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Raychell Reynolds, Oral History Index

Raychell Reynolds

Marcia Lair

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Interview with Raychell Reynolds conducted by Marcia Lair

March 2, 2020

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00:00:01	Introductions and general Information;
00:00:52	Basic facts – born 1/11/1944; parents were Troy Reynolds & Marie Reynolds; has 9 brothers & 5 sisters
00:01:32	Good memories of parents and siblings when she was a child. Father Troy Reynolds worked as a cook at Parkhill's Cafe for "many years"; then worked at East Texas State University until he died of a stroke [1982].
00:02:19	Remembers being taught to work for what they wanted. She & her siblings worked in the cotton fields in the summers, assisted by her uncle, Clifford Reynolds.
00:03:02	Began school in 1950 at the Booker T. Washington school in Cooper, TX. One building was the elementary school; the other was the high school. When she was in high school, the high school moved from the old dump ground to Marshall St. She graduated in 1961.
00:03:59	Attended Texas College in Tyler, TX until 1963; finished her degree in Boston, MA. Stayed in Boston until moved back to Texas in 2003.
00:04:25	Saw many changes in Cooper. Remembers many stores in Cooper when she was growing up – her grandparents worked in the stores. Her grandmother worked at Poe's Fashions
00:05:10	Growing up, she didn't know the terms "segregation" or "desegregation" – conditions were just acceptable; people didn't mix and mingle
00:05:40	Came back to Texas for a visit in 1966; schools had been integrated; her younger sisters were going to what used to be the "white" school. They did encounter some problems during the first years of integration.
00:06:36	When busing began in Boston, she sent her children back to Texas to go to school; didn't want them to be bused out of their district in Boston. Daughter Lisa has good memories of school in Cooper. Great-nieces currently attend Cooper schools.
00:07:44	Lived and worked in Boston for 42 years. Early memories of Cooper include a lot of activities among the children that she doesn't see among the children & teenagers today.
00:08:40	Worried about current eating habits; she grew up on vegetables; kids today want fast-food. Remembers how her parents cooked; she and her siblings preferred their father's cooking; also, their grandparents' cooking.
00:11:01	Good memories of her uncles; their extended family stuck together & worked together.
00:11:56	Contrast with today's families
00:12:37	Remembers her family's first TV – B&W with 2 channels -contrasts with today's TV's and other electronic entertainment
00:13:45	Describes the joys and frustrations of caring for great-nieces, communicating with her sisters, etc.
00:15:36	Businesses owned by Black community members when she was a child – 2 cafes – one owned by Charlie Hart and one by W. F. Johnson. Also remembers Black people could only go to the movie at a certain time on Friday nights. Sparks had two theatres.
00:17:26	Grocery shopped at Wilson's & 3 K's; also shopped at Bart's Shoe Store and Banks Furniture; remembers 1 st National Bank and Delta Bank.

00:18:50	Moved to Boston when her brother, who was in the Navy, was stationed in Boston. He told her about job opportunities there. Applied for a job, then rode the Continental bus to Boston. Bad memory of a stopover in Alabama, when she was refused service at a cafe. No problem at the stopover in New York.
00:22:26	Her brother lived in Boston – was a culture shock; discovered more equal treatment on the job in Boston.
00:23:40	1971 – applied for a job with the welfare department in Boston.
00:25:05	While going through the application process required for work in the city of Boston, worked for a printing company. Began work at the Boston welfare department 6/1/1971 – retired in 2003. Description of how the employees worked together looked out for each other.
00:28:20	1980 – memories of first computers in her office & the contrast to pre-computer work process. Memories of beginning of Food Stamp program in Boston and comparison with the program in Texas. Comparison of public transportation in Boston and Texas.
00:33:00	Memories of childhood in Cooper – more respect for people, regardless of color, even with segregation.
00:34:40	Moved back to Texas in 2008 to take care of elderly mother.
00:37:20	Memory of the JFK assassination – was staying with her great aunt in Dallas – went downtown to see the motorcade. Heard the shots, didn't see the motorcade.
00:42:25	No plans to move back to Boston, Texas is home; family is here; enjoys volunteer work at the Hope House
00:46:10	Role of religion in her life. Childhood church – First Baptist Church – pastor Harvesty Manjay; raised to attend church on Sunday and read the Bible to your children.
00:47:20	Memories of teachers at Booker T. Washington – Fannie Mae Mays – first days at school; advocated reading a book every day. Etta Fay Roseman – English class. Math was favorite subject; English least favorite. 1969 – schools officially integrated - last year Booker T. Washington was open
00:58:55	Words of wisdom for future generations