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Interview with Cliff Bradley

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Bradley, Cliff (B), interviewed by Libba Smith (S), January 7, 1985

Born July 17, 1899 (?) at Leefield (not actually Leefield then, however). Came to Statesboro permanently in 1920. "I met my fortune here, I found her in the choir at the First Baptist Church." First worked for the Westside Pharmacy on West Main Street, moved fixtures over across the street where Durden and Riggs is now. C.Z. Donaldson owned the drugstore (he was Mrs. Bradley's father or uncle or brother). He left the drugstore after his marriage to Miss Wildred (sp?) which took place October 13, 1921 ("That's my lucky day," Miss Wilfred said, "The thirteenth!"). In 1923 he became bookkeeper at Olliff and Smith which was a grocery, bookstore (sold schoolbooks) and feed and seed store. In 1935 he went to work at Racklye's Seed and Feed Co. Then in 1939 "went into business for myself" with Billy Cone (Bradley and Cone). Sold this business and both retired in 1971.

Was elected a director at First Bulloch Bank in January 1955. Has just completed thirty years on the board and still serving.

"I haven't had a whole lot of education. I keep a Bible and dictionary over there and when I don't know the meaning of a word, I look it up. I read the biography of Abigail and John Adams. There are two volumes of it. Miss Mary Lou Carmichael (a former teacher of his) said, "I don't have the nerve to start reading those two books!"

Schooling: When a boy, had school five months out of the year, January through May. Attended Rufus School ("Rufus Academy, wasn't it?" Miss Wildred asked. Mr. Cliff: "I put the academy on it myself."); attended First District Agricultural School in 1915 and 1916. "We named it 'Farmers' Daughters Are Sweet,' for farm boys and farmers' daughters went there."

Teachers: Mr. F.N. Rowan (pronounced Row-an, not Ro-an) was president in '15 and '16 when he attended.

Mr. Cliff's parents died when he was nine years old, He was middle child of five children. Both parents died of typhoid fever: mother on January 7, 1908 and father the next day. He lived around in four different places, all in the Leefield area, with aunts and uncles and two older sisters. Older sister May was Mrs. Ted Anderson (Gail and Chip Mobley were grandchildren of May Bradley Anderson. Gail was first Mrs. Al Rowton). His second sister Clyde married Cleveland Parrish (both taught school).

To get an education, he walked all the way from his sister's house where he was living at the time (Leefield) to the First District Agricultural School (thirteen miles). Told Mr. Rowan he wanted to attend but that he didn't have any money. "I told Mr. Rowan I didn't have much education and I didn't have much money. I need some work; I want to go to school."

Mr. Rowan said they didn't have anything for him to do. He walked back home very discouraged. In another week he was back again asking Mr. Rowan about working and making the eleven dollars a month for board.

Rowan: Boy, I believe you'll work." Bradley: "I don't know anything else."
Rowan: "If you'll put a scuttle of coal in front of each girl's room every afternoon that will pay you five dollars a month." (Each room had a little stove in it) Then Rowan said, "We have a big, wide broom. If you'll sweep out all the rooms, the chapel, each of the six classrooms, the offices and hall each morning, that will pay you five dollars. That will leave only one dollar a month, surely you can come up with that."

But I didn't know where. I went to the dining hall. Mrs. Bell was the dietician. I told her my troubles- that I had two jobs, but I needed one dollar more.

"Do you write a good hand? Mrs. Bell asked. "No, but you can read it," he answered. "Then I can give you a job that will pay you a dollar a month," she said. "You can make an inventory of the pantry once a month for me,"

Two of Mr. Cliff's friends, Arlo Nesmith and Georgie Richardson, had jobs milking the six cows on campus. Each boy milked three cows every day. "Arlo was a pretty good barber," Mr. Cliff said. "If you'd milk his three cows for him he'd give you a free haircut!"

"Uncle Sam furnished us uniforms and hats. Has a military man on the faculty, Captain Mose E. Cox, a Clemson College graduate. He drilled us, had target practice once a month. We wore wrapped leggings with our uniforms, a strip of khaki about five yards long. We started wrapping them at our ankles and wound them around and around up to our knees. We hated those leggings! Our hats had a band that had tassels hanging from them decorated with little things at the end like you see on venetian blind cords. We wore uniforms every day. We began wearing them the second year I attended, not the first.

"Captain Cox was our math teacher. When the war started, he volunteered. In two weeks he was in France. When he came back from the war, he became a highway engineer for the state of Georgia."

"Clinton S. Folk, also a Clemson graduate, taught agriculture. Mr. Mason, science; Miss Hill, English (Mrs. Mary Beth Smith Jones filled in as English teacher); Miss Mary Lou Jones, later Mrs. Esten Cromartie, was my speech teacher."

Later when Mr. Cliff was working in Statesboro, he boarded at Mrs. DeLoach's house on the corner of Zetterower and Grady Street (Mrs. DeLoach was the sister of J. Walter Hendricks, first principal of FDAS). One of the boarders asked Mr. Cliff when he returned from attending church the first Sunday (at First Baptist Church), "Cliff, how was church?" "Fine; I found me a girl." "Who was it?" "I don't know." "What did she look

like?” “She was tall, brunette and pretty. She was singing in the choir.” “Oh, I know who that is! That’s Wildred Donaldson!”

Later on that afternoon, Mr. Cliff said, “and we went over and that started up the racket. We were married in 1920. I think she was worth it and I still think so.”

(End of interview)