gave everything you possibly had to give. If you were not a student who could give A work, then they accepted B work. If they knew you were a student who could give A work, you gave it. And I decided at nine years of age I wanted to be a teacher, and I could not wait. This was something I wanted to do, and I knew I could make a difference. And then I watched the system deteriorate. So I got to the point where this is not what I want to do because I'm not getting to do it. The child became low man on the totem pole, the pupil. Everybody else comes first.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And then it got to the point where the parent says, "Well, you're more or less babysitting, but you can't touch my child. You can't do anything to them. I don't care whether he learns or not." And so then that wasn't working for me. Within the first four or five days of the school year, the first day of school, I put my name on the chalkboard, and I put on the other side of the board the things Mrs. Rogers is afraid of. So we get that cleared up. I'm scared of everything that creeps and crawls, and I don't like snakes and frogs and lizards. And if you try to put them on me, I will hurt you. Simple as that. So, go home and tell your mother now. If you come home with your nose broken, you tried to put a frog or a tadpole on it, and I will break your neck. We got that cleared up.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: So from that, we went, and I was not hung into a lesson plan, like right now, if school were open and you had prepared lesson plans. Everybody's talking about Dave Allison's death and the flood. These children don't want to learn what Constantinople did. They want to know about this flood, so you take the child, where he is, with what he wants to learn, you do that. Then you go back and get whatever it was you were supposed to do. And this is the way I did it. And we didn't stay in the classroom. Hate buildings. I took every field trip that I was allotted. I went around to the other teachers and found out who wouldn't. If you're not going to use yours on days that were beautiful like this, we took chairs, we went outside. We did a lot of hands-on and a lot of seeing rather than a lot of notebook.

Margaret Sampson Rogers: And it surprises me now when I hear about the new innovations. And I remember when the school board came to me and said, "You can't use the newspaper to teach." No, they can't use the comic strip. This is what he wants to learn and read. You have the same words. So what difference does it make? The high school girls, when I taught remedial reading, they read True Confession magazines. That was what they wanted to read. So, when they saw those words somewhere else, they still knew what they

were. What's the difference? But no. So, now they want to put them in groups in elementary school. I had departmentalized the fourth grade when I was up at Sanford.