

Elizabeth Saba: Behalf of Crossroads to Freedom, we just wanna thank you so much for doing this interview. For the record, could you state your name and where and when you were born?

Alice Porter: A. Alice Porter, born in Memphis, Tennessee, February 13, 1924. \_\_\_\_\_ born here in Memphis, Tennessee. Several of the members that I graduated with, they left the city. There were a few of us that remained here 'cause, I guess, 'cause it was home; but I lived – stayed here because I got caught up with my husband; and he wouldn't leave the city; and I wanted to leave; and he didn't want to leave. So I had to do what my husband do after I had followed him – after I had married – we had got married. So we remain here.

My husband and I married. We had four children. He passed in 1958; and my baby was four; and my oldest child was ten. In those days, Social Security wasn't as it is now. As a matter of fact,

[00:01:00]

– he worked with **ELG&W**; and they didn't pay Social Security at all; and all they had was a retirement. Well, he hadn't been there but 15 years; and, you know, 15 years of retirement with four children didn't go nowhere – didn't go anywhere \_\_\_\_\_. But, anyway, I started working. I started working at the job that I had when my husband and I married, and that was at Chemical Auto Products. At that time, it was out on Virginia. Now, I think it's on Fourth Street.

From there, I left and went to Baptist Hospital. They were training me to be a nurse that would take care of the private doctors' instruments in the steam room; and, from there, they were going farther; but I had to quit due to the fact – do you realize that a hospital wasn't paying but \$37.50 every two weeks; and I had four children to support and a house to pay for. I couldn't stay there. So I had to leave; and then I started working for **Montezzi**.

[00:02:00]

Montezzi was a supermarket. It had many supermarkets over the city, and I think they had one out of the city and **in the homes**. We just **marked** – worked everywhere; and I worked for them for 47 years; and so, of course, that's how I did it then. I know you're not interested in that. So I'll go back to my childhood.

Elizabeth Saba: Well, okay, yeah.

Alice Porter: My childhood, as I told you, where the school was located when I first started going to **Hyde Park**; and during my mother's lifetime, I was in private school; and, after the private school, I had to leave, after the death of my mother and father, I went to stay with my uncle and aunt; and they put me in a public school. When they put me in a public school, they put me back; but, still, they would come and get me outta my second grade to go to the third grade to read to the kids in the third grade; and I couldn't understand, how come I couldn't go to third grade. I'm doing that work, their reading; but they didn't. That was the rule, the Board of Education. You had to go along with what they said.

[00:03:00]

Well, when I graduated from – let's see, at that time – I don't know how it is now – at that time, you could graduate from high – elementary from the eighth grade; and ninth and tenth were what you would call middle school now. We used to – eight, nine – eight – seven, eight, nine, is that the way it is now? No? But, anyway, it was different from what you all have now.

Well, when I went to Manassas, I was – we went to – what – 1944. That's a long time. Well, your mother hadn't met her – your father in those days. But, anyway, in 1944, I entered Manassas, 19 – no, not 1944. I entered Manassas in 1940 and graduated in '44. But while being there, it was really interesting. Very, very interesting when I was in high school. [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Saba: How so? How so? How is it interesting?

Alice Porter: Well, I tell you where the interest was. We were a group of kids –

[00:04:00]

– that were quite close, very close. I mean there is so much that I could tell you that you probably wouldn't believe it comparing today with yesterday. There's a great difference today than what it was on yesterday. When I say yesterday, I mean yesteryear. But, anyway, we were very close; and when everyone got into something, the other one wanted to be in there with 'em; and we used to enjoy ourselves; and I don't know. There's one thing that we used to play on the school ground. Have you ever heard \_\_\_\_\_ the Pocket Whip?

Elizabeth Saba: Mm-mmmmmm.

Alice Porter: You never? There's a line of young people – get on a long line. Somebody run and whip you around just like a \_\_\_\_\_. One that get hurt is the one that played what we called swing tail. He was the last person. Now he – unless he turned, the last person and the next person to him hands lose, he will get hurt if you bump up – they would pump it just like – liable to be a tree there. Liable to be a bush there.

[00:05:00]

Liable to be a person there, and you'd have to turn loose if you didn't wanna hurt – get hurt. Then sometime at the end of it, there'll be about – sometime that line can be as high as 20 people in the line. It's like a buggy whip \_\_\_\_\_, but it was a human whip, not a real whip.

But, anyway, we enjoyed doing that. And hopscotch, do you ever play hopscotch today? We used to play that, too. Volleyball, that was another – we played volleyball. We all played basketball. Elementary, I played volleyball. I played – now, I'm going backwards and forwards \_\_\_\_\_ I'm remembering what I did. When I was in elementary school, by me being tall, everybody wanted tall people to play in the game. I played softball. I played volleyball and race track. That's when I was in elementary school.

Elizabeth Saba: And what was your elementary school?

Alice Porter: Hyde Park.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Alice Porter: That's where the post office is now where we were doing all of that. Now, when I was at the first Hyde Park, well, fifth graders, they didn't look at us.

[00:06:00]

But when we got around six, seven, and eight, and being tall, too, and the way they would encourage you to do these things, you had to do pretty good on your paper – on your schoolwork. You couldn't go out there and play and come in and make an F. You couldn't come in late and think you was gonna be out there playing, then make a A on, let's say, to make a A. No, no, no. You had to keep your work up, too.

Now, you probably couldn't make a A on everything; because everybody doesn't have the same ability. Now, if they had the same ability, everybody would be a genius. Would nobody – you wouldn't be able to work for nobody; because you'd be a genius in your field; and you could do it; but they would grade you according to your ability.

Now, when we would be in these different activities that were on the campus, well, if you did pretty good in your classes – and I'm not saying you had to be A student – \_\_\_\_\_. Everybody can't be a A. Everybody can't be a B. Now, some people just on the average, C; –

[00:07:00]

– but if you were doing and trying to do, you could play on these different activities during my day. I don't know how you all do it now, because I don't have anyone in school here; but, by me being tall, and I was doing fairly so in my class – let's put it that way. I'm not gonna tell you I'm an A student now. Hardly think I was; but, anyway, by me being tall, I was in every sport they had for girls.

Now, somebody said, "Did you play baseball?" I say, "Heavens, no, I played softball." So baseball is mostly for men. Softball for women. So, therefore, I said no; but we had volleyball that you hit the ball with your hand over the [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Saba: Okay, yeah.

Alice Porter: You know what I'm talking? Well, that's what they was doing. I didn't know a thing about basketball when I was **keeping it**. May have been, but I don't remember it. And [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Saba: What about at Manassas High School, were you involved in any organizations in your high school?

Alice Porter: Um-hum, yes. I was in the glee club, and this was a transatlantic call club.

[00:08:00]

We would call from Europe back to – call to Europe; and Europe would play their glee club back to us at Manassas; and, at that time, Booker Washington's music teacher was involved. Have you ever heard of Lucy Campbell?

No, well, anyway, she was – I think it was, yeah, Ms. Campbell at Booker Washington. Ms. Georgia B. Quinn, P. Quinn was at Manassas; and Booker Washington we have; and, also, was in our glee club for both the school put together would fill the auditorium stages, would be filled when something big was gonna be – if somebody was entering the city either – whatever the case may be, they would bring us in. But Manassas, we were in the transatlantic call. I don't know about Booker Washington, 'cause we didn't go there for that. But, anyway, at Manassas, we would make a transatlantic call to Europe; and they would make a transatlantic call back to us.

[00:09:00]

Now, whether it was published or not, I don't remember. Whether it was published or just for the sake of the school. Then, let's see, [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Saba: You mentioned music. Were you involved in the music program?

Alice Porter: Well, I was taking music at the time that \_\_\_\_\_; but, hold it, I got another little thing I got to remember. I was in home economics. I was a cook. We was teaching how to sew and how to cook. Once, I'm gonna say, every other day. That's what – every other day, we had to take home economics.

Okay, home economics was something that I was interested – very interested in; and, at that time, the Board of – Superintendent Ball – I think that's his name – Ernest T. Ball. I think that was his name. He sometime – and the members of the Board – would come out to Manassas to eat; and like you all have chicken go in the freezer, pull it out, or go to a store, and it's already – uh-uh, we didn't do that.

[00:10:00]

They taught us everything but how to kill that chicken. All we did – they bring it there. The chicken would still be in its feathers and everything else – it's legs, arms, necks, and all that; and we – that was a training course. Now, when the Board of Education – some of the members of the Board, but not the entire Board – but when some of the members of the Board of Education would come, they would have us fix that; and I remember one time. They were coming, and my teacher was Mrs. Washington. I forget her first

name. Ms. Washington was our – the one that taught us how to cook.

There was another teacher taught us how to sew; and she says "Ms. Strong, when you get to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade, you're a Ms. in those days." "Ms. Strong?" I say, "Yes, Ms. Washington." She said, "You got to take charge of the kitchen." I said, "For what?" She say, "You gotta cook for the Board of Education." I said, "Me cook for the Board of Education?" I said – she said, "You gotta get your crew."

[00:11:00]

And, girl, I did get my crew. We had to set up the dining room table. Oh, we had it set up; and it was looking good. We had chicken; and I done forgot what the other; but I never forget the chicken; 'cause the girls would stand around; and I had – they didn't know how to draw it. You know what drawing a chicken is? Have you ever heard \_\_\_\_\_?

Elizabeth Saba: Never.

Alice Porter: Ahhhhh, you go – not on a piece of paper, but pull its intestines and everything out; and that's what I had to teach the girl, even before they got there; and, girl, we was rushing; and you can't have any feathers on there. You get all those feathers off. Get their legs and all that, and we had a good meal. So we had everything set up. Now, Ms. Washington was there when the Board came. We had to go to the next class. I don't know whether the next class take good care of the rest of the stuff or not; but our job was to prepare the food and set up the table; and we did, I thought, a pretty good job. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have any questions?

Elizabeth Saba: I do. Can you tell me a little bit about the neighborhood you grew up in, what your community was like?

[00:12:00]

Alice Porter: Well, our neighborhood that I grew up into, I lived on the other side of Chelsea; and there weren't too – it wasn't too thickly populated. All the population was really on the north side of Chelsea. Now, I was – it was just one street that I lived on extended from McLean to – you don't know where McLean – oh, yes, you do. You should. Near – no, it's not near Rhodes. Yes, you are.

Elizabeth Saba: Um-hum.

Alice Porter: Oh, well, **the plane** over to University – no, **Tunapin**. No, I think got over to **Springdale**. It was just one street, and that street was called **Honna** Street, Honna Avenue. Now, that's where I lived; and the one next – at the end next to McLean. Now, there isn't too much that was going on down there with we as children; because there weren't too many of us. One child in our house and the next house may have two. It wasn't a half a dozen – maybe a half a dozen –

[00:13:00]

– children, young people there. So there isn't too much I can tell you then. Tomboy and played ball, in the streets. That's what happened.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Alice Porter: Is there anything else you would like to know about? Now, that really isn't – and different ones were there who were members of different churches. I think it was about seven, eight families just on our block; and there's very few – I think all of us were members of different churches. Some was Methodist. Some was Baptist, and some \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Saba: So did religion play a strong role in your [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_

Alice Porter: Major role in my life. My uncle, after the death of my parents, my uncle was a minister; and my aunt was a **mother** of a church; and I think that's the reason why I had to play; and they insisted on you – they did me. I don't know about the other kids, but I learned how to play the piano. I did – 16 years old when I started playing for church.

[00:14:00]

Elizabeth Saba: Um-hum, do you wanna talk about your – the piano incident that you were telling me about?

Alice Porter: Yes, lemme tell you.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Alice Porter: That was in school. I think it was in 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I think it was 12<sup>th</sup> grade; but, anyway, as the story goes, the teachers – you

know, teachers would have teachers' meeting; and sometimes it would be during class period. I don't know why they had it \_\_\_\_\_ time. Sometime it was after school, what have you. But this particular day, they had a teachers' meeting; and we were – I were in my music class.

So Ms. Quinn, who was my music teacher, she told us – she said, "I've gotta go to a meeting; and, Ms. Strong, I want you to take over." I said, "Okay." I love that. So she says, "And I want you to carry them over this music now that I'm carrying 'em over." I said, "All right, Ms. Quinn, I'll do that." Well, after we thought that they had got situated, oh, we started. We started to boogie.

[00:15:00]

You all remember – maybe I better talk about what is the name? It's a dance that we did similar to that of James Brown. You twist your feet and twist everything. I think it's all that stuff. But, anyway, then we boogied; and, baby, we was cutting up on that floor about **to go through absolutely**. Then the other boy, he was a little bit more in advance – far advanced into that than I was; because my folk was religious people; and he really got into it; and, girl, we was cutting up there, switching and turning. Jitterbugging, that's what I'm trying to think of. And, baby, they were doing it; and I never did learn how to \_\_\_\_\_; or what – Michael Jackson would do it; and we were doing that when I was jitterbugging; and that's what I enjoyed. That's the only part of his dance that I loved, 'cause he reminded me of when I was a little girl when I was in school.

Okay, after all of this was over, the teacher came in; and she said, "Ms. Strong?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "How was your music class?" I said, "Oh, they were beautiful." I said, "They were really wonderful."

[00:16:00]

She said, "I know you was." I said, "How you know that?" She said, "Because I was downstairs, and I heard you all jitterbugging." I didn't know they had teachers' meeting under us there. Oh, shoot, and that was an incident I'll never forget; and even the boy that was doing the playing, he has passed on now; and we had our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, whatever – what year was that? I forget. Was it '74? '84? I think it was in '84; and when I graduated from high school, there were about 200 or 300 of us. There were only 100 and some at the class reunion; and a lotta of 'em was bedridden.



Well, you take that day, I'm pretty old, too. I'm not exactly young; and they were – one girl outta the class that was there had –

[00:17:00]

– was on a walking stick like this I got; and all of us, we ganged around her; and so she says, "I'm so glad you all are supporting me." And before the night was over and the shoes was hurting, too, trying to look cute for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; and we was at the hotel, too. I said, "Baby, may I borrow your stick?" She said, "No, you don't borrow anything. Shoulda brought your own stick." But, anyway, all in all, we did have a wonderful time. No, we had a three-day of it; and it was beautiful.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay, and what did you do when you graduated from high school?

Alice Porter: I got a scholarship to Henderson Business College; and I went there; and I won – we didn't have anything but typewriter. You know what a typewriter is?

Elizabeth Saba: Um-hum.

Alice Porter: Did-did-did-did-a-boom. Did-did-did-did-did-a-zoom. And we – I did – after I got my children – my husband and I, he got me an electric typewriter; and I got messed up during the tree. I had – I kept it. Oh, it really was bad. When the tree fell in my house, it messed all that up.

[00:18:00]

And I was so happy to have it. Then I started working with a group of people that is religiously job-connected; and it was a group that's called The Progressive Ushers Council; and I did all the typing work for 'em. And –

Elizabeth Saba: Can you tell me more about that group? What was it?

Alice Porter: What? That I'm a part of?

Elizabeth Saba: Um-hum.

Alice Porter: It is a group of ushers that has come together, and it is under one heading. We are the Progressive. You've heard talk of National. I'm sure the National folk will be here sometime this week or next month or something. They – very soon will they be here. But, anyway, I'm not with that group. I'm with the Progressive group;

and from the Progressive group, we are all an auxiliary to the Council, the Ministers' Council. And that's what I teach. I teach that now. I'm teaching – I've been teaching that for 17 years at one church and 17 –

[00:19:00]

– and I've been from – I've talked from Memphis to Nashville; and I was headed for Atlanta; and something drastically happened that I couldn't go there. The week that I was supposed to go, something happened; and I was unable to go there; but this particular group teaches ushers of the church how to stand, how to have service position, and how to attend the audience in the event of an emergency. Quite a few people think an usher just is somebody to lead you to a seat, but it's more to it than that. You should absolutely – it's nice to take a Red Cross if you possibly can and first aid. I've had Red Cross, first aid, and then usher; and I was certified. It got **nine** from them, my certification from Nashville.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay, and going back a little bit, what was the year that you got married?

*Alice Porter:* I married in 1944.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay, 1944.

*Alice Porter:* '45, I meant to say. I graduated in '44. I married the next year.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Alice Porter:* Um-hum.

[00:20:00]

*Elizabeth Saba:* And then from there, from the '40s and through the '70s and kind of when we move into the Civil Rights kind of era, do you have any stories from that period that you'd like to share?

*Alice Porter:* Well, I didn't become too involved in it at the time; 'cause my children were in school; and I had to work. So, therefore, I gave all my attention to my work. I probably could've gotten off; but when you lose a day, that's a day that I'm taking a biscuit out – a slice of bread out of the mouth of my children. I may not be able to meet note. So I really didn't; but I had the opportunity to do it; but I didn't do it; and it wasn't because I didn't want to do it. It was

because my situation wouldn't allow me to do it; and so I didn't – I worked.

*Elizabeth Saba:* What about the schools that your children went to? Do you remember if they were integrated yet?

*Alice Porter:* Oh, you mean in the class, or was it integration?

[00:21:00]

*Elizabeth Saba:* Um-hum, um-hum.

*Alice Porter:* I don't think my kid – lemme see \_\_\_\_\_. No, I don't think it was – it was when I was going to school. \_\_\_\_\_ pretty heavy. My oldest daughter, she went to – yes, it was – Owen College. You've heard talk of LeMoyne-Owen?

*Elizabeth Saba:* Um-hum.

*Alice Porter:* When Owen burned, my daughter was in LeMoyne – was in Owen. It's a junior college. She was in the second year there; and, after that, she went – started to go to Arkansas to Arkansas State; but she didn't. She met one of her classmates, and they got married. Okay, the second boy, he said, "Mom, I don't wanna go to college." He went to trade school. So he took up remodeling and making – almost make a television; and I wished he was here in Memphis to take care of mine; but he isn't. He's in L.A., and he got his –

[00:22:00]

– own business in televisions. Now, the third child, which you saw here, he went to – in Illinois – **Eureka** in Illinois; and from Illinois, he went to California. From there, I think he went to – it was – I'm trying – he went to Texas. He went to law school in Texas. He studied law; and then he was a lawyer in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. My baby girl went to Tennessee State; and, from there, she was gonna teach special ed. At that times, they didn't have special ed up there. So they advised her to come to Memphis to go to Memphis State. At that time, it was called Memphis State. What is it called now?

*Elizabeth Saba:* University of Memphis.

*Alice Porter:* University of Memphis State, where she graduated from Memphis State with special ed. While she went there – before she

graduated, you know how they try and put on a trial room or somewhere like that?

*Elizabeth Saba:* Um-hum.

*Alice Porter:* And she didn't like it. So she come home. She said, "Mama, I don't like that."

[00:23:00]

She said, "I can't take it. I thought I'd like it." Because she had came in contact with some children, the special ed kids; and she thought it would be easy. She said, "It's not as easy as it sound." So what she did, she took a – passed a – went to the Navy and passed a test; and so she stayed there 21 years; and she's now a what you call it? Not a captain, not a colonel. What is she? There's something she – I done forgot the name. I forget the name of all this stuff; but, anyway, she was there for 21 years. Well, she has her Master's; but she is not – she did get the chance to go back to the school where she didn't wanna do it for – and she said, "Mama, they pay good," she said, "But I'm just about dead." So, now, she's not with them. She's with another group.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay. Well, I guess shifting a little bit –

[00:24:00]

– into Memphis and to Hyde Park and how things used to be. Do you remember when Dr. King came to Memphis?

*Alice Porter:* Yes, I do.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Alice Porter:* I remember that; and I heard it over televisions; and I read in papers and things. I told ya I was working all during – but I never did go to any of the meetings; because it was not conducive to me at that time.

*Elizabeth Saba:* While you were at work, did segregation or integration affect you at work any?

*Alice Porter:* Nuh-uh, I was working for Montezzi's as I foretold you.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Um-hum.

*Alice Porter:* No, there was no integration there.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay, okay. Let's see. Talking about Hyde Park, what events do you feel have been significant in shaping the community? Are there any events that stand out in your mind?

*Alice Porter:* I can't – lemme see. To shape it into what it is today?

*Elizabeth Saba:* Uh-huh. Like what do you feel –

[00:25:00]

– has changed? How do you compare an old Hyde Park to how it is today?

*Alice Porter:* Well, old Hyde Park, I can tell you more about what old Hyde – and then I bring you up.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Alice Porter:* Old Hyde Park was the type of place that neighbors looked out for neighbors. They would even race to see – there wasn't no beautiful homes because we were poor; and, with what they had, they kept it painted. If it was just a room no bigger than this, it would be painted like this. They would keep everything they had clean; and you know how people race to have beautiful yards – now, I don't know whether they do it now or not – but they did then. See who had the beautiful, prettiest flower yard this summer and who gonna keep the grass. That was something they did. Now, the house may be looked dilapidated; but it was painted. They would take care of what they had; and it was just close; and like when my husband passed, there was a lady who lived across the street.

[00:26:00]

She was retired. She was an elderly lady, about like I am now; and there was another lady down the street farther; and she never had any children. Neither one of those two ladies had any children. So after the death of my husband, since she didn't have any children, she adopted me as her daughter and my children as her grandchildren; and you can rest assured, she was really our mother. See, I could go to work. I didn't have to worry about my kids getting into anything, because she was right across the street looking. That lady down the street, the same thing.

To look after them \_\_\_\_\_. Well, we had had a fence put around our yard before my husband passed; and so, therefore, then I told 'em that yard, meaning everything on the outside, stay out; and everything on the inside stay in; and don't use my front door. If anybody come in, they have to use the gate; but nobody's supposed to come in. That was an order, and these two old ladies would see to it that that order was carried out; and –

[00:27:00]

– one day my son that was here – that was my bigger boy – he didn't know he was look – he and his brother didn't see it. Well, I had a storage room; and my storage room was about five feet from that chain link fence with the staples up like that; and they jumped over that fence; and they could've gotten hurt; and that lady told me about it; and they always – they loved the lady – that **Ms. McKay** – that was my play mother. They loved her; but the lady down the street, they really didn't care too much for her.

So they always told me, "I know, didn't nobody tell ya that, Mama, but **Ms. Day**." I said, "Oh, yeah." I never did say yes or no; and I said yes to myself; but it was the woman that they had so much confidence in that wouldn't tell anything on is the one that told me about it. So that was an incident; but getting back to Hyde Park community, I don't mean that was just in one group, two or three houses. That was all over.

[00:28:00]

And people that had gardens, vegetable gardens – now, my play mother had a vegetable garden since she had a large space; and she had – she grew all kinds of trees that carried – you know, that would grow food here in Memphis: apples and she had pears. She had grapes. She had plums. She had all of that, and then she had a garden; 'cause, see, she had a huge place; and she taught me how to make jelly and how to can and preserve and stuff like that. She was a wonderful mother. That's true. She was more of a mother than my mother, because my mother didn't stay with me for eight years before her passing.

And so, of course, she was a mother; and I could appreciate her very much; and she would look after my children since she had adopted them. Even – she would look after 'em, and I didn't know it even before my husband passed; but I was at home. I was one of those stay-home mothers 'cause my husband didn't want my children to be around – reared by a lot of people.

[00:29:00]

If they couldn't go to kindergarten, he didn't want – like they got daycare? Uh-uh, that didn't go on in our house. I had to take care of my kids till they got old enough to go to kindergarten, and that's the way the ball bounced in those days. Everybody tried to outdo the other with their gardens and their flower yards and their yards. Now, the houses wasn't the very best. They really weren't; but what they had, they kept it painted up.

Elizabeth Saba: Um-hum, um-hum.

Daniel Saba: And have you – that's changed quite a bit.

Alice Porter: Yeah, because there has been, in my community, quite a few homes has been vacant; because the older people has left; and I'm not saying anything about you three young people; but y'all don't care about homes like we did; and they have let them go. I'm not saying you all, but your age, that's what I'm speaking of. Those old people has worked to pay for those homes –

[00:30:00]

– and they didn't have to do \_\_\_\_\_ keep it up, pay taxes and insurance; but they have become dilapidated. I can just name several – quite a few homes in my community where I am where the parents has worked and paid for the homes; and the kids care nothing about them; and it really bothers me; because that could be your first step. See, they made the first step. That could be your second step, if you got your home. Why worry – you ain't got to worry about your home. You can make another step to get a little higher, but they're not exactly doing. I'm not saying this applied to every young person, but there's quite a few in my community that has happened. So that's why it **bothers moms and dads** as far as I know. Any more questions?

Elizabeth Saba: Do you remember what Hollywood Street used to be like?

Alice Porter: Yes.

Elizabeth Saba: What was that like?

Alice Porter: Two-lane street. One going left and one going right – pass each other. If it – lemme tell you, it used to be gravel. See, as a little girl, –

[00:31:00]

– before the death of my husband, we had \_\_\_\_\_ the death of my husband. Before the death of my mother, we lived on **State**. That would be east of Hollywood Street, and we lived on the street down there which used to be gravel. All the streets out that way were – all around there – not here. I believe over here, too. Oh, State is right up here. That's where I grew up at when my mother was living, 2419 State; and it was gravel; but as time – and high – probably – Hollywood area?

Elizabeth Saba: Um-hum.

Alice Porter: Honey, you couldn't get two cars together unless somebody go in a ditch when I was a little girl; but now you can tell in a lotta places. That's over there by Rhodes College \_\_\_\_\_ too much about it. They were – they just did it because they put the school over there. They put blacktop and widen the streets and everything; but it was – looked like it's a new – it appeared to me, now looking back, a newly discovered place –

[00:32:00]

– that they're going fix up to put \_\_\_\_\_ residential areas.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Alice Porter: Um-hum.

Elizabeth Saba: And do you remember when the shops used to be on Hollywood Street, when they added – when businesses were [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_ – do you remember?

Alice Porter: Ever since I was a little girl, there has always been something. I don't know what it was before that.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Alice Porter: Because my uncle had a grocery there. My uncle's grocery was \_\_\_\_\_ and he moved to Hollywood Street. We had – there's somebody at the door. We have somebody – oh, what time is it?

Elizabeth Saba: Let's **pause**. Mrs. Porter, if you could give – well, actually, let me ask you this first. What would you say is your proudest moment?



Alice Porter: In life?

Elizabeth Saba: Yeah, what are you most proud of?

Alice Porter: You really don't wanna hear – you wouldn't really wanna hear it.

Elizabeth Saba: We do.

Alice Porter: When my last baby graduated from college; and she – oh, I'm proud of all of my kids; but that was the happiest moment; and it wasn't so sad when she first left home –

[00:33:00]

– to go off to college after she graduated from high school. That wasn't so happy, because I wished I had had another child; because I would have had company. She was my baby; but when she graduated from college and I didn't have put out anymore tuition fees, that's the happiest moment of my life.

Elizabeth Saba: All right, and then, finally, if you could offer young people in Memphis any words of advice, what would you –

Alice Porter: Words of advice.

Elizabeth Saba: What would you –

Alice Porter: Stay – give them, you know, they took prayer, oh, you don't wanna go into that; but I'm gonna mention it anyway. They tried to take prayer outta school; but you can't take prayer out of anything; because the prayer is within you. You can sit \_\_\_\_\_ sit here and look at you and be silent doing all the prayer – praying all on the sun. So, therefore, continue; but don't take God outta your life. I'm sure you're gonna live a – you're gonna live a holy-hallelujah-happy-clapping-hand-all-the-time life. I was young, too. I didn't; but as you grow older and you get your own family –

[00:34:00]

– live the type of life that you wouldn't mind talking about. I don't mind talking about my life. Going from the time my husband passed until even today, I don't mind talking about it because I tried to live the life in front of my children that they, too, would appreciate me as a mother and would respect me when they get grown, when they – in their lives. So I would leave to the young

people: Do everything you possibly can right. You don't have too much praying to do, but you just have to ask the Lord to lead you.

From that, I say, stay in school and get every bit of the education you can find. You can scoop it up out the street, get the education. Get education, because **at a parent** – see, in those days when I was coming up, some – a lot of people was working and didn't even know how to read and write simply because they didn't have the opportunity to attend school; but when you have the opportunity to attend school, you do it. Get everything you possibly can. Just like I told you, my daughter graduated –

[00:35:00]

– as special ed; but after she got into it, she said she didn't like it; and that's when she went in the Navy and stayed 21 years. So she's retired now; and so that's the way it would be – I would advise all three of you all and carry the message on: Get your education. Do the very best you can. Everybody, told ya', couldn't be a A/B student. There are some people may not be college students, but there are so many trades that they can learn and do just as well. Does that answer your question?

*Elizabeth Saba:* Well, thank you on behalf of Crossroads to Freedom. Thank you so much for –

*Alice Porter:* I've kind of enjoyed being with you all.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Yes.

*Alice Porter:* Lemme sign this very quickly. [Crosstalk] \_\_\_\_\_

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay, yes, thank –

[End of Audio]