Lucinda Gulledge: At that time during the, what you call it, the Civil Rights struggle. People were just plain scared. And so I don't guess you could blame them for it. They was plain scared. And this one lady and my son and her daughter was the only two kids in my integrated that school. She wouldn't carry her daughter over there unless I went with her, she was just plain scared. Some people just had that fear, but I never was. Never was. And so when they went from Davis to Greenwood High, I'd get in my car, I'd go over there and pick both of them up. Pick both of them up, bring them on home.

Paul Ortiz: How many other students were there?

Lucinda Gulledge: Wasn't but two.

Paul Ortiz: Two.

Lucinda Gulledge: But down through time, I think there was about three or four more come in, that Tudor McGill girl and my son, that's three. And Catherine there were four. There were about five more. But they was in Greenwood High, then, but they didn't go to this one here, only two over here.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. So Mrs. Gulledge, you had a son who was in the first integrated class at Greenwood High School?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, at Davis.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, at Davis.

Lucinda Gulledge: At Davis.

Paul Ortiz: That's an elementary?

Lucinda Gulledge: Right, right over here. Davis Elementary, right.

Paul Ortiz: How old was he, and what grade was he in?

Lucinda Gulledge: I think he was in sixth or seventh grade. I think he was. But that same year, he passed it. That same year he passed, he didn't have to go but one year. That same year he passed, he was passed to Greenwood High. That's the high school over there by the highway. He must've been about seventh, eighth grade, because he had the paper route—Alright.

Paul Ortiz: And there was one other student that—
Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, one other student, her name was Catherine Edwards.

Paul Ortiz: Catherine Evans?

Lucinda Gulledge: Edwards.

Paul Ortiz: Edwards, okay. Did you know her parents, Mrs. Gulledge?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, I do, but they live in Chicago now. Daughter's in Chicago, sure is. Yeah, they're in Chicago. They lived right down the street on the corner from me down there, at that time. But they're all in Chicago.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, was that part of an organized effort? Was there an organization that was involved in that with you?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, no. No more than what they call the civil rights movement. I think that's what they called it. Yeah, it was. It had to be. The civil rights movement.

Paul Ortiz: Were there other local leaders who were supporting that?

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh yeah, yes there was.

Paul Ortiz: Who were some of those leaders?

Lucinda Gulledge: One of them was Mr. L.C. Mayswine. James Moore, David Journ. Let's see. Johnny Matthews. And they were supporting that because if this one didn't pick them up, then the others come pick them up. They was in that together, you know.

Paul Ortiz: All pick up the kids and take them to school?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay. So other people—

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Was that in the late '60s?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, that was in the last '60s. Sure was. Really was because—yeah, that was in the late '60s, mm-hmm.
Paul Ortiz: I was trying to track that down. What year was your son born?

Lucinda Gulledge: Hmm?

Paul Ortiz: What year was your son born?

Lucinda Gulledge: Let me see, what year was he born—'49, I think it was. '49. I think it's '49. Let me see, that make him how old?

Paul Ortiz: In '69 he would've been, he was born in '49, so in 1969 he would've been 20.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. Let's see, was he 20 then? Well, probably so because now he started in that before he was 20 because see there was those stores here around here like where I live on the corner there and on the corner there. But he was in there. But he hadn't started, he hadn't went to the school, hadn't integrated the school at that time. But he was in the [indistinct 00:05:38] stores until then.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh-huh. That's what he was doing then. And they had a little black boy and they picked him up and carried him out there on the farm on account of labor, a busload of children. And my son was in that busload. They didn't stay out there but a week. They didn't do nothing but feed them, because the other guys was watching. The other Civil Rights boys was watching. And so that man come from Jackson and told them to get [indistinct 00:06:18] children, because there were no kids back then.

Paul Ortiz: Now where was he staying for a week?

Lucinda Gulledge: Who?

Paul Ortiz: Your son.

Lucinda Gulledge: Here. Oh, little old place across—number seven, my daddy called Captain Larry. The farm. Something like a farm for prisoners.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, he was arrested?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, uh-huh. That's what I'm telling you, they arrested a busload of them. Mm-hmm. And then some of them up there in jail were nothing but teenagers.

Paul Ortiz: And that was because they were boycotting—

Lucinda Gulledge: That's exactly right. Right there, that store, used to be right on this side of the street. Yes, I believe that corner. And that's the store they would boycott.
Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, was your son in high school at that time?

Lucinda Gulledge: No. Uh-uh. No, no. Because this school over here, Davis, that’s the elementary school. But see, he left that and went to high school at the Greenwood High.

Paul Ortiz: Okay, so he was in elementary school when he was arrested?

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Sure was.

Paul Ortiz: So they would arrest kids?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, sure did. Arrest a heap of them. Really did now. Mm-hmm. Because he didn't go to Greenwood High until he was passed at this school over here. They had whole bus painted black. And that's what they doing, picking up them children in that old black bus. That's right. I can tell you the story.

Paul Ortiz: Were there other things they would do to try to discourage you from—

Lucinda Gulledge: No, no. Uh-uh, they didn't bother. They didn't bother. They didn't come here and bother me no kind of way here. Sure didn't.

Paul Ortiz: Were there people in the movement keeping an eye out for you?

Lucinda Gulledge: Well, some of them was, but most of them was afraid. Most of them were afraid, even my next door neighbors was afraid. Sure was, they really was afraid because the people in Jackson would call different people they wanted to come in but they didn't have nowhere to stay. And they would tell them to come to my house and I’m the only one would let them in. Other people, now they would let them in, but they were really afraid. They were afraid to let them in. And I told them they were welcome here. Sometime I have two or three here.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, who was the first group that stayed here, and what were they trying to do?

Lucinda Gulledge: I know you rubbing my brain now. I believe it was those people who were—those people came into town and get these people on the welfare, some ADCE. Wasn't welfare then, they call it ADCE because it's only people they had like that.

Paul Ortiz: And it says they should be sent to Booker care of Mrs. Lucinda Gulledge. Who was Booker?

Lucinda Gulledge: He was one of the workers, Booker [indistinct 00:10:08]. He dead now, but he was one of the workers.

Paul Ortiz: Where was he from?
Lucinda Gulledge: He was from over in the delta somewhere.

Paul Ortiz: He was black?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, he was black. Uh-huh.

Paul Ortiz: So he was a native Mississippian?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: And he was working in the movement?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. Oh, Booker Nelson, yeah.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: And let's see. I also talked about Mrs. Weir.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, she dead.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: She was one of the workers, too, just like me.

Paul Ortiz: Okay, was she from Greenwood?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, she lived on the next street right there.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. And what did she do?

Lucinda Gulledge: Well, she helped with the registration and vote.

Paul Ortiz: Voter registration.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: What was her first name?

Lucinda Gulledge: Who?
Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Weir.

Lucinda Gulledge: Ruby.

Paul Ortiz: Ruby Weir.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: And it also says Mrs. Scales.

Lucinda Gulledge: Bertha Scales. I didn't know her. I think she across town over there somewhere. I really didn't know her. I didn't know Bertha Scales.

Paul Ortiz: But she was Black also?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: And it says she's been replaced by Mrs. Missouri Gray.

Lucinda Gulledge: Missouri Gray stayed on down in the next block. She dead, too.

Paul Ortiz: So a lot of the activists have passed away.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, they have. They really have. But they would send clothes down here to the needy people, and I would tell them the clothes would come and then they'd come in here and get them clothes. Different ones.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, did you know Mrs. Ruth Reading?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, I knew her. She stayed right back there. Yeah, I knew her.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. It says here she was a member of the committee.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. That was the welfare committee. The welfare committee. She's trying to get those poor people on some aid. Those poor people wouldn't get nothing. Wouldn't get nothing.

Paul Ortiz: So that, and then you helped organize the Greenwood Welfare Committee.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: It also mentions the St. Francis Mission, Mrs. Gulledge. What was that?
Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, the Catholics.

Paul Ortiz: Catholics.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. It's gone. The church is still here, but they had a mission, they had another building, called it a mission, that would help people. They were Catholic people. They would help people, give them some clothes.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Like that.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, were you also involved in the Greenwood Voters League?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. When did that start here?

Lucinda Gulledge: You know what I told you, the voting had started on my porch?

Paul Ortiz: Uh-huh.

Lucinda Gulledge: That's when it started. Folk come down from Washington and said everybody would want to register come down to the old post office. That's when it started. That's in, let me see.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Let me see, where is my—

Paul Ortiz: Because I went to a meeting last week with a couple of my colleagues.

Lucinda Gulledge: Did you? Let me see if I can find that.

Paul Ortiz: I'll help. Here. Mrs. Gulledge, I was wondering about a couple other things in the letter here. You talk about this organization called Star. What was Star?

Lucinda Gulledge: It was an organization like a fraternity order. Like Easter Star.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay. And it was a Black organization?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, uh-huh. [indistinct 00:17:42] my certificates.
Paul Ortiz: Oh, you logged it?

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh-huh.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: I'm the matron of it.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay, so that organization was active, too?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. Easter Star.

Paul Ortiz: Because it says here Dan McDevitt with Star told me they were going to try and desegregate some of the local chain stores.

Lucinda Gulledge: When you start talking about that, you know me, and you start talking about that.

Paul Ortiz: Okay, and that was done through the Eastern Star, or—

Lucinda Gulledge: Well, it was done through the Stars and the rest of them. We was all together.

Paul Ortiz: Other fraternities?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, yeah. Uh-huh. They was done all together.

Paul Ortiz: So you knew Dan McDevitt?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, uh-huh.

Paul Ortiz: Was he from Greenwood?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, uh-uh. He just coming through like the rest of them. They just come in there and work and get things done and then they gone. Get us started out.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, did this gentlemen named Chip Seward, did he stay here?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, here. Right here.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Stayed right here. He got the message when he got to Greenwood to come here to my
house. It's where he stayed. Yeah, he wrote that. And he sent me that back after he was gone. I told him I wanted a copy of it. But he did that, he sent me that back. You might see on there where it says sorry he was late getting it back to me.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, right, yeah. "Sorry about the delay, the matter slipped my mind."

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. He sat up half the night in the kitchen with the telegraph getting his business together.

Paul Ortiz: And he was working mainly on the welfare—

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, he was. Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: And he would stay here during the day and then sleep-

Lucinda Gulledge: He'd sleep here at night, uh-huh.

Paul Ortiz: How long was he here? A few months?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, he was here about a couple of weeks. He was here about a couple of weeks.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. Now Mrs. Gulledge, did you have people stay here before that?

Lucinda Gulledge: Let's see. Yeah, two white ladies stayed. Mm-hmm, two white ladies stayed. Sure did.

Paul Ortiz: So a lot of people stayed here.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm. Other folk was scared to let them stay at their house. And you know how that go. The only somebody over here was me. There was somebody else across town might've let 'em, but I think [indistinct 00:21:19] don't make [indistinct 00:21:21] some place over there.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, one of the things I wanted to ask you about, it says here that the Black community in Greenwood was kind of spread out. That's what it says here. There does not seem to be a coherent community in Greenwood other than Baptist Town.

Lucinda Gulledge: That's where it is now.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. What were some other Black neighborhoods in Greenwood?

Lucinda Gulledge: Called GP. GP, right here, Brittney. There's two more, let me see. This is Baptist Town, and that's GP over here, going to [indistinct 00:22:17] by Greenwood High School. And this is Brittney back over this way. And so that about covers it in the buckeye.
Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, how did Baptist Town get its name?

Lucinda Gulledge: I don't know no more than that. It had that when I got here.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay, so it goes way back.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. It goes way back.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, it talks here about this organization called the Friends of the Children of Mississippi.

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: Was that like Head Start?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, it was like Head Start? They still got the Head Start going. Yeah, they did that, too. Sure did. Uh-huh. They still got that going.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, that was the program before Head Start?

Lucinda Gulledge: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Paul Ortiz: I talked to somebody in Clarksdale who's involved in that.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yes, some Blacks in Clarksdale, but I think when they left Clarksdale they had to skip on to Greenwood because they was hitting the dust over there. Them folks didn't want them stopping there in no kind of way. Uh-uh.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what would you do in Greenwood if you had, say, some spare time? What were some of the good places to go to go out to eat or go to a movie?

Lucinda Gulledge: Go to any of them now.

Paul Ortiz: But I mean back in the older days, back—

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, you couldn't go nowhere. You couldn't go nowhere but, let me see. You couldn't even go up there to the Christian club, you couldn't go there. Wasn't no place.

Paul Ortiz: Somebody was telling me about a theater called the Dixie Theater.

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, that's right down on Johnson Street down here. Well, it used to be down there, I think they moved it on Walter, I think.
Paul Ortiz: Did Black people go there?

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh-huh, Black people go there. Uh-huh, sure do. Yeah, Black people go there. Yes, sir, they do. Well, I'll tell you. The same boy I was telling you about.

Paul Ortiz: Chip Seward?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, a Colored boy. We got together and went and met Dr. King in the march. He was a McGee. Silas McGee. Yeah. Him and his brother, they integrated the theater downtown.

Paul Ortiz: The Dixie Theater?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, Le Fleur.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, Le Fleur. Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Paul Ortiz: Was the Dixie Theater already integrated?

Lucinda Gulledge: Uh-huh, it was already integrated down here. Yeah, it was already integrated. But they integrated that one downtown, up on Main Street, I think. Le Fleur Theater.

Paul Ortiz: How did they do that?

Lucinda Gulledge: They went on in there. They put them out when they got there, but they went in there. Then that caused a commotion, but they finally integrated, you see. They had to, or close it down. See, that law had passed.

Paul Ortiz: The Civil Rights Act.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, that law had passed. They was going because that's how it goes. Stand aside, we going to do what we want to do. They wasn't going to abide by the law, or the Civil Rights Act. Boy went on in there. Sure did. Then everybody was going in and then it wasn't long before they closed it down.

Paul Ortiz: The Le Fleur?

Lucinda Gulledge: Closed it, closed it up.

Paul Ortiz: Were there other things that closed down? Pools or—
Lucinda Gulledge: No. No, uh-uh. No, because wasn't too much of swimming going on then. Uh-uh. They ain't closed nothing down but that theater. And so it wasn't long before they was glad for everybody to be in there because they wasn't getting no support, they wasn't getting no nothing, see what I mean? This guy say comes into your grocery store in the other part, other people can't come. Well, you going to soon be out of business.

Paul Ortiz: So the Black community had a pretty successful boycott?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, they did. Mm-hmm. So they finally got together. They're together here real nice. Sure is, real nice. In the churches [indistinct 00:27:58], they together real nice. Sure is, because white churches downtown, they were criminal, they [indistinct 00:28:06] supposed to be up there. They sang Christmas carols, they together now, both of them. But after all, there still going to be some hatred in them. But they don't show it.

Paul Ortiz: Try to hide it more. Mrs. Gulledge, what have been the major changes you've seen in the Black community since those days or before?

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, there's been lots of change in the Black community. But what you talking about?

Paul Ortiz: Well, changes like earlier you were talking about how so many Black people used to work in the fields.

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, there's lots of change. Now they all got good jobs, jobs come in, Bowling Piano, Picture Frame, and Urban, these folks got good jobs. Man, doing good. These jobs done come in here. Mm-hmm. Sure is. Yeah, that Picture Frame and Urban. Uh-huh.

Paul Ortiz: What year did the Picture Frame come in?

Lucinda Gulledge: Huh?

Paul Ortiz: Did those come in during the '60s?

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, I think they did. Right behind there, right up in there somewhere. Picture Frame, and let me see what [indistinct 00:29:34]. Bowling Piano, and Urban. That's three right there. Uh-huh. I think there's another one down that road somewhere, Bowling, Picture Frame, and Urban. I think that's all, I think, back this way. That's it back this way. I'm trying to see what was going on back towards 82, back that way. But it ain't nothing back there.

Paul Ortiz: Is there a cottonseed—

Lucinda Gulledge: Huh?
Paul Ortiz: Is there a cottonseed oil plant?

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh, it’s right over here.

Paul Ortiz: I was interviewing somebody about the union campaign and the piano.

Lucinda Gulledge: It's right down there by Bowling. Talking about the piano and organ place?

Paul Ortiz: Yes, ma’am.

Lucinda Gulledge: That's down there by Bowling. That's down there by Bowling.

Paul Ortiz: Do you know anybody who was active in that when they were organizing the Piano?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, I don’t. I really don't. I think they came in behind there. I think they came in behind, that's when them jobs come in. When everything got quiet. When everything got quiet, that's when them jobs come in because most of those jobs—the Civil Rights people, they put them jobs in here. Lots of them did. A company.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, just a couple more questions. I don't want to take up your entire day. What were the things that inspired you the most through all of the struggles during the toughest times? What were the things that really inspired you?

Lucinda Gulledge: You say during the toughest times?

Paul Ortiz: To keep on going.

Lucinda Gulledge: Oh. It's the old folks and the willpower, I guess. Because I kept on going, and the children in the schools. That was one of the things was the school. I was helping the kids get in school. Encouragement. So they made it.

Paul Ortiz: It looks like you played a really role here in the neighborhood. Were there other Black women who did that, too? Helping kids out, and—

Lucinda Gulledge: Well, Miss Wendy, she would cook. Uh-huh. She did. Yeah, she did. She's about the only one of us ever did. Helping the kids out, that's right. Yeah, she did. But I'm going to tell you what it was with these people—they just had that fear. They just had that fear. And you just couldn't get it out of them. I guess it's just like a growing child, they have to grow out of them, I guess. They just had that fear. Uh-huh. They just had been, I don't know, what you call it? Partial slavery all their days and things like that. They just had that fear, but I never had no fear. You couldn't get none of these folks to let none of the White people stay at their house. And when everybody come to Greenwood and they had go to Greenwood, they send, "Go to Lucinda." Sent them here.
Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, what were some of the things that set you apart that you said you didn't have that fear? Was that something you got from your parents?

Lucinda Gulledge: I guess it must've been. I guess it must've been. I guess it must've been because I wasn't afraid. I wasn't scared of them. Wasn't afraid. Sure wasn't.

Paul Ortiz: Your parents teach you to stand up for your rights?

Lucinda Gulledge: Stand up for your rights, that's right. That's exactly right. Stand up for your rights. And I already had something to do with that. Part of my own self, stand up for your rights. And you see, another thing what helped me, I always believed in the things that was right, and I would read the Bible. You heard me tell you I was a Sunday school teacher, I would read the Bible and I believed in the Bible and that's God's Word. And that darn thing kept me through, was God's Word. He ain't got no respect of person, He made everybody. He made me and a one man made.

Lucinda Gulledge: When He was getting ready to make Man, the three Godshead got together, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He said, "Let us." I said lots of people read the Bible and don't pay it no attention. He said, "Let us." And then He wasn't by Himself, was He? Somebody had to help Him, didn't He? He said, "Let us make Man." All right, when He said, "Let us make Man," one of the heads said, "If you make it, he'll sin." And the other head said, "I'll go down and redeem them." That was this God. It was three Godshead, in the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Lucinda Gulledge: And so that's what you got to do, you got to read His Word and believe in His Word. And He'll straighten it, He'll take all fear from you. He take all fear from me. When those three God's head, He said, "If you make it, he'll sin." And the Son spoke, said, "I'll go down." And Jesus Christ gave His life for me, see what I mean? He go down and redeem me, and if you believe in Him, he'll restore you right back. And that's what helped me, nothing but that. That's all, that's what hold me, because God ain't got no respect to person. And in one scripture He said, "He that doeth His will, him will He heal." He ain't got no respect, He made all of us. He made everybody.

Paul Ortiz: Mrs. Gulledge, did most of the people in Baptist Town go to one church?

Lucinda Gulledge: Well, they got different churches. Some Methodist, some Baptist.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: And some goes to Sanctified, because down on the next street, we got a Sanctified preacher down there. His family go to the Sanctified, and then some goes to the Methodist, and some goes to the Baptist.

Paul Ortiz: What church do you go to?
Lucinda Gulledge: Baptist. Uh-huh, Baptist church. That's my church right around the corner.

Paul Ortiz: Is that McKinney?

Lucinda Gulledge: That's it.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, okay.

Lucinda Gulledge: Yeah, that's it right around there. That's McKinney Chapel—

Paul Ortiz: Okay, Mrs. Gulledge, are there anything that you wanted to add that we haven't talked about?

Lucinda Gulledge: No, while we was talking I was thinking, but I don't think there's nothing else to add. I don't think. If there is, when you get to where you going, you just write me a note or something and I'll write back to you and send it to you.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.