

1973

Mrs. Lucille Myer

Donna Thomas

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INTERVIEWER: Donna Thomas

- I Where did you work?
- A I went to work on W.P.A. I was assigned to Barnard Street School. I worked there awhile and then I was transferred out to the soup kitchen, out to the water works, where they made the soup and sandwiches and bread and butter. That was delivered to all the schools. I went to work at 4:30 in the morning and I got off at 8 o'clock.
- I At night? You got off at 8 that night?
- A That morning. Let me see, I worked there about six months and then I was transferred to a field worker to inspect all the lunchrooms. To go around and see that they were all clean and served soup and sandwiches. They all wore uniforms and hair nets. I just went from school to school. I did that until about '49, then the Board of Education took over the lunchrooms and they kept me as a field worker.
- I Who was in charge of the lunchrooms before the Board of Education took over?
- A I worked for the W.P.A. as a field worker. I think in '42 the W.P.A. closed out. And then the Board of Education took over the lunchroom and hire me as a field worker for the Board. I still kept the same job, and I was assistant to Elizabeth Walter from Richmond Hill, who taken over as supervisor of the lunch program. I worked there until about '46 and then Nell Wood taken it over, and I worked for Nell Wood until '66. I still was a field worker all that time. And I taken sick in '65 and I had sick leave coming to me for a year, which I got paid for; and then I retired on disability. But I had the same job all that time.
- I When you first started, how much were you getting paid?
- A I don't remember. I tell you it was very little on W.P.A. And then when I went with the Board of Education, it wasn't much more just a little more. And as time went on, I got a little raise every now and then, but after so many years. I worked for the lunch program for 26 years; when I retired, I think I came out with about \$57 a month. And not long ago, we got a raise to \$100. That wasn't my salary that was my pension. When I got the raise not so long ago, that was unexpected. But when I came out of my retirement, I came out with about \$57 a month. But my salary was about \$19 every 2 weeks. I make around \$45 or something like.
- I As a field worker, who transported you from school to school?
- A I walked or else I rode the bus. I couldn't drive. We bought a car, but I couldn't drive. I worked a long time, but I retired in '66.
- I When the children were buying the lunches, how much did they pay?
- A If I'm not mistaken, I think they paid about 15¢. Now, the soup kitchen that was all free. The W.P.A. was free. They got that free. But after the Board of Education started, they started I think 20¢ a lunch. When I left there, they were paying 30¢ a lunch. And the adults were paying 35¢.
- I How many children were in the schools?
- A I couldn't tell you because I can't remember. But we served a good many free.
- I How did they get free lunches?
- A Well, it had to pass through the teachers and the principal. I tell you, it passed through the nurse. You know in those days, they had a nurse that visited each school and through the nurse.

couldn't afford to buy them.

I Did they look into the families' salary?

A I believe they did.

I About how many children got free lunches?

A Oh, it was different according to the size of the school.

I When you worked in the soup kitchens, who came to these?

A They had a great big truck with a sign on it, "Nutritional Lunch", and they would come out about 4:30 in the morning and get the soup. And we made sandwiches of whole wheat bread and butter. And we packed them in boxes and wrapped them in wax paper. They were all delivered to different schools. The soup is left there in 5 and 10 gallon cans, steaming hot.

I Was this for the kids lunch?

A Yes.

I Didn't you have soups in the summer time when school was out?

A I didn't know nothing about that. In those days, they didn't, only during school time. About 2 or 3 years ago they served lunches at the parks to the school children, to the free children. There's a lot I've forgot about.

I How did you get the job in the first place?

A How did I get the job for the W.P.A.? I went up to the W.P.A. office and put in an application.

I Did you ask for any special type of job?

A No, and when they sent me the notice to report to Barnard Street School, the first school I ever worked in. And then I worked there several weeks and they needed someone out in the soup kitchen where they made soup and sandwiches. The supervisor and I were good friends so she transferred me out there. She was trying to push me up and learn something about it. So I worked out there a few months and then they transferred me as a field worker to all the schools. But I tell you a little pull is what done it. I happened to know the girl and she kinda pushed me. There's a lot I forgot about it.

I When you were talking about walking from one school to another, did you ever get frightened or anything?

A No, not at all.

I You were never attacked?

A No, no and I went in some terrible locations. Never give it a thought.

I Comparing that time with now, do you see a big difference?

A I wouldn't go places now I used to go for nothing.

I In other words, the same places that you would go today that you went then, your life would be in danger?

A Absolutely would. I wouldn't go there now. I wouldn't go there now.

I Why do you think that's so?

A Because of the conditions of the colored people being so different. I worked in colored schools and white schools and the colored people were just as nice to me as the white people. But I wouldn't go and work with them now, because things are so different.

I What do you think made it change?

A Well, I couldn't tell you. Just times are not like they used to be. I used to ride the busses to the water works. We had school out there. I used to go out in West Savannah at a colored school out there, and I never was afraid to get off the bus and walk to school. I didn't feel a bit scared of the colored people, not a bit.

I Were their schools inferior to the white schools?

A I couldn't see much difference. It looked to me like they were all under the same system. Whatever the white schools had the colored had too. I didn't know anything about the schools except the lunchroom. And I found the colored teachers just as nice as I could. But I didn't come in contact with the children so much, because I was in the kitchen, you know, in that part. Of course, I'd go in the dining room and look around, but I didn't serve them.

I Do you feel the young people today are as nice and courteous to an older person as they were 30 years ago?

A You see, I'm not in the schools anymore so I don't know what's going on in the schools anymore. I retired in '66. I haven't been back since; so, a lot has happened since then.

I When did you first come to Savannah?

A Honey, I couldn't tell you the year to save my life. My family came ahead of me. I really don't remember.

I Do you do any other kind of work?

A Yes, I used to work at the Triple X Thirst Station. I worked in the kitchen. I helped make sandwiches.

I Did you wear a pinafore with ruffles on the sleeve?

A No, those were the girls that worked on the curb. I worked on the inside where we had to wear uniforms. I worked in the kitchen part.

I During the time you've been in Savannah, have you noticed a great change in the way the city is run, the government part?

A I know it has, but it's rather deep for me.

I What were people dressing like when you came to Savannah? Were the dresses real long?

A They didn't dress like they do now.

I Which do you like best? The way they dress now or ~~-----~~

A I like now.

I When you first moved here, who did you live with?

A I lived with my mother and my sisters and brothers.

I Where was that on Liberty Street?

A No, on East Broad Street. My mother was living when I came to Savannah.

I Was that East Broad and Perry or East Broad and Harris?

A East Broad and Perry.

I Did you go to school in Savannah?

A No.

I Where did you go to school?

A Columbia, that's where I come from.

I What kind of subjects did you take?

A Well, I don't remember. I didn't take nothing special.