

MARGARET WALKER ALEXANDER NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER
JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

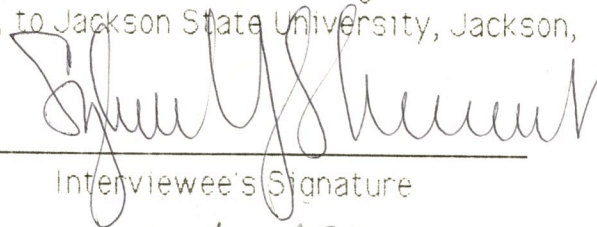
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Oral History program at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi. The purpose of this program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview has been made by the interviewer and a transcript of the tape will be made and submitted to you for editing. The final retyped and edited transcript, together with the tape of the interview will be placed in the Oral History Collection at Jackson State University. Other Institutions or persons may obtain a copy. These materials may be used for purpose of research, for instructional use, for publication, or for other related purposes.

I, Sylvia Stewart, have voluntarily given an interview on and in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information. I knowingly and voluntarily permit Jackson State University, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or such rights are now known, recognized, or contemplated, to Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.



Interviewee's Signature

4 / 20 / 94

Date of Interview



Interviewer's Signature

Jackson State University
Oral History Interview

Interview with Sylvia Stewart

Date of Interview: 4 April 1994: Jackson, Mississippi

Interviewer: Tiffany D. Williams

Tiffany: Mrs. Stewart where were you born?

Sylvia: In Jackson. My family lived on Cohe~~a~~ Street which is west of Farish Street.

Tiffany: How would you describe your family during that time? How big was your family?

Sylvia: My mother and my father and I had an older sister and my grandmother, my mother's mother lived with us. My grandparents on my father's side lived around the corner (a loud knock) on Blair Street where I live now and my dad and grandfather work here across the street where we live at the funeral home.

Tiffany: How would you describe your childhood; what was your childhood like during the Jim Crow ~~science~~^{segregation}; the age of segregation? How would you describe.

Sylvia: Well, being that I lived, it is a very closed community, we moved out of the neighborhood when I was six years old. I ~~specifically~~^{specifically} remember it being a very quiet neighborhood, a very safe neighborhood, all the kids in the neighborhood played all along the streets, all the way down to Mill street, we even went down there today to watch the trains come in and out. I went to nursery school on Blair Street at Bethlehem Center and when I started first grade we walked to school which was at Holy Ghost, which was about four and a half blocks from here, so it was truly a neighborhood. The kind that you see on the Beavers show or you know everybody had a great yard and it was landscaped and we didn't; I don't remember sidewalks, but I remember you could go up sidewalks in most of the area and just about anything that you wanted you could get it in this neighborhood. but then it just; within walking distance, even though we had a car not very many people in the neighborhood did. So there was a grocery store, a drug store up on Fortification Street, obviously the funeral home were you could by insurance also, but then the Alamo Theater which was probably about four and a half blocks south of here, so it

was truly what people in vision from that era; when you watch you know like watch old television shows like the Beavers show, it was truly that type of neighborhood.

Tiffany: Can you remember what things were like for your family during the Jim Crow period?

Sylvia: Well, if you mean from a ^{financial} ~~financial~~ situation I don't remember that we had any problems. Of course, my family own a business here in the Farish Street area and very proud to say that we were successful so as far as the; there were limitations I do remember as a child when we went; the only area we could shop in Jackson that wasn't a metrocenter or a Northpark mall(laugh), OK, all the shopping was downtown and we had department stores like Kennington's, McRae's, Euporian and they had elevators and they had black women running the elevators, but the thing that I remember more so than anything was outside of the elevators were water fountains and to left would be *colored* and on the other one would say white only. It was very infatted, it was only white people could drink out that water fountaine, so that part of it I remember quite well. I remember also during the period of time when the state fair was going on there was only one period, one **day**, that fair would be here like a week and only black people could only go like on the last day, that was the colored day.

Tiffany: How would you describe your neighborhood during that time?

Sylvia: Again, it was an interactive neighborhood I think at the time we probably knew; everybody knew each other and the people in the neighborhood watched out for everybody else's kids so it was a very comfortable time. I don't remember it being anything stressful other than when we would get in trouble, there was a lady that lived next door to us that raised chickens, those little baney hens, and a friend of mine and myself and some more kids decided we were gonna bathe them one day, (laugh) needless to say we found out you not supposed to bathe chickens, ~~OK~~, but we thought that. There was a big tin and stuff like that so we got in a lot of trouble. (still laughing)

Tiffany: Did you ever play on Cohee Street?

Sylvia: Oh Yeah we played. The biggest event everyday during the summer time would be to go through the neighborhood and ask people did they have any bottles, pop bottles they wanted to get rid of and so then we take the pop bottles and go to the store which was down here on Monument Street, I don't remember, it may have ^{been} the New Deal store I can't remember the name of it, but anyway we trade the pop bottles in for pennies and then take them down to the railroad tracks and lay 'em out on the railroad tracks to wait for the train to come and it was called "busting" pennies and see take a little coin penny like that when

the train would run over it and it would be about that big, and then there was a man that lived on the other end of Cohe~~a~~^{as} street we would take them up there and he would knock holes in 'em for us and we'd string 'em so we'd make necklaces and things and then basically what we do is just save 'em, at the end of the summer we probably have fifty of 'em ; God I don't remember, but it was like to me it seem like a big treasure chest with these big pennies, a big nothing. Other than, there was a lot kids in the neighborhood, so we, I don't remember anybody having a bicycle, some kids had skates, my parents wouldn't let me have a pair of skates 'cause my sister had broke her arm, skatin down our grandparents driveway, so I missed out on learning how to skate, but we did start the summer that I was five we were going to learn how to swim and unfortunately, I don't remember what happen because by the time they open the pools they decided to close them back because that was in a time ; the pre-civil rights movement but people were begining I guess to demand services from the city and the city wasn't willing to give them. I do remember taking ballet lessons at the Y.M.C.A. , Y.W.C.A. I'm sorry, ^{where} ~~were~~ the building, the marino branch and come to find out Dr. Jessie Moseley was the teacher. (chuckle) I just found that out a few weeks ago 'cause she was saying she was the director of the Y.W.C.A. so I think most women in my age group probably took some sort of activity, planned activity , activity at the Y.W.C.A.

Tiffany: Getting back to what you just said, you said something about you didn't know why they closed down the pools or something.

Sylvia: No, well ^{and hearing} Several years later there was a pool out at Jackson State which was called ~~College~~^Park it was right across the street from were the auditorium is now. I don't know if it's still out there or not. I think I may have been seven or eight. We didn't live in the neighborhood anymore. We were still going to take swimming out there and we went for a couple of weeks and then all of a sudden all the pools closed down, and I do remember my dad saying it was because of the civil rights movement. Once things started getting pretty hot, ^{and hearing} the administration decided that they would just close down the pools rather than integrate the pools, they would just close them down. Needless to say, a lot of people from my generation have no swimming ability because we didn't have the advantages that kids have now. I do remember even with the Woolworth Store that was on Capital St. They had a sign up that said White Only, Blacks couldn't sit at the counter ^{at all} at all. You could go and purchase things, but you couldn't eat at the lunch counter.

Tiffany: When you playing on Cohea St., do recall any neighbors like maybe Mrs. Ford's house, did you ever play down that far?

Sylvia: ^{Mrs. Ford} She owned the chickens that we ^{bathed} ate, and her grandson, he helped us. He was the ^{one that} instigated ^{ed} of most of the things we got into. ^{In addition to busting}

^{Heppemans} Mrs. Ford was an interesting person for the kids in the neighborhood. She was a very ^{volatile} ~~volatile~~, always kind of ^{fussing} ~~fussing~~ nothing was ever right. She ran a laundry in the back of her house, then beyond the laundry was the chicken house. She had these ladies that came to work every morning, ~~at~~ 5:00 in the morning and they did drapery, and during that period of time for those people that could afford it, you had your bedwomen who ^{washed} ~~washed~~ and starched and ironed, but her backyard was like all of these clothes' line, and it was a great place, like a big ^{go be} maze and she would just get very angry because we would ^{be} ~~be~~ there playing all through the lines and that's something that she was very ^{meticulous about laundry} ~~particular~~, was very ^{meticulous about it} ~~particular~~. I don't even remember. When you walk through the streets now, ^{in this area} ~~when it's dirty~~, you can see trash and things, I don't remember any of that. Now, days you see kids running up and down the street with old cans and ^{sticks} ~~bottles~~ and ^{with that} ~~playing~~. We didn't have that. We would have to sneak things out of the house like pots and pans in order to make mud pies. There wasn't anything just lying around that you could just kind of put your hands on. Every ^{body} ~~body~~ was very ^{meticulous} ~~particular~~. The yards were always very nice, a lot of shrubbery, a lot of grass, a lot of flowers.

Tiffany: It sounds like you were a really curious kid, do you ever remember going back there in her backyard, trying to go and look at the rooms and at the chicken coup.

Sylvia: We would go in and help her feed. Even though she was kind of a loud lady, she would allow us. She'd incorporate anybody's help to do anything. We'd help feed chickens. Basically, what I remember, ^{I went over there} ~~is that~~ not too long ago after she died at the house. The house looked a lot like it did when I was a child. It really has not changed a lot. The house next door to it and her house, she owned that house. So they have a common backyard. That was where the laundry and other things were. It was very neatly kept.

Tiffany: Do you remember ever playing with her daughter?

Sylvia: Her daughter is much older than I am. Her daughter and my mother would be in the same age bracket. My mother is seventy-six, even her grandson would be older than I am so, no. [Her daughter and my mother were like in the same age bracket.]

Tiffany: So like in one sentence how would describe Farish Street District?

Sylvia: Now or then?

Tiffany: Then.

Sylvia: It was truly what we, as Americans now, think of what a neighborhood should be. It was a safe place, it was a clean place I don't remember having seeing empty houses, there was a family in every house. It was truly a neighborhood, it was a place where it was a great time to grow up as a child. I feel kind of sad because of the kids now days, they have so much outside stress they have to deal with. I don't remember that as a child. Again, if you go back to the TV shows ^{the 1950s} back in the fifties, the little white picket fences, of course, I don't remember no white picket fences along Cohea Street, they had some on ^{Dutton} ~~Dutton~~ ^{Dutton} Street. That ^{is} simulance, a very low-key, very clean, very safe, a non-stressful time.

Tiffany: I know your father owned this business.

Sylvia: My grandfather started this business in 1925. My dad came to work here. My grandfather was ^a postman. He was one of the first black postman in the city of Jackson. My grandmother was a seamstress. She sewed for very large, heavy-set, well-endowed white women. She also ran a florist out of the house. She had a nursery or a hot house in the back. She grew orchids. During that period of time, in the 20's, 30's, 40's, there wasn't television. Television didn't come until like the late 40's or early 50's. People did a lot of ^{socializing} as a part of entertainment, did a lot of dancing. So there was a big business for orchid corsages. So she grew orchids. My grandfather had the opportunity to go into business. To get out of the postal business and join the business. The story is that my grandfather

borrowed \$500 from my grandmother and then they borrowed \$500 more from the bank. They put a second mortgage on the house for \$500 so he could come up with \$1000 to buy into the business. My dad came to work for them. He was 19 or 20 years old in 1929. That's when they started the insurance business and he ran the insurance company. The rest of it, the family basically are involved and still the owners.

Tiffany: How would you describe your father's business or your grandfather's business during the age of segregation?

Sylvia: I don't remember anything about the business in that period of time, other than it was part of our ~~life~~ ^{to the T.H.} We lived across the back side of the building and my dad, he was at home early in the morning and he was at home late in the evening. Whoever wanted to see him or whoever wanted to find him, you could just come across the street over here. At that time, I think we had probably 10 or 15 employees. Other than that, I would have ^{to} go back and look at our source of records, in order to tell you anything else about it.

Tiffany: How would describe your relationship with your father? What was he like?

Sylvia: To me, I guess he was like the epitamy of what a father would be. He was a very outgoing person, dealt a lot with people, talked all the time. He'd love to tell jokes, so that has a lot to do with being in the funeral business because you come in contact with your general public 24 hours a day almost. He was a very outgoing person, very dynamic, but very committed to his family and to the business. In fact, he spent his entire life building this business ~~6~~ 1 years.

Tiffany: Can you recall your earliest ~~st~~ job working and what most did you enjoy?

Sylvia: My earliest ~~st~~ job was here at the office. My dad had rental property and we kept the books. My sister and I kept the books. My first experience was bookkeeping. I ended up the financial officer of the company.

Tiffany: So you never came into any direct experiences with race while you were working?

Sylvia: Racism. ^{Yes.} ~~Yes.~~ Basically because of the way I looked. Probably was exposed to racism, from a standpoint of the deliniation where black people could drink water, where black people could sit down. When I went to school, ~~it~~ ^{it} became a little different situation. I was ostrasized ^(harasssed) or picked on because of the way I looked. I was fair-skinned. If I got good grades, then the kids would give me a hard time and they'd say that I was the teacher's pet. It was a Catholic school and at that time, the school was being managed by nuns that were primarily from Germany. Even now, I get a lot of slack because people tend to feel that I have advantage or got picked to do something because of the way I looked as opposed to what I could offer.

Tiffany: Getting back to ^{the} racism issue, can you recall your first experience with racism?

Sylvia: No more than my grandmother, she was part-Indian, so she was a light brown-skinned woman with very heavy wavy black hair. She and I went downtown to shop, I guess. I asked for some water. *We went to Birmingham, Alabama one time on the bus. We traveled ^{during the} ~~in the~~ summertime and my grandmother would take my sister and myself with her. It was really interesting because when we got to Birmingham, we got off the bus and my aunt was supposed to pick us up and she didn't, she wasn't there. Even at the bus station, there was a colored waiting room and a white waiting room, but in the colored waiting room, there was no telephone. The telephones were in the white waiting room. So she gave me a nickel and ^{was} six years old and she gave me the phone number on a piece of paper and she said go around on the other side and call Aunt B. When I went around there, I kept putting in the telephone number, but it wouldn't go through. So this man came over, ^{a policeman or a guard} and he said "Can I help you" and I gave him the nickel and telephone number and he started dialing and he said "This is a nigger's telephone number!" He gave me the nickel back and I took it back to my grandmother and she said

*She said
"here you drink
out this water fountain."
This lady come
over and said,
"NO that ~~lady~~ girl
can't drink out
that fountain, she
has to drink over
on that fountain."
On other words
my grand mother was taking
me to the colored water
fountain and she white lady
was getting all upset. All
the people downtown were
or waitress, she was the maid
an unusual sight, that is not
today. An African
American house sister with
white children during the day
I asked her.
I called my sister and
we asked her mother and
drink out of the one you can't
out of the one you can't
out of the one you can't
us to drink out of that
said those people just don't
know the difference
because the water
is all coming from
the same place.*

*put it down and
you got the wrong number.
Tiffany: How old were
you then?
Sylvia: 5 five years
old.*

Tiffany: you said the officer recognized that ^{it was a} black person phone #.

Sylvia: I guess when he tried to make the phone call, the operator was saying or the communication on the other side lets ~~them~~ him know.

"That's o.k. baby, we'll just wait a few more minutes and if not, then we'll walk downtown." because my aunt works downtown. The bus station was downtown. We didn't have to walk that far, but in Birmingham they had street cars. Somehow or another we got home. It was so delineated from a white waiting room in Birmingham, Alabama, you could not call each other out the neighborhood and I guess vice versa.

Tiffany: ~~When~~ ^{white} you were working here, do you remember any encounters with racism with people?

Sylvia: No. Within the neighborhood, everybody knows everybody that is part of the neighborhood. So I've never had any problems.

Tiffany: So would you say that during the Jim Crow period that you were just speaking of not having any problems with racism while you were working or are you speaking of now?

Sylvia: No. Because during the Jim Crow period I would not have been old enough to work. The federal mandate, ~~of the~~ Civil Rights Movement came down in 1963. I would have only been 12 years old. I didn't actually start working until I was in my 20's, other than what we did at home. My dad was a firm believer of if he was going to give you ~~you~~ money, you ~~was going~~ ^{had} to work for it. He'd give you some project to do, it didn't matter what it was. I think that part of it, he taught my sister and myself quite well because we came up knowing that in order to make money you had to work. It just doesn't grow on trees or come out of checkbooks. The reality of it is you work and then you get paid.

Tiffany: Did your mother work ~~also at home?~~ ^{outside the}

Sylvia: She did, but I don't remember. She worked until I was 3 years old, but I don't remember that. She was a recreational director at the Veterans Administration

9.

at the Veterans Hospital and at that time, it was out on the west end of Capital St.

Tiffany: Because you were so young, you couldn't have been able to tell us ^{it} affected your father, your family, except for your experiences with your grandmother, racism.

Sylvia: By the time I was able to ^{sp} delineate, even the school that we went to, my childhood was very sheltered. I went to a Catholic school. We lived in a close ~~knot~~ ^{knit} neighborhood, so it was very little exposure. We knew about it, but it didn't really affect us. As far as I can remember, That maybe different for somebody else coming up in that same era, but I don't particularly remember it as being as a detarage ^{sp} and I don't look at it as being some big black hole that I would like to forget. I was not ^{directly} adversely affected by it, because I had the advantage, my parents may have been affected differently. ~~I do remember my mother saying that~~ ^{My} dad was the first black real estate broker, black real estate broker in the state of ~~MS~~ ^{Mississippi}, and he had to go and get a white attorney to get him ^{the} permission to take the real estate test. I have one of my dad's voter registration cards because during that period of time, I do remember that in order to vote, you had to pay a voting tax, even though it was constitutionally allowed, there were a lot of black people that didn't vote because they couldn't afford the two dollars. You had to pay \$2 to vote, but when my dad first got into the real estate business, I remember my mom saying that there were a couple of houses that he bought that he had to send her to make the initial contact and make the initial deal. Had they'd known that they were selling to a black person, they would not have sold the property, even though it was it was in a black neighborhood. So there ^{was} ~~en~~ ^{was} a racism during that period prior to and even after the civil rights movement. Black people still had to fight hard to make their way or make their impact into the business world. It was

not just so easily given because you could go in and eat at Woolworths. That didn't mean that you would get the right kind of service and I think a lot of places closed ~~down~~^{up} rather than served black people which is really strange. I do remember my mom saying that we had to go to Birmingham to buy clothes because it was a boycott. *and she did not want to cross the line.* It was close to school time and we still needed clothes. *one year* Even though there were fringes upon living or livelihood, I unfortunately had the advantage of a family that had resources a little bit more than some of the other black people. We had some advantages that were not necessarily available to everybody. Even going to school, I don't remember anyone ever coming to school barefoot. People did survive for their kids.

we had family in Binswood we went had to buy school clothes

Tiffany:

Getting back to your experiences when you were young in school, do you recall any racism?

Sylvia:

When I was in high school and when I started dating. When I went out, it appears that it was a mixed couple. Even now, people look at mixed couples today, both black and white. There's racism on both sides. So there were a couple of times that may have concerned me that there may have been some problems and I'm sure that had I come up in a earlier time. My older sister was dating like in the late 50's. I think that she experienced it more than I did what we really call reverse racism. In some cases, like if we went to the movies or something, white people would give you these strange looks if you were with a group of black people. It didn't affect us one way or another because today, I don't look at people and just see color, I see people. There's still a lot of people that when they look at you, they look at the color of your skin, and then they predetermine how they're going to react to whatever the situation is. In the South, it's still very preve~~X~~alent, but not as preve~~X~~alent, because really and truly, there's no color now except green.

If you've got money, it doesn't matter what we know. Then, there were businesses and people that would refuse service because you didn't conform to what they felt was polite, you didn't look right or you weren't with the right group of people.

Tiffany: Did you ever personally experience that like going into a store ?

Sylvia: No. I do remember like when we were in high school ^{we had a dance at} the VFW Club. ^{*we had decorated all afternoon} When we got there, the people that came to open up the place, they found out that it was an integrated class and they closed the dance, they called the police and made us go home. This was in 1968, and even then it was a way, it was an excepted thing. When you're 16 or 17 years old, and someone tells you to go home, you have to go home. It hurt. Somehow or another we survived it. We ended up still having, I think, a ^{fairly} well stable childhood. Family values were a lot different, 20 years ago, 30 years ago than they are now and that's very difficult to compare what it is now to what it was ^{then} now. A lot of people when you talk to them, they won't even know what you're talking about.

Tiffany: So how would you describe family values then?

Sylvia: I think family during that period was more important to people than it is now. That's not to say that all families are not like that. Your entire ^{world} ~~entire~~ revolved around something that was going to happen very close in and where you live. The neighborhood was the focus of your life. We went to church a few blocks from where we live. We shopped a few blocks from where we live. We went to school a few blocks from where we live. There was somebody at my house all the time. When we got home from school, somebody was ^{there} there. The idea of giving ^{us} up a key, we didn't have a key, cause why would we need a key. I don't

ever remember coming home and ~~nobody~~ ^{no not anybody being} was
 there. I always had the safety of the fact that
 if it wasn't anybody there, I could always go to
 my grandparents house, I had one grandmother at ~~the~~
~~house~~ ^{home} and another set lived around the corner.
 Of course, the business was always open. I
 don't ever remember coming home and the house
 being empty or I don't ever remember coming home
 and dinner not being ready. We had a big family
 meal everyday. Somehow or another, the next
 generation, we didn't have that. When you have
 both parents in the household working, or one
 parent in the household working, kids coming
 home at 3 or 3:30 in the afternoon. Having to
 wait until 5:30 or 6 and then it'd be 7:30 before
 you get something to eat unless it's fast food.
 So it's a different lifestyle and with a different
 lifestyle obviously comes different values. I
 don't ever remember us sitting down to the
 table to eat and not everybody being there and on
 time. That was the tradition. A lot of family
 values ~~has~~ been lost because we've lost the
 tradition. The tradition of even the oral
 history. The combination of multi-generation
 in one household. We're getting back to it
 because of the economic base. Now when
 people ^{get old} when you move them to a nursing home
 they forget about it. During the 50's and 60's
 there weren't any nursing homes in Jackson
 that I know of. The old people that lived in the
 neighborhood, my grandmother lived with us
 and there were several kids in the block where
 there grandparents either lived in the house
 with them or next door or they lived very
 close. When people got married, they moved
 not very far from where the home unit was.
 Again, I think it's a change in lifestyle
 predominates or dictates what family values
 are.

Tiffany: Where did you go to elementary school in Jackson?

Sylvia: Holy Ghost. I went to Holy Ghost up until 11th grade and then I went to St. Joe High School.

Tiffany: Where are both of your schools still located?

Sylvia: Holy Ghost is right here, right off of Mill St. Right off of Mill St. on ~~Cl~~uster. St. Joe is originally downtown at the dioces where St. Peter's church is, but it's now out off of ~~49~~ Hwy. So I went to the new school out on ~~49~~ Hwy.

Tiffany: So you didn't have far to walk to get home.

Sylvia: No. When bussing came about, because we went to private school, we didn't have that experience. That may have been a stressful situation for a lot of kids to have to get ^{up} before dawn to wait. Jackson's not that big, so even if you bussed, you only bused on one side, so it was not that inconvenient. Like in the big cities, kids were ^{Chicago, Detroit} ~~used~~ 20 and 30 miles to go to school. So one way of living in the south, there was an advantage. Once busing came about, I think it affected the neighborhood to the extent that the continuity of families started breaking up. How could you have a sit down family breakfast and you got to be standing on the corner waiting on a bus at a quarter to seven in the morning. As we progressed or the times changed, a lot of family-oriented activities were lost because of where somebody had to go to work or where somebody had to go to school.

Tiffany: So you didn't ~~stop~~ ^{stand} bussing there until high school?

Sylvia: We never rode a bus. My parents had automobiles so when I went to high school, I had a car. The

private schools didn't have buses at all. The kids that went to public school rode buses.

Tiffany: How would you describe your class? Was it predominantly white or predominantly black?

traditionally

Sylvia: No. Holy Ghost was all black. Even then, until the 70's, people didn't cross over and go to the white churches. Black people went to black churches, white people went to white churches. When I went to St. Joe, that was my first experience in a mixed environment.

Tiffany: Do you remember ever visiting Mt. Helen?

church?

Sylvia: We were Catholic and went to a Catholic church. My grandparents were Methodist and attended Central, but my dad, we would go to Holy Ghost and he would go back after we got out of church because church started at Holy Ghost at 10 and would be out before 11 and sometimes it would be just within a mile so he would go back and drop them off at Central, so they could go to church. I don't remember being there, not as a child. I've been there several times within the last few years, but not as a child.

and *church* *pick up my grandpa*

Tiffany: I'm going to conclude this interview by asking you, what would be some advice that you give children now of how to deal with racism, having dealt with some forms of racism?

Sylvia: I would like to think that nobody would ever have to deal with racism. It's going to always, I think be prevalent in one form or another, but I think children need to have a very strong foundation. It's obvious that I had a very stable childhood, so regardless of the fact that I was faced with racism, it did not affect me in the same manner.

I did not come out of that period hating anybody. It made me strong. I had a lot of self-confidence in myself and obviously that comes from a strong foundation. So children right now need to have that same direction and that same background during those formative years and parents need to continue to teach their children that they can do whatever it is that they want to do in life. But they got to be proud of themselves first and it doesn't matter what they face out there in the world, if they can walk out that front door with enough self confidence to make it around the corner and back, then they can make it any place in the world and we need to ^{teach} ~~teaching~~ our children that the color of your skin is an immaterial thing. It's a secondary finder as opposed to when you look at somebody or meet somebody for the first time, you look at them, but not at the way they look. Right now kids are very into dress and clothes, a lot of materialistic things and those come and go, but the values that you were raised with, are the values that you're used to. So the way you interact with people today is the way you saw how your parents interacted with people and then you imitated it, because all of us learn by imitating somebody else. If we can have good , positive role models and good positive values, whatever the kids are going to face out there, is not going to affect them adversely. If they've got a strong background or a strong foundation to start with.

Tiffany:

At this time, I would like to thank you for your interview and your time. I'd also like to get your permission to use this tape for the Walker Alexander Research Center.

Sylvia:

I'd be very honored.

Tiffany:

Thank you.

Sylvia:

Thank you.