Geneva Waldin
Tape: 2.20.01.1
Starts: 1:00:00

Interviewer: Kathy Hersh
Recorded: 2/20/01

Q: Can you tell us about when you first came here and what it was like for you moving down here?

A: Well, we moved here in 1957. My middle child was in the 2nd grade and she was born in 1950. We first lived over near Pinecrest school in one of the houses built by Mr. Rice who was a pioneer family here. We were not the first owners but I liked the area. That was where King and Keogh built a lot of the houses in the same area so it was very near Hirnis, the florist shop over there. And it was a very nice community. It was populated largely by pilots. They made more money than a lot of other people at that time. And so one would come down here and Eastern had a lot of pilots here and Delta. As a matter of fact on this street alone there were about six or seven houses that were built for airline pilots or people associated with the airlines. And it was just a lot of ...of course...we had a vegetable farm over here on North Kendall. It was totally..that's where they used to have a stand. That's where we got all our vegetables. Beth Am was not there.

My daughter remembers a bridge that went from Red Road over to Banyan Drive, it was not Banyan Drive because the church was not built at that time. And the way you would go across then would be by this little bridge, the only way across. That was of course before they built the footbridge which is across from the Coral Oaks Tennis courts over to the other side.

Q: In terms of housing, there were much fewer houses?

A: There were many fewer houses. They were certainly much smaller. The Martin Suburban acres, which is 96th Street to 102nd, I think it is, and about 60th Avenue over to Ludlam, was called Martin Suburban Acres and a lot of the families who came in there were pilots. They were acre estates and the houses were very small. Most of them have been torn down since then.

Q: So you became involved with Pinecrest Elementary School...

A: Yes, I did. My daughter was in the 6th grade at Pinecrest. And my second daughter was in the 2nd grade. And my son was still in kindergarten.

Q: And it was called Pinecrest Elementary?

A: It was always called Pinecrest Elementary School.

Q: What kind of community was that?

A: It was a very close-knit community. You could always count on people to help you. I became involved with the PTA and actually the first year we were over there, the school was new. And I can't remember exactly the year the school was built. But there was a group of fathers who put these calistamen (?) trees between, here was the main office, this was the first grade that went down here, and there was the third, you know they had fingers, so the rooms were all open, before the air conditioning and anything, so between the first finger and this finger the group of fathers including my husband went over and planted these calistamen trees out there. And I think they're still there, for shade for the children.

Q: Do you remember what the school population was?

A: I don't...I can't give you numbers. Of course it was one through six and there were, I have some pictures of Earl's class but I couldn't find them this morning. There were maybe 25 children in each class. I was trying to think of how many first grades there were. You know there might have been a couple of first grades because it was just the three original fingers that were there so there weren't that many rooms. It was not a huge school.

Q: What kind of activities did they have?

A: They had the, you're talking about the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and Girl Scouts met there and they had the base...the Khoury League baseball, my husband was one of the coaches of the Khoury League baseball team. And they had Scouts, the baseball teams. The school, they were having

carnivals at that time, the money raised was very small, that sort of thing. My youngest child was 4th or 5th grade, we had a, we raised the money to build the pavilion over there. Mrs. Isabel wanted a pavilion because everybody else was getting a pavilion. So they wanted me to be president but I said "Really, I'm not a fundraiser. And Roberta Evans, whose husband was Sam Evans, of Winn Dixie, was president that year and Erlene Seibert had been president the year before and so we helped Dottie Isabel, Mrs. Isabel raise the money to build the pavilion. I have the pictures, the ice cream social pictures that we had.

Q: They had an ice cream social...

A: They had an ice cream social. There's an article in the newspaper over there about how they celebrated the building of the pavilion. And that had to be around '57, 1957. It tells over there. (referring to her scrapbook)

Q: Did people socialize around the school community?

A: Well, they were active in the PTA and a lot of the mothers were room mothers so we all knew each other. I won't say... the mothers were all involved in other organizations here and we knew each other. Some volunteered in the library and in the neighborhood you knew everybody. And because a lot of the people were pilots they knew each other from that aspect. In those days, socialization was....you know..you'd go to each other's homes and you'd...you know...they had bridge groups and things of that kind. I wouldn't say that the school was necessarily a major hub of people's getting to know each other. No.

Q: What kind of community organizations outside of the school do you remember that were active?

A: That were here in this area....Of course, except...there were...I can't think of anything like the Museum of Science...something like that. We had the baseball, we had the Scouts. But most of the people were volunteers, like I was the Museum of Science primarily. But there were people....Fairchild wasn't even that important at that time. It became moreso after that period of time, like '57, in there. There was really...I can't think of any organizations... There was the church...

Q: Clubs?

A: There was not a garden club at that time. They had the Coral Gables garden club. People were active in that. But as far as a garden club...Pinecrest was not a cohesive entity in that sense of the word. They were outside of this community, their volunteer work was outside of this...So I cannot recall, except for the churches, there...even when we came here the Lutheran church was not there.

Q: What about Parrot Jungle?

A: Parrot Jungle was there and people went and that sort of stuff but it was not a center of any kind. I don't know when they started having breakfast over there and I've never done that but I understand that they have a really nice breakfast there. But a lot of people would go over their for breakfast on Saturday mornings. But I myself have never been.

Q: Do you remember any events that occurred in the Pinecrest area that had some sort of impact on people?

A: What are you talking about exactly?

Q: For example, the Helen Witty, the young girl who got killed by the drunken driver really caused a lot of concern in the community about safety.

A: I'm trying to think back to events of that kind. It was really a benign community.

Q: What about pleasant things? Did people meet at the fruit stand?

A: Well you know people but this was acres, it wasn't as if, now over where we lived they were half acres so that it was more dense at that time. But you were far apart. Now because the mothers didn't work, the children played with each other. And you children could go anywhere and play and there was never a problem of any kind. My children were talking about it the other day. There's a woods over, where we live is a 100th Terrace here, 99th Terrace and the other side of there there were the houses on the half acres and behind them was woods and the children used to go back in there and play in the woods. They built houses. 97th was this side of it. And then 99th Terrace was over here so that it was an acre here and an

acre here and the woods in between. So it was a very safe community. You didn't have to worry about your children. I can't remember any major things like that occurring.

Q: What were the 60's like?

A: The sixties here, now my daughter graduated from high school in 1964, so the Palmetto High School was built, it would have been six years earlier than that, so that would make it '59, because she went to the 7th grade, her classes as I told you was the only one, the first class and only class to go from the 7th through the 12 grade at Palmetto Senior High. They built, during the time she was in junior high, they built the junior high, and so then it would have been when she went into like 9th or 10th grade that the junior high opened.

And the sixties. So she was in the middle sixties. Her group of young people were the beginning of the flower child generation. It was also the Vietnam War and one of her classmates left, Dexter Lehtinen, was in Vietnam. And people know who he is. So they still had the values of the group just ahead of them. It was my daughter who was born in 1950 then and she was like ten years old there in the sixties, it was her group, and they today are like 49 or 50, I think they call them the Baby Boomers. Sixties was the preliminary. They did some of the things but they were very conservative young people. They did all the things just like...It was after 1964 that you had this other group that came in and they were into drugs and I remember we, my daughter had a lot of illness, and so we were going to send her to a private school that was over there near Palmetto, the Palmetto. And all the kids there were deeply involved in drugs. And when we found out about it, we didn't let her go because of that. And so actually there's a woman that, her oldest son was a close friend of my son and he went to the University of Florida because his father had and he became totally involved in drugs and just ruined his mind. And her second son died because he had taken drugs and his, it was his liver failed. So our, I would say that the people in this area were highly impacted by the drug use of their children during that time and many of the families were all but destroyed because of it. A lot of my friends. My children were not...Thank goodness they did not get involved.

Q: Do you think it was because of the affluence, that they actually had the money to buy drugs?

A: Yes. And you know, they were innocent. Their parents were innocent. Now this family I'm telling you about, her husband was with an accounting firm, was bought out by one of the biggest ones here. From the beginning, they were active in their church, the Pinecrest Presbyterian Church, had 3 boys. Her family was way back from the early times, not here, but the United States, and so they were...they thought everything was...like Mary Ann Bower said to me she said, "Geneva, you believe in the good fairy and all those things." And that was that time period. So we'd didn't know our children..this could happen. But I did because my daughter was very sick. She had to go to a psychiatrist for a number of years because of the physical illness they weren't able to treat. So the emotional problems were severe. And so at that time, he had his patients, he was an adolescent psychiatrist, and his patients were the wealthy families in Dade County and they were all on drugs. And I think perhaps you're right there, because the parents did not know, and because the children, they did have money, like the private school over there, they had access to it and their friends were doing it. And they didn't realize. And this young man went up to the University of Florida brilliant, he should have gone to Harvard. But his parents wanted him to go there and so he, it was easy to get the drugs. You couldn't get alcohol. And my son went up to visit him one time on a diving trip and was given it and he didn't have any more sense that to smoke the marijuana, you know. And that was his first exposure to it, through a childhood friend.

But I would say that more than anything, from my point of view, and also the schools were segregated during the time, the integration, was, during that time period when my son was in senior high school, and he graduated in 1970, so we're talking around '67, '68, that was during the time of integration, those problems there. So we had that, and the drugs, and, of course, the school. At that time the PTA was instrumental in helping the school cope with the integration process. And they would, patrol the bathrooms.

Q: This will help children studying that period to help children understand the impact in had right in their community. Tell me when the desegregation, the civil rights movement, really started to be felt here in this community.

A: It was after 1965, '66, '67, Holmes Braddock, and I know you've heard of Holmes Braddock, was on the school board and they voted to bus the children so that the schools could be integrated. And Pinecrest was never an integrated school. They were too far. They integrated Palmetto Elementary. But Pinecrest was always too far from anyplace to bus the children. So the senior high school first. I was a member of the PTA at that time. And we had a woman named Martha Vickers, her husband used to run one of the big horse tracks, I forget the one in north Dade, in north Miami there, it was his job. And she volunteered or was given the job of heading up a committee to enlist the mothers to patrol the halls, especially in the bathrooms because there were a lot of problems in the bathrooms. And so we did that for about a year I think.

Q: What kind of problems? Can you describe them?

A: In the bathrooms, the boys, well the boys would get in there, I don't know a specific instance but I had a friend who happened to be president of the PTA and they would accost her son in the hallway. It wasn't safe. Children who appeared to be, perhaps, weak or not, maybe weren't as big as somebody else or something like that, they would be accosted in the hallways.

Q: You're talking about black on white?

A: Yes. This is what I'm talking about. Now in the girls bathrooms, they could go in between classes. There were incidents that happened. I can't tell you specific instances because my son was there and he was never involved in any of that because of, I think, his personality, not a person you would interfere with he's tall and strong. I can't say specifically, I just know that she did it for a while and I did it for a while, and all the mothers in this area went over there, particularly around lunch when there was more activity in the bathrooms. It wasn't safe for the children. But I can't say anything specifically. Someone else could help you with that.

Q: Now, you said the PTA took an active role...

A: The PTA took an active role in that and by the time the kids got to senior high school a lot of the mothers had dropped out. But a close friend of mine had become president and she got her friends and my son there, I was very active there....That was the time that a woman named Marge

Perlson came to the PTA and wanted to start the community schools. The feeling of the women, especially some, well this is such an affluent community, these people wouldn't take a class after school or at night time and we do not think this is a good use of the schools or the money or anything. And all Marge was asking for was to..them to support her. Marge is a very powerful personality. She has gone on to make the community school almost international. In Turkey they are going to start it because of her. And there again there were few of us, Alice White, who's husband has now retired, is a lawyer, and I can't remember, the woman whose husband owned Lane's men's store in South Miami, and the family who had a very large rug business in Miami, Marge knew all of them, and then I was there. Marge called it "the five," either the "five" or the "seven." We met at her house. I think, it was Martha Vickers possibly who spoke up for the community schools. And there were enough there that said, "Okay, we think we should do it." And so I became involved with that. The first one was at Palmetto Senior High School. And Marge was very, she knew all the county council people, she knew all the commissioners, she knew all the school board and she got them to extend it around to the different schools. And I think it's important that the community schools started in an area that you would not expect it to start and people did go.

Q: Explain what the community school concept is...

A: Well, the community school in Ohio, I'll think of the name of the city, Flint, Michigan, maybe Flint. It was during the time of the depression and the community schools were started there to give the people, maybe reeducate them in some way, or to help the community feel better about itself. And so Marge found out about it. She went up there and she came back down here all enthusiastic. And the idea was that the schools were only used until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Why can't we use them more than that? Why can't we have classes, typing classes, classes that people, well, they had astrology classes in those days, they had, I'm trying to think, they had shop where the people could go, the parents, and so people used it. And they would come from outside the area because they had, I'm trying to think, some of the business type of classes, some of those things. I went to the astrology classes but I can't remember. Oh, in the 80's they had, that was the time, of all these young people, there was a class called relaxation techniques for the 80's. And they brought all of these things, opportunities, and the school was widely used and it became widely used all over Dade county.

Q: ..and still is...

A: And still is today. But it started in a PTA that said this was too affluent a community to have a community school. I think that's exciting. But it took someone like Marge Perlson who was not going to be stopped.

Q: ...and knew everybody...

A: She didn't know everybody but she got people who did. I knew everybody. I was white. Martha Vickers. These were people, and of course, Elaine down there, and Irene. I wish I could tell you the names. Their was the Jewish community, and the uh, I just call them the WASP community, and Marge had the Jewish community that she knew and Alice and I knew the other community so working together there we created this very successful situation, you know. She didn't know anybody, but Marge came in like gangbusters. She came into that meeting and we all looked at her (laughs).

Q: She was captured by the idea..

A: She was captured by the idea. She's been up to the President. She's been recognized all over for her work.

Q: Let's talk about that episode we were talking about earlier.....

A: During the time of the moral majority, you know we had had all the flower children, all the children on drugs, there were a lot, as today, a lot of people were concerned about their children. And the effect that was being had on our children. And so a group called the Moral Majority, at that time, it was Reagan times because...

Q: It was Nixon's time wasn't it. No I'm thinking of the Silent Majority. You're right....

A: The Moral Majority came first and Billy Graham had a big revival down here, you know. There was a very conservative group of people in this town and I was part of it. And so we, uh, we were really concerned about the children. And they said there's more people like us that people realize. We are a majority. They're just silent out here. See the silent came later.

As a matter of fact, we've had something recently and I said that's just like the Moral Majority back at that time. It resurfaces from time to time where you have these people vitally concerned about their children. And so this was about 1968, the same time my son was in senior high school. We had a principal at that time that I think that perhaps this group felt was too liberal. And that was at the time of integration, it was a time of the community, at that time all those things were happening at the same time. And so, I found out later that there was a group in Dade County that was very militant in their desire to change the schools, to change the school board, to change the PTA. And so that Moral Majority, these people could prevail in their desire to have the education more conservative. This is before your Christian schools were started. We didn't have anything of that kind at that time. And they were going to do it through the schools. And so at our particular school we had someone on the PTA who was very active in that and uh, I'm trying to think how to say this because these people were all very sincere, dedicated people. They were the foundation of your community here. And so they, it was really a sort of a sad thing to have this sort of faction type thing in the community. And so, I don't know exactly how they expected this to go about but I was involved because I was in the PTA and I was the membership chairman. And so, okay, there were going to be a meeting where they were going to bring out some of these issues, about how they felt about how the high school was being handled there, and the things they felt that perhaps the administration was doing that was contrary to what they felt should be done. This had been happening throughout Miami, I found out later when I contacted the county council PTA. And they sent a representative down here at one of our meetings, uh, and she explained to us what was happening. But because of the friendships within the group, they did not want to lose the friendships. The men were friends, they were in businesses and things of that kind. So the meeting of the PTA was to be very shortly, the board meeting before. And at the meeting the president felt so strongly about what was happening that she could no longer be part of it and so she resigned. It was known that something was going to happen throughout the community. So the senior high school auditorium was packed. Everybody came. Because they knew something was going to happen, they didn't know what. And so the president resigned and my husband was parliamentarian, because, there again, we were close friends. And Carson Lutter's wife, Doris Lutter's was...

Geneva Waldin
Tape: 2.20.01.2
Starts: 2:00:00

So this was happening because of the changes in our community. We were a close-knit group, we were more or less alike. Our homes were more or less the same. You know, the people, the husbands were professional people by and large or pilots as I said, and so this was the time then of all the changes -- the drugs, the Vietnam War, we felt that we were losing control. And our children were very important to us, that they be brought up in the same manner in which we had. So that this particular year, I think it was 1968, that my son was in junior high, ah, he was in tenth grade, yeah he was tenth grade. And so this group was very active in the PTA's. And I did not know what they were going to do but apparently at the meeting, it was a regular meeting of the PTA, they wanted the membership lists to call everybody.

Q: For what purpose?

A: To call everybody to come to this big PTA meeting. And, I'm not sure I had called county council at that time. But they wanted the list and I had the list and I felt that something was going to happen. And I didn't give them the lists because I felt, I didn't know what was going to happen and I didn't, it was very foolish on my part. I could
have given them the list, it wouldn't have been any big deal...

Q: Something told you that the list was going to be misused?

A: I just felt it was going to be misused. So I did not give them the information. And I think we had the board meeting after that at which I called the county council and she explained to the board that this was happening all over Dade County and they were trying to shut the county council of the PTAs out of the schools. I'm telling you the truth. This is what she said.

Q: They felt the PTA was too liberal?

A: They felt the PTA was too liberal. They didn't like what the PTA was doing and they felt they had a majority at Palmetto, on the board, that they could do something.

Q: So they wanted the PTA so they could shut down the PTA?

A: No, that's not exactly what it was. Okay, I was chairman of the membership committee and my job was to get as many people as we could get from the different classrooms. So I had the homeroom, there was a homeroom for everybody, I had the homeroom lists of the people, the kids who were in those classes so I could contact their parents. We were real good about that, you know. We would get parents involved. And so I had telephone numbers, I had all those things, I think at that particular time they were simply trying to call everybody, "We're going to have a meeting of the PTA meeting's going to be that night and we'd like to bring up these subjects." I didn't know what subjects. I wasn't part of that inner part there. But I just felt it was not the thing to do so the night for the meeting came and instead of talking, I guess, well because of what had happened at the board meeting, when the county council representative came, and told the board what was happening throughout Dade county, I think the president decided to resign and not telling anyone. I mean, I didn't know about it. But I think what she did hope to do was to rouse the community so they would realize what was happening.

Q: So she was making a statement: This situation is so bad. You know me, I'm a reputable person, my husband is as well. I can no longer be president of this group because of these things that are happening. It was brought to a head that night. She probably hoped that there would be enough behind her there that they could bring out some of these things that were happening and it was my understanding later, I could be wrong, that they were hoping that the principal would be dismissed from this school. I did not know those things at the time this was happening. So at this meeting, when she made this statement, there, Doris Lutter, whose husband was the pastor of the Lutheran church, the Christ the King Lutheran Church, was one of the counselors there. And she was vice president as well of our PTA and she stood up and said, "Where is my parliamentarian?" And it happened to be my husband there, he is a lawyer, and so they felt it'd make a good parliamentarian. He went to the stage and Mrs. Lutter asked what was the parliamentary law on a situation of this

kind. And his response was that she was now the acting president. So she preceded to conduct the meeting. It went, nothing was brought up that wasn't okay, it just went like regular and it was dismissed and everything sort of settled down after that. And I think that by the next year, see during that year we had the bathroom patrols, we had the integration, we had the conservative movement, we had had the drugs. It came to a head in her term. She had never been president of the PTA, she had hardly been active in the PTA, she didn't know what the PTA did, but they needed someone, so as a conscientious person she agreed to be president and got all her friends involved in it because she wanted to do a good job. And so we had a person who was totally inexperienced in what PTA did.

Q: So you all had to pitch in...

A: So we helped her because she was our friend. We helped her do everything that happened. But when this occurred and she stepped down from it, (airplane noise) everything sort of settled down after that. I think by the next year everything began to be okay, except that the teacher strike was the next year, you know, and that was something.

Q: But the integration proceeded. In sounds like it occurred down here a lot later than up north.

A: Absolutely. You know this was a southern town. And you know you just didn't have integration. You still had segregated bathrooms. You still had, it was not until Holmes Braddock became part of the school board that any of these advanced ideas began to take place. His wife was one of the ones with the community school and she was, his wife was on that same PTA board that I was on.

Q: And this was the Palmetto PTA?

A: This was the Palmetto PTA and their children went to this school. And his wife was on the same school board and she backed Marge Perlson with the community schools and they had gone to Palmetto Elementary. My children had gone to Pinecrest and theirs had gone to Palmetto. So we did not know the Palmetto people. You know this area, we did not know past 128th Street. They went to Palmetto. So the Pinecrest area is what is Pinecrest today.

Q: Let's talk about the experience of helping Jean Taylor prepare this wonderful book, The Villages of South Dade.

A: Well...

Q: How did you get involved?

A: I have a...had a very close friend and our children were friends, Marianne Ballard, who is well known for her starting Cauley Square. Her husband was in...was a general and he was the general that was the only living general honored by having an armory named for him. Special...they had special dispensation, you know. They had a special law passed to enable them to name this armory after General Robert Ballard. He was a World War II hero, and but, more than that, when he came back he was responsible for getting the National Guard...getting them so that they were a group. More than any other...any other person he was responsible for that. It was all of Florida and so that's why they named the armory for him. But his wife was a charming, charismatic woman and anyone she was around, you know. So, um, she had started Cauley Square by this time -- 1976, I think, was when. At that time the railroad was going to be taken up and the railroad decided to tear down all of the...the, um, packing houses and the Blue Goose Packing House, then own by Luther Chandler, who was part of the Wholesome Bakery group. Luther Chandler owned the Blue Goose Packing House there in Goulds and Marianne and her husband had bought it from him. And, so, because it was going to be torn down they had antique shops all it. It was called the Green Barn and so Marianne decided, she was in the decorating business, and the whole top of what is now Cauley Square was filled with furniture of all kinds because she...she would decorate a house and she'd just take out all the furniture and put new stuff in and so that's how...it was a ware...it was a furniture ware...only her people could go in. I mean, you couldn't just go there. So she decided then to let the man from the Green Barn come over and rent part of the upstairs at Cauley Square. And she also had a woman named...I forget her name right now but she had an antique store on the other part of it and she died. So Marianne had all this stuff up there and she asked me if I would help her with it, you know. And so I said "well, you know, I don't know anything about antiques but Marianne knows the antiques and I can just run the little place up here." So, ah, and Liz Kendell, whose husband was Harold Kendell, the Kendell Packing Company down there, was very creative, she had a lot of handmade dolls and toys and stuff, and so, in the middle

section, Liz Kendell...I rented it, but she was sort of under me, your know, there so she didn't have to handle all those things.

Q: So you got connected with these women who had connections?

A: That's right and in the front part of the middle section, the...we called them the girls in the gallery, they were from Homestead, Miriam Hood, who was Hood's Department Store, Dottie...oh, gosh I can't remember these names right this minute, but they were all artists. And so they opened up an art gallery in the front part of that there. there were about six or seven of them. If I could just tell you these names because one of them was an Italian...they have a restaurant down there now. An Italian restaurant in Homestead itself. But they were all wonderful artists and so they brought there work up there and they...I think it was 19...1977. Either February of 1977 or '78 that we sort of had an opening where we have group come down and it was an official opening there of the gallery and the Green Barn and Geneva's Antiques and downstairs I think, by that time, Jean Sutton had Pisces too. So, and then...I had been taking some classes. The Miami Dade Community College in the early '70s started a program called "Rusty Ladies" and it was for women who had been to college, raised their families and they wanted to get out and do something. And they had all of the...the anthropology...the Medical School, the anthropology department out there. They had...there were eight session of this down at the Museum of Science and that was when it was call the "Rusty Ladies". So, I...it was my idea at Cauley Square...I said "Marianne, you know, we can get a lot of people to come down here if we have classes." So the...Dirk Kaiser by that time at Miami Dade Community School agreed that we could have the classes at Cauley Square and so we had....Marianne taught antiques classes, different people taught different kinds of classes there, you know. And through....they were paid by -- a small amount -- by the community school and I was the liaison. And so, about 1980, I think it was there, Marianne called me one day and she said "Geneva, there's a woman named Jean Taylor and she gave a lecture on the pioneer...

BIRD NOISE ...that's a clock. That's a clock. That was our clock...I think it's finished. It's a bird clock. It should be over very shortly. Okay, come on. Is that the woodpecker? That may be the woodpecker. Okay?

A: So anyway, Jean had given this class. I mean a lecture that she gave. At that time Jean had only finished her...her, part of...South Miami, Larkins

she called it, and I think just Larkins was finished. I think that's the only one...or maybe she had done the Redlands by that time. I think she gave a talk about the Redlands. And so Marianne said to me "Geneva do you think we could have some classes through the Miami-Dade Community College" and...so that Jean could teach this class of hers. So I said "sure." So I called up Dirk Kaiser, she agreed that we should do it. Now, Jean Taylor was a remarkable woman. She had a degree in architecture from the University of Chicago. One of the...and Jean was 78 when she started. And she...she was anxious...you know when she started this project. But she had gone to, I don't know if it was the University of Miami or Miami Dade, and Charlton Toubeau (Sp?) had taught a class. And she needed to do a project. She had been teaching in the Redlands School for many years.

Q: Who, Jean?

A: Jean Taylor. This is how Jean Taylor got into everyones home. They weren't...people had come down there from the Junior League trying to interview people. And they couldn't get in the door. Jean had taught everyone's children. They knew her. She had been in...she'd done art and things and helped with the productions they had had. So Jean was the only person who could have gotten into South Dade. But, Dr. Toubeau said "well, Arver Parks is doing downtown Miami, Thelma Peters is doing the north part, there -- Lemon City and all that stuff -- why don't take South Dade. No one has done South Dade." And that's how Jean got started. So, as I said, at the time she started the classes at Cauley Square she had just done...I think she'd done one bus tour down in the Redlands. I don't know...but she started up in Sunset, but she...the Redlands for the Historical Museum. That she had done. And so we started the classes and what she did, she advertised in the paper, telling people she was doing a history of this area, if they wanted their families in the book, they could contact here and she would interview them. There are all of Jean's interview, and they are transcribed by her. Plus the tapes and the slides of her lectures are in the Historical Association in downtown Miami. She donated...she gave them to them. She was going to give them down to the Pioneer Museum but she felt they would be safer there at the Historical Museum downtown. So, anyway, she started and she would get pictures from the people and she would have them copied. All at her own expense. She didn't get any help from anybody, Jean didn't. But she...it was a project she wanted to do. Well she got paid, of course by Miami-Dade, a little bit. And, so we started. And we had...the classes were packed. All the pioneer

families from South Dade. And they would come up and listen to her. And one of the women said “you know,” her husband was a...grew beans, I think. She said “Jean makes all those people look like they were so...such fantastic people.” She said “half of them were...were bootleggers or something like that, you know.”But Jean had a way. and actually Jean’s husband was scared to death they were going to come after her with a gun when the book got published. But her book was...was, you know...she wrote it in such a way because she came from that time period. She understood people. She understood what they meant when they were talking about things. And Jean was able to...ah, to put it down so that it’s very simple people, very simple...the ways that they did things, it wasn’t a sophisticated book, at all. So, anyhow, she, at that time she didn’t she was going to write the book, and she started and she got pictures from the people. She showed...lectures, she had a map of each area that she had drawn and because she knew the areas she...and then she finally divided into the railroad towns. That’s how it was called that way because...

Q: Now, we’re going to talk about your role in the Jean Taylor book.

A: What I did was it provided a forum for Jean to give her lectures. At that time she only had two of the railroad towns, Larkins and I think maybe Redland. We...classroom space. She taught for the Miami-Dade Community College. We had...the classes were filled, every time. Morning and afternoon...I don’t know whether it was two or three years. We had...we also...Jean and I gave bus tours because of the different areas and we would...she would take her classes into the different homes. She would...she mapped out the different tours for each of the railroad towns, there. So that she took us by the important homes of that...that area. And so what I did, basically, was provide the framework for Jean to complete her book. She...she...the different divisions after that. She made maps of each area and talked to all the people, you know, that she could. Had pictures. And so, we raised the money to...for her to...have the pictures made that she got from other people and then, at the end of the time when she actually had written the book, we tried to sell enough copies to get it printed. We couldn’t get it printed. So finally a man over in St. Petersburg...Byron Kennedy, I talked with him several times. He said “if you will get a thousand books sold, I’ll print it.” He said “I won’t make any money on it, but I’ll print it.” So we called up everybody in the class. I had card files on everybody that had come to our classes and then the museum -- the Historical Association I think bought a hundred books and then Bob

Jensen down in Homestead got the back to buy quite a few and the Pioneer Museum. So, we were finally able to sell enough books to get the book printed. And then it was so popular that they wanted second printing. So...basically that...I mean...Jean and I worked together on it, there. I did it for Cauley Square and for Marianne, and Jean did it because it was a project and that's...that's how I was involved just by happenstance.

Q: But you must have gotten to know a lot of people through this?

A: Oh, I did. Well I knew people already. I mean, you know, I've been active in so many different things. I knew people in Pinecrest and that area. I knew the people in Homestead because I was a close friend of Marianne Ballard. I knew all those people down there before this started. I was active in the Museum of Science for 25...over 25 years, so I knew all the people there and the Historical Museum used to be at the Museum of Science before it moved into its own building. And so, and Earl's a pioneer family. So that...you know...and it was a smaller community. That was before the Cuban Crisis. and...Miami was a small, Southern community. People knew each other. They...all over town you knew people. Wherever you would go, go to the beach you knew people. Go to the Miami Shores Country Club you knew people. In all the different clubs, everyone knew each other. So that...I guess I was very fortunate to know such a broad group of people, but we were always active in everything.

Q: And how would you describe Pinecrest...This area that's now called Pinecrest?

A: It's heartbreaking for us because we came when it was really just beginning. There was no organization whatsoever. And... my daughter Doris -- it used to be open, this end of the street down here -- she had a horse and buggy. See, Doris was sick quite a bit and so she wasn't able to go to school a lot of time, but she had a sulky, a buggy...well it wasn't, you know...it was a n open buggy. And she rode...we had horses in the backyard. My husband went to...they were going to take that away from Pinecrest area and my husband went to court with the picture of me riding a horse in our backyard and they decided you could have a horse...a cow and two horses, something like that, on these acres down here.So Doris used to ride her horse and buggy all through here. She drove down, went through the yards down there, went all over. And they used to be...there was a Sleepy Hollow Riding Club and they rode their horses all over. And

a...actually Jean Taylor sponsored that at one time and Helen Wittys husband was part of the Sleepy Hollow Horse Club. So, I...I mean...you hate...I hate to see all of these homes built, they're covering all the land. Pinecrest is changing. The whole Dade County is changing and so, you know, it was wonderful here. Everybody knew everybody else and...but that's the times. So.

Q: That's great stuff. Thank you.

A: Well, you know...

###