

Elizabeth Saba: On behalf of Crossroads to Freedom w just want to thank you for doing this interview. For the record, can you state your name?

Mrs. Hall: Yes, my name is Edie Hall.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay. And where and when were you born?

Mrs. Hall: I was born May 3, 1934 in Greenville, Mississippi.

Elizabeth Saba: In Greenville, Mississippi. And who were your parents, what were their names?

Mrs. Hall: My father's name was Henry Hunt and mother's name's Ella Hunt.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay, and what were their occupations?

Mrs. Hall: My father was, at that time, what they call a laborer. He did pretty much whatever.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: But when I was a child, I remember him driving a big, yellow road raider. He went the roads through the country, making roads, and he went to different parts of Mississippi driving that big, yellow road raider.

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Elizabeth Saba: Okay. And what was it like growing up in Mississippi?

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Elizabeth Saba: What was your neighborhood like?

Mrs. Hall: It was – at the time, it was okay. It was just we lived in the country but not so very far in the country, because at one time my father worked at a gen. You know what a gen is? Anyway, the gen is always close to the little country town. So the person that worked at the gen lived near the gen, so \_\_\_\_\_ where we lived, at the time, it really wasn't a town, but by the situation it was a little town.

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Elizabeth Saba: Oh, okay.

Mrs. Hall: So we lived in the country but not way back in the country.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay, and did you have any brothers and sisters?

Mrs. Hall: I do.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay, how many?

Mrs. Hall: I have – well, I had six brothers and three sisters, there were ten of us.

Elizabeth Saba: Oh, wow, and where do you rank in that, are you the oldest, youngest –?

Mrs. Hall: I'm the second oldest, I'm the oldest daughter.

[0:02:00]

Elizabeth Saba: Oh, okay. So what was that like being the oldest daughter in a family of that many children? Did you –?

Mrs. Hall: In those days, the oldest children, in case the mother or father was not \_\_\_\_\_, I was the next mother. My sisters and brothers were under my care if my mom had to go to, whatever, to the store or something. She would – whatever, I'm the one that took care of my sisters and brothers.

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And even now, my sisters and brothers will ask me what do I think about a situation or whatever, if something came up, so I was next in line.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay. And so I'm sure being the second oldest it kept you very busy, but do you remember any activities that you did when you were in Mississippi? What would you do for fun as a kid growing up?

Mrs. Hall: As a kid growing up, what did we do? We played – and we didn't have a lot of toys –.

[0:03:00]

Mrs. Hall: But I do remember, I loved to do paper dolls, and I – see I do like to cut and draw.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: So I did paper dolls, and at that time, a paper doll book would cost a dime. And if I had a dime and went to the store and bought a paper doll book I was happy. We also would maybe have a Sears Roebuck catalog. Now, we're in the country now. And I would

get – **Walter Field** catalog, most people will not remember that. But my mom would order our clothes from Sears and Walter Field. Well, I might get that catalog and cut my paper dolls, but I liked to do that, and I would kinda get in trouble with that.

And then we made mud cake, I mean made it, get the dirt and get some water and make some mud and get a \_\_\_\_\_ topping put it in there. We made mud cake.

[0:04:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* And then we made – I loved to do sea grass doll. Get a Coca Cola bottle and get some sea grass, \_\_\_\_\_ some – that will tie around, maybe an ice, because in those days people had a block of ice instead of just reaching in the refrigerator and get the ice. So I would take that sea grass and tie it around the ice and put it in a Coca Cola bottle and you could comb it and curl it and make a doll. So those were the things that I did.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Oh, wow. And what was religion? Did religion play a strong role in your community growing up?

*Mrs. Hall:* It did, it did.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Did people go to church?

*Mrs. Hall:* Always.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Really.

*Mrs. Hall:* Mm hmm.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* We always went to Sunday School and went to church. My father was a deacon and we went to church always.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay. Can you share any memories from your childhood that influenced you later in life, if you remember anything? Significant things.

*Mrs. Hall:* As I was thinking about, you said do we go to church –.

[0:05:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* Yeah, my father was a deacon. I remember one time, in particular, I guess I might have been about 9. We were at church and the little girls and boys went outside to the little corner store, bought pickle and some candy, and we would put the candy in the middle of the pickle and we were outside eating pickle and candy. And my daddy \_\_\_\_\_ deacon boy came outside, took his belt off and game me a nice little flap with that belt and walked me back down the aisle in the middle of the Sunday service, sat me on the front seat and then he went back up there and sat on the deacon \_\_\_\_\_ and I was so embarrassed and I'm still embarrassed when I think of how he did me like that. But I don't like pickle and candy.

Begin Segment 2: 00:05:47:16

*Elizabeth Saba:* What were your school days like? Where did you go to elementary school and middle school and high school?

*Mrs. Hall:* I went to –.

[0:06:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* Elementary school in Lula, Mississippi. By that time, we lived in Lula, Mississippi.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And I went to the school there.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And we moved to Memphis, and I was in the seventh grade –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* When we moved to Memphis, my dad came to Memphis and my mother and my sisters, brother and I, we moved with our grandmother, because if you were not gonna farm anymore, you had to move out of that house so the next person that was – families that were gonna farm – and we weren't doing that anymore, we were moving to Memphis. So we moved in with our grandmother and grandfather. My daddy came to Memphis and got a room, found a job.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* So after he found a job my mom would come to Memphis on a Friday to spend the weekend with my daddy –.

[0:07:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* Come back to country on Sunday evening. After about four or five months, my daddy got a house for us.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And he came to the country, moved us to Memphis to –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Do you remember where the house was?

*Mrs. Hall:* Yes, ma'am, on the corner of Hyde Park in **Stovall**.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay, okay. So really nearby.

*Mrs. Hall:* In the heart of Hyde Park.

*Elizabeth Saba:* In the heart of Hyde Park in seventh grade you were –.

*Mrs. Hall:* Yeah.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Yeah, about that time.

*Mrs. Hall:* Yeah, I was about 13, 12, 13.

*Elizabeth Saba:* What was that move like for you, moving from Mississippi to Memphis?

*Mrs. Hall:* Oh, we thought we were going to Heaven, you know, figuratively speaking.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* We were so happy. And then when we got to Memphis, you know, it was totally different. Say, big, bright lights and just – it was different.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And we were happy. And then we lived in Hyde Park in Stovall for about, I guess about not quite a year –.

[0:08:00]

Mrs. Hall: And my daddy bought a house.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: At 858 Imperial. So we moved from Hyde Park in Stovall to 858 Imperial and we went to ~~Manassas~~ High School. At that time, it was from the 1st through the 12th then, when I was in the 7th grade.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: Mm hmm.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay, and what was it like going to ~~Manassas~~ High School?

Mrs. Hall: Loved it, loved it, loved it.

Elizabeth Saba: Did you?

Mrs. Hall: I did, I did, I did.

Elizabeth Saba: Do you have any memories from school that you would like to share?

Mrs. Hall: We lived near – not too far from the school. Shortcut was to go down Dunlap, across the railroad track to the school.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: It was against the law – well, we weren't supposed to go across the railroad track because at that time, trains were coming and going, but we would go across the railroad track –.

[0:09:00]

Mrs. Hall: And go to school, and it was a big, beautiful school and I just enjoyed it. I loved it. I loved it.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm. Okay, and then when you graduated from high school what happened?

Mrs. Hall: I graduated from ~~Manassas~~ in 1953 and I got a job. I went to work at ~~Loebbe's~~ Laundry. At that time, ~~Loebbe's~~ Laundry was on Madison. It's not there anymore but it was on Madison.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: And I happened to be, at that time, was considered a pretty good position, I was a marker, I didn't – I wasn't in the hot part and all that. I was a marker, which meant I put the tag on the clothes.

[0:10:00]

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Begin Segment 3: 00:10:22

Mrs. Hall: And I liked that, so I worked a the laundry.

Elizabeth Saba: Uh huh.

Mrs. Hall: Then I got married.

Elizabeth Saba: Oh, okay. How old were you when you got married?

Mrs. Hall: I was 21.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay. And what did your husband do?

Mrs. Hall: I married Ernest Hall.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: He was in the Air Force and he got out of the Air Force, we got married and moved to a little apartment. It was brand new, so we were the first one lived in our new, little apartment and he worked at **Humpcomb** Factory. That was a place that they made oil and whatever, but **Humpcomb**, he worked there.

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Elizabeth Saba: Uh huh. And did you ever have any children?

Mrs. Hall: I certainly did. I had lots of children. I have eight. I have four boys and four girls.

Elizabeth Saba: Oh, okay.

[0:11:00]

Mrs. Hall: And they're all grown and they're all fine. Everybody lives in Memphis except one. I have one son who lives in Atlanta.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay. All right, well, I guess we'll shift gears a little bit and start talking about the '50s to the '70s.

*Mrs. Hall:* All right.

*Elizabeth Saba:* A very – lots of things happened. Are there any things that come to your mind when I first say that, like the Civil Rights era? Are there any kind of stories in particular from that period that stand out that you'd like to share?

*Mrs. Hall:* Yes. In the Civil Rights era, that's when the changes were beginning to happen.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* We had meetings. We were gonna have a meeting over here where we discuss and try – in fact, you know, schools were not desegregated, so that was one of the issues that came up.

[0:12:00]

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* So, we would go to the meetings, and I would to the meetings and my husband would say, "You always –." But I was just there. So, we had the meetings and then eventually the law changed that –. For instance, I – have you – black water and white water and –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* All that stuff. Been there, done that all. When the – before integration there were black water – well, the water fountain, one said white and one said black.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And I remember my mother and my little brother were downtown one day and children were there to do things that, back then, old people just didn't do. So, my little brother decided to see what's the difference, how do white water taste.

[0:13:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* So he decided to get a drink of water out of the white fountain, and my mom looked back and she almost had a heart attack, you know, why are you doing that, why are you doing that. But that was

tradition, and she had never, I guess, thought about bucking the system, what's the difference in the water. But my little brother did, I remember that and she was so upset about it. It really wasn't a big deal, but – because he said the water tastes just like the rest of the water. Little things like that did happen.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: And I remember walking down the street – as I said, I lived at 858 Imperial. The street that ran into that street was **Pierce**, okay. In those days, black folks live over here, white folks live over there. On **Pierce Street**, half of the street –.

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Mrs. Hall: Down was the white folks lived up there, and down a little further~~a bit farther~~, we lived down there. But in order to get to Chelsea to catch the bus, we had to come up the street, okay.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: So, it was nothing to be walking up the street and somebody said, "Why are you walking up here?" Saying things to you, you know, I mean. And they thought that was okay. I resented that, and I remember one little boy told me in particular, he would kick me, and I told him I would kick you back. And I don't think anybody had ever said anything back to him, because he jumped back, I mean he was startled.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: He didn't kick me but he said it.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: You know, so there were things that went on that really weren't too cool but it was what it was.

Elizabeth Saba: Right.

Mrs. Hall: Mm hmm.

Elizabeth Saba: Right.

[0:15:00]

*Elizabeth Saba:* And what was it like trying to raise a family during this time period? Did you find it difficult at all?

*Mrs. Hall:* It was, it was. And then –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* And explaining to your children what was going on?

*Mrs. Hall:* We lived in – pretty much in the same area. My mom lived in that area, my mother-in-law lived in that area and I did. And then where they say that it takes a family to raise a – a village to raise a family, yeah. Yeah, if I didn't have it, it didn't mean that I was not gonna get some, 'cause if somebody else had some there was a sharing going on. There were times that I may not have had a can of milk.

In those days, we bought **Pet** milk for the baby or Carnation milk. A can of milk costs about \$0.45. If I didn't have it, my mom, you know, had it or my mother-in-law or somebody. So it was a thing where we kinda shared.

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*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay. And this was the Hyde Park community that had this sense of sharing or –?

*Mrs. Hall:* Well, by that time – I'm sure it was there also, but –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* This particular was in – after we had moved from Hyde Park.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* When I had my children and I was grown. Because I lived in Hyde Park when I was like 13.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* But when we lived in Hyde Park we stayed – where we lived, we stayed there. We didn't – it wasn't a matter of going all over the neighborhood. We just was in our little area and that was it.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But raising my family, I had a good husband. I had a good mother-in-law and I had a mother. Plus, I had little sister and brothers that

helped me with my children, you know. If I had to go to the store or do whatever, my little sister kept my little children. So we were just a circle together.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm, mm hmm. And you talked about being involved, going to community meetings.

[0:17:00]

*Elizabeth Saba:* What kind of activities were you involved with during this period?

*Mrs. Hall:* Oh, we might have to go over to the Board of Education.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* So, we —.

*Elizabeth Saba:* And what kind of things would you discuss there?

*Mrs. Hall:* Well, just in numbers. I may not have said anything but I was there. We were there, you know, so by being there made a difference. One thing I remember after — well, this was when our children were growing up, going to school.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* They went to ~~Trezevantsmet~~. ~~Trezevantsmet~~ was, as one of the people at the Board of Education said, "Well, you people, you just need to be careful because the Klan Land is there." That was one of the statements that were made —.

[0:18:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* About the area down Range line, ~~Trezevantsmet~~ High School down there, 'cause that was the white school. But children had been transferred to ~~Trezevantsmet~~. So they were going. But it was nothing for a fight to break out every day between the white folks and the black folks, and parents had to get off of work or whatever and run and try to get their children, because it was like H-E-L-L down there. And I had a sister that worked there, she was a teacher.

*Elizabeth Saba:* At ~~Trezevantsmet~~?

*Mrs. Hall:* At ~~Trezevantsmet~~.

Elizabeth Saba: Okay.

Mrs. Hall: And I had a son and her daughter that went to school at ~~Trezevant~~ ~~Fresmet~~. My son rode the bus, didn't bother him, he wasn't afraid. My daughter rode in the car with her auntie, my sister.

[0:19:00]

Mrs. Hall: So she went to school in the car, he rode the bus. No problem for him, it didn't bother him. However, my sister got sick, so she couldn't go to school. My daughter had to ride the bus. So when she come home she said, "I hate going to school. I just don't like going, 'cause I hate going through the woods." And I said, "What do you mean, going through the woods?" She said, "When we get to school, the bus put us off, and we have to get off the bus and walk through the woods and go in the back door at the school."

I wanted to know what was she talking about, so I went down there and on Range\_line, behind the school, there is just beautiful trees all back there, but the bus would stop, put them off of the bus. They had to get off the bus, walk down through the trees and come over to the school.

So, now there was one meeting that we had at the Board, we wanted to know –.

[0:20:00]

Mrs. Hall: Why the bus had to put them off on Rangeline. Why couldn't the bus put them around at the front of the school and let them go in the door, because that law that you had to go in the back door no longer exists, publicly, but undercover it was going on.

So we had a meeting about that several times. They said they didn't have room for the bus to come around there to put the children out. So there was a lot of discussion about that. Well, you can make room, so then they did. They put a road around there and the bus stopped putting the children off –. And there was another big – you just cannot imagine the stuff that – I mean it was, it is what it is, that's what it was.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Begin Segment 4: 00:20:59:14

[0:21:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* And so they made a road around there and then the bus stopped putting the children off on Rangeline and brought them around to the school and they went in the side door. So they did stop going through the woods. So that was some things that changed, but it wasn't, I mean it wasn't cheap, I want you to know that. It was not cheap and it was not easy.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But it is what it is. Some things that I saw and I – this was really, I never will forget and I still think about it. When the pools came up where you could go swimming.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* At one of the schools down on Chelsea, there was a nice big old wading pool and all the little white children were just running and playing and jumping and everything in the water. Black kids could not get in that water. So when the law changed that said everybody could go in the wading pool –.

[0:22:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* They dug that sucker up, dug it up, filled it in with dirt and anybody that don't know that and didn't see that would never know that there used to be a wading pool there. I get the impression that some people would rather do without than to share. That's my impression.

And another thing I would like to know, people that did these things and acted this way towards black people, how do they feel now? I would just like to – just like I'm talking to you, I'd just like to talk to them. I mean the little guy that told me he would kick me 'cause I'm walking down the sidewalk. I'm at a store and I'm already standing there and somebody else come in and they totally disregard me, as if I'm not there, you know.

[0:23:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* Just blatantly, just mean.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* I would just love to talk to one of them, some of them, any of em, anybody and find out how do they feel about that now. Thinking about school, snow, they were – the children were going to school then they re-did the school, they were taking out the asbestos and remodeling and everything. The children had to walk around with backpacks and carry their lunches. We had to take lunch to them so they could have – whatever.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* They said, don't worry about it we – just bear with us, everything's gonna be fine. We're gonna have a nicer school. By the time they got a nice, new school we're gonna redraw this boundary area and we're gonna get all the little black folks up out of here.

And so it would seem mighty funny, now you're gonna put out –. Oh, it's not like that, it's not like that. And it is like that. I have no problem with whatever it is –.

[0:24:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* If they just do it across the board, tell the truth and just don't be talking about it's not like that when I'm knowing it is like that.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* Now, you ask me and I'm telling you.

*Elizabeth Saba:* It's great.

*Mrs. Hall:* I didn't ask you, you asked me, so if you don't want to know, don't ask Ms. Hall, because Ms. Hall will definitely tell you.

*Elizabeth Saba:* We want to know. Let's see. If you could just reclip that to yourself that would be wonderful. Sorry, it –. Yeah. Thanks.

*Mrs. Hall:* That work?

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm. Okay, well, do you remember the period when Dr. King came to Memphis and the sanitation strike?

*Mrs. Hall:* Yeah.

*Elizabeth Saba:* What was that like for Memphis?

Mrs. Hall: It was real tension. It was – everybody was – and some people said, "Oh." You know, 'cause some people just really do have that spirit of fear.

[0:25:00]

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: I mean they just, you know, everything is all right, just leave it alone. Oh, they're gonna start something, oh, you know.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: And then there's this group said, let's get it on. We will march--  
-----marchers. They said we're gonna be at Mason Temple. We're gonna march for freedom. Some people said, well, I'm just gonna stay in the house. But there were a whole lot of us said, I'm gonna march for freedom. [REDACTED].

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Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: And those sanitation people –.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: It just was terrible. I mean if it was raining the black guys had to keep on working. The other folks could go to the barn-----. There were some people were saying oh, it wasn't like that, but it was like that, yes it was.

[0:26:00]

Mrs. Hall: It was a terrible situation, but Dr. King died – that was a terrible situation that he died, but in so doing, it did make a difference for a lot of people, for us. I can say that.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: I can say that, and I have –. When he got shot, I was standing at the corner of Chelsea and Peereese, waiting on the bus, and in April on a bright sun-shiny day, the day he got shot, it clouded up and snowed.

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Begin Segment 5: 00:27:00:00

[0:27:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* I'm talking about it snowed great, big drops of snow.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And in a little while snow was almost half – I mean up my legs. Snow, it was a very, very odd day. I mean it wasn't raining, it wasn't cold, it wasn't – it just snowed, something terrible happened that day but something good came out of it.

*Elizabeth Saba:* And how do you feel that Memphis has changed as a result of it?

*Mrs. Hall:* Well, all those sanitation workers began to be treated a little better.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* In fact, they came up with some other ways that they could collect the garbage. Because before then, they used to have to – the garbage was in a great, big old barrel and them poor men had to go back in the backyard, pick up the barrel –.

[0:28:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* And if it was too big they had tubs. And they had to pull the garbage out of the barrel, in the tub, pick the tub up on their head and walk back up to the front to the truck. It was just ridiculous.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But then after that they did make some changes. They got some garbage – or containers that got a wheel on it, it rolled and stuff. So it was a little better.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* I'm sure it's still, you know, I'm sure it's still you know.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Right.

*Mrs. Hall:* But it's better than it was.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* Yeah, mm hmm.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay. And going back, you were talking about growing up in Hyde Park in seventh grade, you're 13 years old, and then seeing Hyde Park now, what –?

*Mrs. Hall:* When I first came to Memphis.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Yeah, how is it different?

*Mrs. Hall:* When I first came to Memphis to Hyde Park.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* It was so – to us, 'cause we came from the country, you see.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* So it was pretty.

[0:29:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* It was pretty. And there were stores. There was a drugstore, a sundry at the corner of Hyde Park and Chelsea. There was a big funeral home at the corner of Chelsea and Springdale.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* It was just nice buildings –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And on down to this part of the town, where we call Hollywood, it was like a whole, new city at Hollywood and Chelsea. There was a city, beautiful. But at 13 –.

[0:30:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* We didn't venture down here to Hollywood other than maybe if our momma and daddy was with us. I mean in those days we just didn't go – you know. In fact, I live on Golden now. I never came across – I didn't even know Golden was over there when I lived – when I was a child.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* Because we never came –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Into Hollywood, really.

*Mrs. Hall:* We never went over to cross there, right.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And that was other folks' city or where other folks lived then.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Okay.

*Mrs. Hall:* But it was pretty, it was nice in there.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And we would catch the bus and go downtown. That was almost a weekly thing. I mean we might have a dollar. It costs \$0.10 to ride the bus –.

[0:31:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* So we would have a dollar, catch the bus, go to town. You could buy a bottle of fingernail polish for maybe quarter, bag of popcorn for quarter.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And just walk and look and just – and then catch the bus and come home.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And that was a good outing day on a Saturday after we washed the clothes, ironed the clothes, swept the yard, 'cause in those days you always had something to do. And you were wondering, why in the world do we have to sweep the yard. It was already clean but we had to do those things. So after we got through doing our work and whatever then we could go to town and then get back home at a certain time. So I had a good life.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But I ran across some stuff that if I had had a choice it would not have been that way.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

[0:32:00]

Begin Segment 6: 00:32:00:04

*Mrs. Hall:* But, you know, it's all good.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Right. And what about looking at things now, at both Hyde Park, how it's changed, has it changed?

*Mrs. Hall:* It has, it has, it has. One thing – yeah, because in Hyde Park and pretty much all the areas around here, you will see houses that are vacant and boarded up or whatever. Back in the day, those houses were beautiful homes, but what happened, the older people, most of them died out. The younger people, the ones that still kept their mind and whatever, and did fairly well, they did like other folks, I'm getting the hell out of here.

So they moved – well, first, a great move was to be to –.

[0:33:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* **Frayserzier**. You moved to **Frayserzier**, you were to move somewhere. Then you moved to **Raleigh**, you really moved somewhere. Then you move on a little more and a little more and a little more, you see what I'm saying. And that made the change of the neighborhood, like Hyde Park, people that used to live in Hyde Park, either they're on drugs or dead or if they had a chance they left. So that's definitely changed.

And Hollywood – and I remember when we first moved out here, every week the street sweeper came – I don't think the street sweeper know the way to Hollywood anymore. I mean it is what it is. It is what it is. Apartments that people live in –.

[0:34:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* The yardmen or the keeper would come and cut the grass and do the hedges and all that stuff. After a while, you notice, they don't do it anymore.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Uh huh.

*Mrs. Hall:* That makes a difference.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* So that's – yeah, it's different, mm hmm.

*Elizabeth Saba:* And are you still – have you still gone to some of these community meetings that are taking place nowadays? Are there any that are taking place?

*Mrs. Hall:* They're not – they're not – as far as I know, they might be, but I – for some reason, I got old and all that stuff, so –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Right. Yeah.

*Mrs. Hall:* Mm hmm.

*Elizabeth Saba:* What about – how would you compare like race relations growing up in Memphis to them now?

*Mrs. Hall:* Back then this was your territory, this was my territory, as I see it. And when –.

[0:35:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* I walk through your territory, it was nothing for somebody to ask me why am I walking – you know what I'm saying. So we pretty much – I don't like the way you talk to me so I don't have to be where you are, you know what I'm saying.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* And you'd say, well, I don't want you over here anyway, so that's what it was. And now, it's not quite as open, it's not quite as out as it was then. You know, like, back then, you ain't got no business over here. You can't just really tell me that now. Nobody would – not too many folks would just openly say that now.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But in other ways, like, you know, well, here they come, well, I'll just – let's close the gate. You know what I'm saying, little subtle stuff. So it's a little different but it's still the same, almost.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

[0:36:00]

*Elizabeth Saba:* If you could offer younger Memphians any advice, or if you could go back in time and tell yourself something to your younger self, what would you say?

*Mrs. Hall:* My younger self, I couldn't tell my younger self anything because back then, that's where I was.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But I can tell young folk now –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* Go to school, get an education. Because if you get the education, that's one thing can't nobody take from you and you can get more done with your brains, by what you know, than what you can do with your hands if you don't know nothing. Because somebody can tell you anything, but if you don't know any better –.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* I mean you're stuck. But if you know and you know what you know, it makes a difference. And in these days and times, you do have some of the law, not all of it. It's not –.

[0:37:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* You know, they say the law is blind but the law is not blind. It is not. The law is equal but the law is not equal, it is not. Money talks. Family talk. Who you are talk. Trumps just your regular person. It's not equal. But if you got some education it can help you and then you can get some money and then that'll help you. I know what I'm talking about. Because there are some people that they can't do nothing about it. So you're in trouble, real trouble.

But if you get a little education and get some Jesus in your heart, because with all of it, you're gonna need some extra help and that would be my – I would just tell any and everybody –.

**Begin Segment 7: 00:38:01:03**

[0:38:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* First of all, try to get some education. But then don't forget the Lord, because even if you get in a situation where you don't have any money, anybody, you can always call on Him. And He may not even get you out of your situation. I was sick, very sick one time. Everybody thought I was dying. I did too, but it really didn't make that much difference.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* I was just sick. But in the midst of it, I wasn't really bothered because I just knew that the Lord knew where I was, and I came on through that. So I would tell – this is what I would tell them, be sure, very sure that you get your anchor in Jesus, 'cause sometimes you get into some situation – you might end up in jail, you might end up sick, you know, and you might end up being treated wrong.

[0:39:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* And then you have to kinda step back and say, now should I say this, 'cause you know, I can say something. I ain't scared, you know, but is this the right thing to do.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* Is this gonna help the situation.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* Should I say it now and just don't say anything. You know, sometimes people say, well, you're not saying anything. You really don't want to know what I have – you don't want to hear what I got to say, you really don't. So that's what I would tell, kinda weigh what you say, be sure you're right, and try to do the right thing. That's what I would tell young people.

Now, as far as me and going back, there's no going back. In fact, I pretty much did what I had to do. I knew that I had to do what I had to do and I did it. I resented some of the stuff, and I resented some of the stuff that was said about us that really wasn't true.

[0:40:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* And one thing, about girls getting pregnant. I remember it was in the paper, one – this was years ago, but I'm 75 years old, so this is long time stuff, you all wasn't born.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* But the article said that black girls had babies out of wedlock, white girls didn't. Lie, and the truth wasn't in them. You know why I know that? Because where I lived, there was a home where

some black girls didn't have this cover and this backup thing, home for unwed mothers, right down the street from where I lived.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: Black girls got pregnant, they had to stay at home and they were ostracized, talked about. I mean just really put down.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: Everybody in the paper and everything said black girls and they ain't married. White girls did too, but they went to the home for unwed mothers –.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: And had their babies over there on Poplar and Mclean ~~and~~  
popular.

[0:41:00]

Mrs. Hall: Black girls had their babies and they grew up at home with their sisters and brother and everybody. So there's so much stuff that really ain't – it ain't equal but when you look at it and – bottom line, I just said, it is what it is.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: And only thing I'd like to know, I really would, is – I keep saying that I'd love to talk to some of these folk that had these theories and these sayings that are not true.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: How you feel about it? Do you still say that? You know, do you feel like – I'd just like to know how you feel, because that's the way I feel.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm. What about – just to kinda wrap up our interview and then we'll definitely talk more. What is your proudest moment? What do you remember just wowing you or something that you're very proud of in your life?

[0:42:00]

Mrs. Hall: I was so proud when I got married.

Elizabeth Saba: Uh huh.

Mrs. Hall: And I was so proud when one day, this is the one that really, really, really did it.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: We had – my husband said, "I'm not buying a house." I said, "I want a little white house with a little white fence." He said, "I'm not buying no house." I let it alone. But I said, Lord – there were some people that lived over in the neighborhood where I lived, they had a big house and then they bought the little house, well, there's a three-room house, you know, they bought that house. They tore that house down and made a driveway and a beautiful yard. I stood on the little porch and I said, "Lord –."

[0:43:00]

Mrs. Hall: "They got two house, one to live in and one to tear down." I said, "Now, give me a house." That's what I said to the Lord, okay.

Went on about my business, went on about my life. One day, my husband said, "Come on, let's go for a ride," one Sunday. Me and him and all those children, I had about five children. He said, "Let's go for a ride." We all hopped in the car, we come down Chelsea. Now, we hadn't been this way in I don't know when.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

Mrs. Hall: We're going riding. Came on around, pulled up at a house. The house had a sign in the yard, for sale. He said, "Y'all like this house much?" Children said, "Oh yeah, daddy, we like that, oh, yeah, daddy, yeah." He said, "You like this house?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "I was thinking I could get this house."

[0:44:00]

Mrs. Hall: I said, "You know we ain't got no money." He said, "Well, I'm still gonna put in for it." That was my husband. Now, he would buy it – if you let him have it, he would buy it. I'm the one keep – oh, we can't do that. Well, he said, "You all like this house?" Yeah, daddy, yeah, daddy. And so – and at that time, houses were left open, you could just go in em, 'cause, you know –.

Elizabeth Saba: Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* We went in the house and the children, they're running, ooh, this is gonna be my room, ooh, this gonna be my room. They're in there getting their room all ready.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* So, we go on back home. He put in for the house. No more thinking about the house or nothing about the house. About two months or three some later, the phone rang. I didn't have a phone at my house. Like I said, my mom lived in the neighborhood, so they come running around where I live, say momma said telephone. So I had to run around the corner to my momma's house to answer the telephone.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* It was the real estate man. He said, "Mrs. Hall, you all can move in."

[0:45:00]

*Mrs. Hall:* Now that was – that did it. That was the one that really, really – that was it when mister real estate man said we could move in our house and I was so happy.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Mm hmm.

*Mrs. Hall:* Still am. I've been in that house about 40 years.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Oh wow.

*Mrs. Hall:* Still happy. That did it. That did it.

*Elizabeth Saba:* Oh, well, that's great. Well, is there anything else you'd like to add we haven't talked about?

*Mrs. Hall:* No, not really. I guess I'll shut up.

*Elizabeth Saba:* No, well, thank you so much on behalf of Crossroads to Freedom, just thank you for participating in this interview, Mrs. Hall. We've had a great time listening to your stories.

*Mrs. Hall:* Thank you for asking me and if you –.

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