Civil Rights History Project
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Interviewee:	Mrs. Mary Jenkins
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Interviewer:	Will Griffin
Videographer:	John Bishop
Length:	00:40:47

John Bishop: And we're recording. So, Will, could you just say your name and Mrs. Jenkins' name, so we'll know at the beginning?

Will Griffin: I was going to give a little introduction.

John Bishop: That's okay. Thanks.

Will Griffin: Today is Saturday, March 9th, 2013. My name is Will Griffin, and I am a research associate with the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am with videographer John Bishop in Albany, Georgia, on the campus of Albany State University to conduct an interview for the Civil Rights History Project, which is a joint undertaking of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Library of Congress. We are here today with Mrs. Mary Jenkins, who played a role in the local Albany Movement.

Thank you so much, Mrs. Jenkins, for being here and agreeing to share your story with the Civil Rights History Project.

Mary Jenkins: Thank you for accepting me.

WG: Okay, can we begin with you stating your full name, date and place of birth?

MJ: My name is Mary Frances Jenkins Royal. I just messed that up, didn't I? [Laughs]

WG: And you were born when?

MJ: I was born in Waycross, Georgia, Ware County.

WG: Okay. What's the date of your birth?

MJ: Oh, 8/12/28.

WG: Okay, so August 12th, 1928. So, you were born in Waycross, Georgia. How long did you spend in Waycross, Georgia, before you—?

MJ: Well, not many years. When I was very young, I lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

WG: Oh, wow.

MJ: My father was killed in an automobile accident on Georgia highway. And when my mother remarried, we moved to Albany, Georgia.

WG: Okay. And how old were you when you moved to Albany? Do you remember?

MJ: When I moved to Albany?

WG: Yeah, about how old were you?

MJ: Oh, I was about eight or nine. I remember I entered the fourth grade.

WG: Okay, okay. So, when you came to Albany, what was the city like? Do you remember anything about it?

MJ: Well, yes, I remember [laughs] a lot about it.

WG: Okay.

MJ: I grew up in the Jim Crow era.

WG: Okay.

MJ: I sat in the balcony of the Albany movie theater. I drank from the separate water fountain. So, I know a lot about segregation as it existed. I remember when I was very young, walking through Kress Ten-Cent Store, and my mother was holding tightly to my hand. And a little white boy just about my age walked up and squirted a water pistol in my face. And I tried desperately to get away from my mother so that I could catch him. [Laughter] But she kept saying, "You can't."

WG: Um-hmm.

MJ: And pretty much, "You can't" has followed my life.

WG: Right.

MJ: You know, when my daughter was three years old, I took her to Tift Park, and she saw some white children getting on buses. Well, they were rides for them. And she said, "Mommy, I want to ride on that!" And I had to say the same thing to her that my mother said to me: "You can't."

And she turned around and beat her little fists against me, and she said, "*You* don't want me to ride!" How was I to explain the system to her? So, that meant that I had to take the blame.

WG: Okay. So, do you think—I mean, do you think—you know that your mother was probably trying to protect you.

MJ: Oh, definitely! Definitely! Anytime that we were in some sort of white situation, she was clinging, you know, to me, and I knew that.

WG: Okay. So, beyond those, what else do you remember—those memories about your mother—what else do you remember about her, in terms of her bringing you up and the other lessons she tried to instill in you as a person?

MJ: Oh, well, she—well, one thing I do know. She definitely wanted me to have a good education.

WG: Okay.

MJ: She never finished high school.

WG: Okay.

MJ: And so, she was definitely trying to convince me [sounds of mic being moved] that education is the key to everything we want in life.

WG: [Speaking closer to mic] And your—so, what did—was your mother primarily a homemaker? What did she do?

MJ: She was primarily a homemaker.

WG: Okay. And you said she was remarried, so your stepfather, what did—what was his profession?

MJ: My stepfather worked on the Coast Line Railroad—

WG: Okay. [05:00] What position?

MJ: So, we always could travel—

WG: Oh! Okay.

MJ: Half-fare.

WG: [Laughs] That's always good. So, the schools that you attended—what were the first schools that you attended in Albany?

MJ: Madison High School. Madison High School was all segregated, all-black school that I attended. And, of course, by being a segregated school, we received hand-me-down books. The equipment was not the modern kind for that day.

WG: Right.

MJ: But I think we had the best teachers in the world.

WG: Who were some of the most memorable teachers for you?

MJ: Ms. Ruth T. Kimbrough happened to be—

WG: Ruth T. Kimbrough?

MJ: The first black principal, female principal, in Dougherty County.

WG: And what do you remember about her?

MJ: I remember that she was very strict. And that you had to follow policies. I remember that quite well.

WG: Okay, alright. And were there any other teachers?

MJ: Well, I had Ms. Reynolds as a Home Economics teacher.

WG: Okay.

MJ: Ms. Thelma French, who was also a Home Economics teacher.

WG: Okay.

MJ: Ms. Olive Rogers was my English teacher, and many others.

WG: Okay. So, what do you remember about the instruction of the teachers? Were they—I mean, were they very protective of the students? Or did they—you know, you said some of them were disciplinarians, while others were mentors and so forth.

MJ: Well, you know, we don't have the problems that they have. You know, *we* didn't have the problems that they have today, thank God. [Laughs] But, yes, they disciplined us when

we did things that were wrong. But we didn't have—well, we *could* have corporal punishment [laughs], but it wasn't brutal or abusive, you know, in any way.

WG: You were never the type of person to [laughs]—

MJ: Well, no, it's just fortunate that I wasn't, really.

WG: Right. Okay.

MJ: While I was there, I served on many committees. I was the editor-in-chief of the high school annual my senior year.

WG: Okay. That was the school newspaper? Okay.

MJ: Um-hmm.

WG: And what other—do you remember any of your close friends from school that you stayed in touch with or stayed close to?

MJ: Yes, I have a very dear friend, Vashti Stubbs.

WG: Vashti Stubbs?

MJ: We were very close friends. I remember when I was giving the salutatorian address. And as I sat there waiting for my turn, I was so nervous, and she took my hand. And when I got up, I guess I did just fine [laughs] because I wasn't as nervous.

WG: Okay. So, when you graduate—so, you go on and you become the salutatorian of Madison High School and you graduate. Did you know at that point that you wanted to be a teacher?

MJ: I think I always wanted to follow in the footsteps of those who taught me.

WG: Okay, and you decided on Fisk?

MJ: I decided on being a teacher. At one point, I really wanted to be a writer. I wanted to write novels, fiction novels, but that didn't work out too well. [Laughs]

WG: [Laughs] Who were some of your favorite novelists that you were reading at that time? Do you recall?

MJ: At that time?

WG: Um-hmm.

MJ: My goodness! And they're right on the tip of my tongue, but I can't think of them.

WG: [Laughs] That's okay. Now, you decided to go to Fisk University. Who directed you in that—?

MJ: Well, I had a teacher that thought that Fisk might be a good school, liberal arts.

WG: Liberal arts school?

MJ: And I had to consider it, you know, a great deal, financially, you know, even though it wasn't as expensive as schools are now.

WG: Right.

MJ: But, anyway, my parents made it possible for me to attend.

WG: Okay. So, this is the first time you're away from home, and you're in Nashville, Tennessee?

MJ: It was. Well, at that age, it was the first time. [Laughs]

WG: [Laughs] Right.

MJ: Yes.

WG: What was that experience like?

MJ: Well, you know, my first year there—in fact, it's amazing that when I arrived on the campus of Fisk, [10:00] you wouldn't believe it. Almost the first day, they thrust a petition in my hand. They wanted to get rid of a teacher.

WG: Oh, wow.

MJ: And I didn't even know the teacher, had never met her, but they were so persuasive that I signed it. But fortunately, they didn't succeed. And later, she was the best teacher that I ever had.

WG: Oh, wow. Who was the teacher? Do you remember? Or what did she teach?

MJ: Well, she was in the arts. She was in the Little Theater, because I did belong to the Little Theater while I was there.

WG: Okay.

MJ: I took creative writing.

WG: Okay. What other activities at Fisk were you involved in?

MJ: Well, mainly the writing—

WG: Just the writing?

MJ: Other than my sorority.

WG: Okay.

MJ: But mainly the creative writing activities. I did plays for the Little Theater. In fact, my senior year—

WG: This was 1950.

MJ: My grade came from directing a play that was written by one of my teachers.

WG: Okay. [Faint sounds in background]

JB: We're not picking that up.

WG: Okay. So, after Fisk, where did you go? What did you decide to do? You graduated in 1950, I take it?

MJ: Well, you know, before I finished Fisk, I really went into the service.

WG: Oh, wow.

MJ: I stayed two years in the service.

WG: Okay.

MJ: And I got married while I was in the service.

WG: You married—who did you marry?

MJ: You see, I married two Jenkins. [Laughs]

WG: Two Jenkins? Roscoe Jenkins? Okay. And so, what was your experience like in the service?

MJ: Well, basic training—

WG: Basic training?

MJ: Was something that I had to really adjust to and get used to. That took place in Virginia. And then, I went to Fort Dix in New Jersey, which was, of course, Special Services. And I was transferred there and stationed at Fort Custer in Michigan.

WG: Michigan.

MJ: And I didn't have any problems.

WG: So, was it segregated at all?

MJ: Oh, yes!

WG: Still—was it still segregated?

MJ: It was segregated.

WG: Okay. And you didn't have no problems. So, you decided to leave? You decided not to stay after that?

MJ: Yes. I had my daughter, Sharon. And I knew then that I had a responsibility that I had to have a job.

WG: Right.

MJ: So, I decided, well, my mother's training—education. And I was only half-through at Fisk, so I decided to go back and finish.

WG: Oh, okay. So, after you finished, you decided to move back to Albany?

MJ: Albany, yes.

WG: Now, what brought you back here? Now, was Roscoe from Albany, as well?

MJ: No, he was from North Carolina.

WG: Okay.

MJ: But he went overseas.

WG: Okay.

MJ: And after that, you know, we divorced.

WG: Okay.

MJ: I came home, and a few years later, I married again.

WG: Okay. And when you first came back, did you immediately pursue a job in the school system?

MJ: [Clears throat] I did. But what happened, when I graduated from Fisk, I had a secondary certificate.

WG: Okay.

MJ: And the supervisor here promised me a job, but she was an elementary supervisor, which meant that I would have had to have had an elementary certificate. So, I went over to Albany State, spent a whole summer, trying to get an elementary certificate. But when I finished, the supervisor had, you know, filled the job—on time. She couldn't just wait for me.

WG: Right.

MJ: So, my pastor, Reverend E. James Grant, he was the principal at East Baker High School. He promised me the job. [Laughs]

WG: Okay. So, talk about the job. When you came into it, was it everything that you expected?

MJ: Oh, my goodness!

WG: What were some of the earliest challenges that you faced?

MJ: It was at Baker County—

WG: "Bad Baker" County.

MJ: That I learned the power, white power, what white power could do. And I knew that as soon as I could get out of Baker County, [laughs] I wanted to. [15:00] Two incidents happened. One involved a young man who somehow or another got involved in an incident over a weekend. It wasn't anything that required police. But, anyway, there were students who somehow took care of him and carried him home.

But early that Monday morning, somehow the information had gotten to the white supervisor, and she came over to the school. And she walked into his room and she told him, "Pack up! This your last day!" And it was. He had no recourse, no one to go to. In fact, her husband was the superintendent of Dougherty—of Baker County, school superintendent of Baker County. And so, that young man lost his job without being able to defend himself.

And then, the next incident that happened really happened at the end of my term there, and I think it was also the year that the Supreme Court ruled on desegregation in—

WG: 1954?

MJ: Yeah, in public schools. And she came over to the school and assembled all of the black teachers in a room and she talked for I don't know how long about how *wrong* it was for us to be together. And she had teachers that stood up and agreed with her.

WG: These were black teachers?

MJ: But I kept my seat [laughs] because I knew that I couldn't agree with all that she was saying. And then, at the end of her speech, she said this: She said, "They may make us go to school with you, but I would never invite one of you to my home."

WG: Wow.

MJ: I was through with Baker County.

WG: So, you left Baker County after one year and came to—

MJ: I came to Albany at Carver Junior High.

WG: Carter?

MJ: I was a teacher at Carver Junior High.

WG: And how was that—was it different? How different was it from Baker County? Or was there much difference?

MJ: Well, I'll tell you one thing. It was different in the environment, because actually when I taught in Baker County, it was like a barracks, an Army barracks.

WG: Okay.

MJ: So, it was quite different in—

WG: The actual school building was in an Army—?

MJ: Well, and then, I can't say that Dougherty County was any different, because they were adding on, but at that time, they had Army barracks in the back of the building. And for

about two months, I think, I had to teach in the barracks. I didn't have a room. And then, they moved me into the adjacent building to it.

WG: Okay. So, did you have chalkboards? I mean, what did you have?

MJ: Yeah, we had chalkboards, erasers, and—you know, yeah, we had that.

WG: Um-hmm, but still hand-me-down, second books?

MJ: Oh, yes! I don't think it was too different, you know, in that aspect.

WG: Okay. How were the students? I mean, did you have many problems out of the students?

MJ: Well, I had good students, some of them. You know, I look at what is happening today. We have *gangs*.

WG: Right.

MJ: But, you know, then we might have one person that could upset the whole school. And it was different then. And we could discipline then. And this is what we need now.

WG: Okay. So, this is probably the mid 1950s, '55, '56, that we're talking about? And what do you know about—?

MJ: Yeah, we're talking about '58, '59.

WG: Okay. So, this is when things—

MJ: Just a little before the Movement actually started.

WG: Right. So, what was taking place in the black community before the Albany Movement really took off?

MJ: You know, a lot of things were being done quietly. We weren't making the kind of noise that we made during the Albany Movement. But I recall that a group of men [clears throat] that had a Criterion Club.

WG: The Criterion Club.

MJ: And they had gone down to the city commissioners and requested that they organize a biracial committee so that some of the problems that blacks had could be resolved.

WG: Right.

MJ: But [20:00] they were turned down. And even Dr. Anderson, who was president of the Albany Movement—he lived in an area where, when it rained, sometimes they couldn't even get out of the front door. And he had gone down and talked about the situation. But he, too, was refused.

And even after the Movement was organized, at the very beginning, [clears throat] they had three representatives that went before the city commissioners and asked them [clears throat] to organize a biracial committee. And they were told that they had no way of doing that.

WG: So, the white establishment just refused?

MJ: Yes, the white establishment. Everything was all white, as far as the city commissioners and, you know—the government, so to speak.

WG: Okay. So, from my understanding, some of the earliest things that these people involved from the Criterion Club—one of the things that they pointed out that they wanted to discuss was the portrayal of blacks in the *Albany Herald* newspaper, how all the news that was being reported in the *Albany Herald* was all negative, and it was never any positive news about blacks.

MJ: Well, you must remember, too, that the *Albany Herald* was owned by one white man. The radio station was owned by one white man. [Laughs] So, everything, naturally, he dictated.

WG: Right.

MJ: His way. So, that, I guess, is why their complaints even there were ignored.

WG: Right. Okay. Did you read the *Albany Herald* or listen to the local radio stations at all?

MJ: Oh, yes! What else could you do [laughing] if you wanted to hear any news at all?

WG: Right.

MJ: So, yes, I read the *Albany Herald* and I listened to the TV station.

WG: Okay. So, were there any other sources of news outside of Albany, like black newspapers that circulated?

MJ: Oh, yes! We had the *Albany Southwest Georgian* that was edited by Arthur Searles, Sr.

WG: Okay. And any other newspapers outside of Southwest Georgia, like national black newspapers coming into the community?

MJ: No, unless—now, there were people who subscribed, you know, to outside papers, like, I think, the Americus, or Sumter, or something of that sort. But you had to subscribe to those papers.

WG: Okay. So, let's talk a little bit about the Albany Movement itself and how you came to be involved in it. Did someone approach you, or did you just make the decision that you were going to—let's—just take me back to that moment when the Movement was finally here in Albany, it had developed, and when you decided that you were going to participate.

MJ: Well, you know, you hear a lot of rumors about things that are going to happen before they happen.

WG: Right.

MJ: And so, I had heard that the—you know, about the Movement, and how it was going to be organized, and that kind of thing. So, I went to the first mass meeting.

WG: Where was this mass meeting?

MJ: Now, this was held at the Mount Zion Baptist Church under Reverend Grant.

WG: What do you remember about that, the meeting?

MJ: I remember the crowds. I remember the singing. I remember the crying. And people just making all kind of pleas, you know. And it was an emotional meeting, people banding together and singing along with—well, they weren't called Freedom Singers at *that* particular time, but they were the leaders of freedom songs, like Charles Sherrod and Bernice Reagon and Rutha Harris, you know.

And I was moved, because I wanted all of the "you can'ts" taken out of my life: the "you can't go to this restroom," "you can't eat in this restaurant." I wanted all of that out of my life, not only for myself, but I wanted it out for my children. I wanted them to have a better quality of life than I had, as far as segregation was concerned.

So, when I—after that meeting, I imagine one or two more meetings, Wyatt T. Walker came down. [Clears throat] [25:00] And he said, "We need some help in the office that was set up in Dr. Anderson's house for Dr. Martin Luther King." And so, I volunteered and I worked there, you know, for the time that Dr. King had his office there.

WG: Okay. What types of things were you doing in the office?

MJ: Well, I was answering the telephone, taking messages, and it was awesome sometimes. It was awesome, because Dr. King would walk in, thrust a number in my hand, and he would say, "I want to talk to such-and-such a person." They'd be famous people, and he would want me to contact them.

WG: Be responsible for calling them?

MJ: Um-hmm. Once he put a number in my hand that was for, um—oh, this calypso singer—God, I can't think of his name!

WG: Harry Belafonte?

MJ: Harry Belafonte! I couldn't *believe* that I was going to talk to Harry Belafonte! But I dialed the number and, sure enough, I *didn't*, because I was told that he wasn't in, but that Dr. King would get the message.

WG: Okay.

MJ: So, there were meetings that Dr. King had with just females.

WG: Wow.

MJ: He believed that women were the movers and shakers of the world.

WG: Absolutely.

MJ: And I learned that he was a listener. He might pose a question, but then he would stand back and listen to the comments, you know, that were made. So, that was quite an experience for me.

WG: Okay.

MJ: But as I sat in meeting after meeting and listened to the people who went to jail, and then they came back to the meetings and described how they were treated in jail, and I guess I began to think, "My goodness! They know Dr. Martin Luther King was here, and they know Sherrod, because he's everywhere!" I said, "But you have a lot of people, people will never know what happened to them, how they were treated, what they *sacrificed* for equality."

And so, I began to just take notes of what some of them were saying. Sometimes I would write on fans; I'd run out of paper in my purse. But I just thought that there should be something

about what was happening here for future generations. And so, mainly I was thinking about children who needed to know.

WG: Right.

MJ: And so, I wrote the book.

WG: Okay. So, but—

JB: Let's pause for just one second.

[Recording stops and then resumes]

JB: Okay, we're back on.

MJ: [Clears throat]

WG: Okay, so do you still have those feelings about—oh, do you have those fans that you wrote notes on, those fans you said you wrote notes on?

MJ: You know, [coughs] I've been trying to go through things that I have in my attic. I'm trying to put them all in a box, so that one day somebody might give them to the museum. [Laughs]

WG: [Laughing] I think we could probably arrange that to happen this weekend. So, I guess I want to back up a little bit about—what I know about Southwest Georgia and teachers who got involved in local movements, they were often threatened with intimidation and the threat of losing their jobs. Did that ever happen to you?

MJ: Well, nobody officially threatened my job, but we knew that if we were arrested that we would be fired.

WG: Okay.

MJ: And it was also rumored that they sent people to even check car tags at the mass meetings.

WG: Oh, wow.

MJ: So, we were all aware of that.

WG: So, was that a decision that you made not to march and get arrested?

MJ: It was a decision, even though there was one time when I thought I would. We were in Mount Zion Baptist Church, and Reverend Grant had just finished the sermon for that Sunday. And he made the statement, he said that, "After this," said, "I'm going to do something. I'm going to do it *for* myself and I can do it *by* myself." And he stepped out of that pulpit and—well, people, you know, they weren't going to let him do anything by himself.

WG: Right.

MJ: So, there were several people who got up. And I don't know what moved me. [30:00] I had my four-year-old son in my arms.

WG: Wow.

MJ: And I got up and got in line. But when I got to the door, my husband was standing there. And he gently pulled me out of the line, and I guess I lost my spirit. And, you know, that particular day, Chief Pritchett decided not to arrest anybody.

WG: That could have been your moment that you could have marched.

MJ: It could have been.

WG: Wow. So, I imagine you knew a lot of other teachers who—did you know any other teachers who marched?

MJ: Oh, yes! Oh, yes! [Clears throat] Now, when they started integration in the school, there were teachers who were, of course, sent into the all-white schools. And some of the experiences that they had were very humiliating, I thought. Because some of them—in one school, the black teachers had a whole hall by themselves, no white teachers there at all. And

when grading time came, in some schools, they would have to carry the report cards to the principal, so that he could see whether the white students had been given the proper grade.

WG: Wow.

MJ: So, there were a lot of humiliating incidents that occurred.

WG: Um-hmm, okay. So, you were getting ready to talk about your decision to write the book, *Open Dem Cells*, about the Albany Movement. What prompted you to want to do that? I mean, you always mentioned that you wanted to be a novelist?

MJ: I wanted to be a writer, and I can imagine that is why I was prompted to take notes about what was happening. I *wanted* it to be a book, but at that time, I really wasn't thinking of it being a book. It was really my daughter.

WG: When did you start the idea of even doing it?

MJ: Well, what happened was, my daughter—she's deceased.

WG: Okay.

MJ: But she knew I had all this material and she kept saying, "Mama, why don't you put it together in a book?" And, of course, I hesitated, you know—procrastinated, I guess I should say, and she passed.

WG: Oh, wow.

MJ: And I guess the one thing was in my mind was what she said to me. And so, that is why I started work on trying to put it together.

WG: Okay. Talk about the process of putting it together. Was it tough putting the book together?

MJ: Well, once I had the organizational technique for it, and I could just go through all the materials and place them according to the outline that I had. And so, *having* the material is what's important, you know, and I had that, so it turned out to be a fairly easy job.

The only problem that I had was that I didn't know anything about publishing a book, didn't really know who to go to talk to. And what I saw was a company that had done religious books. It was out of Columbus, Georgia. And my husband and I both, we decided after I had everything together, [clears throat] we would take it to this company, which we did. The publisher was—really was fantastic, I can say.

What I hadn't anticipated was the people behind the publisher, you know, the copy center, who was—I can see her now, a white lady, who I guess didn't like all of this material that was in the book. And I kept finding errors, you know, and I would go to the publisher and tell him. And, well, I had to pay for every mistake that was there, as if, I guess, it were mine.

WG: Right.

MJ: And so, finally what happened—I always say God stepped in, [laughs] because I sold out of the first edition. And the second edition—we picked up the books like on a Friday, and the company was closed, now, that weekend. I had a book signing that Saturday or Sunday. I can't remember which one of those dates. But when we went through the book, we found a page [35:00] where—you know, on a page where they're going to put a picture, where the picture goes, they have a blank spot. And the directions at the top says, "Drop here," and they didn't drop the picture. And printed all those books!

WG: Oh, wow.

MJ: So, I had a decision to make whether or not I would accept the book, you know, in my mind, and whether I would just not have the book signing. But everything was so close until I

said, "Well—" I decided I would have the book signing. I would explain about the mistake, and once it was corrected, then the persons that bought books would get the corrected copy.

WG: Okay.

MJ: So, that Monday morning early, my husband and I went to Columbus, Georgia. And, well, the publisher knew that it was his mistake and that he would have to account for it. He made *all kind* of offers to us so that he wouldn't have to redo the whole book. But my husband wouldn't accept it. So, finally, he said, "Okay, I'll redo the book." But when the book was printed, he didn't use "second edition"; he used "third edition." [Laughs]

WG: [Laughs] Okay. So, how did the community respond to your book, I mean, readers who were interested?

MJ: Oh, wonderful! I can't say anything about the community. They did—they were fantastic, really. That is why, I guess, the first edition went so fast.

WG: Right.

MJ: And then, we got into, well, really, the fourth edition.

WG: Okay. So, what—I mean, you've talked a little bit about the process of creating the book and getting it published. Do you think it accomplished—what were you trying to accomplish with the book? I mean—

MJ: Well, mainly to get information out.

WG: Just to get information out?

MJ: You know, I wish every black family had a copy of the book for their children.

WG: Right. Just to know—

MJ: But I'll tell you, now. Since then, I've thought about it. There's a lot of writing in the book, even though it says a pictorial history. And children like to look at pictures.

WG: Could you hold the book up?

MJ: And children like to look at pictures.

WG: Right.

MJ: But they're not that fond of reading.

WG: Right.

MJ: And since then, I have discovered that they like poetry. So, what I'm doing now is a book on—it's really on the Albany Movement, but it's done in poetry.

WG: Okay. And these will all be poems by you?

MJ: Yes.

WG: Okay. So, um—the Albany Movement and its impact on the community. Talk about that. How do you—do you think it was successful? Do you think there are some areas that have naturally—you know, that some work still needs to be done? What do you think it accomplished?

MJ: Well, I wonder how long it would have taken us to get where we are today had it not been for the Albany Movement. When I walk in stores or walk in banks and see black people behind the desks, this is what we accomplished. We might have gotten this far, but I don't know how long it would have taken without the Movement, you know, pressuring these issues. And so, I give credit to the Movement for where we are today.

And we must remember, too, that the journey is not over. You know, I look at—we've become so capitalistic, too. And I think of Dr. Martin Luther King and the legacy that he left us of *service* and *preparing young people* for the future, because the baton is in their hands now. And they must know what to do and how to do the things that need to be done.

You know, I was thinking about those young people who went into the bus station. That really was the beginning of the Movement. They didn't go there to break laws. You know, they went there to *enforce* laws, the ICC regulation. And those six girls that went into Albany High School, simply because C. B. King [40:00] struggled *eight* long years *after* the Supreme Court ruled on desegregation in public schools. So, and then, think now: the laws that helped us then are the laws that are being challenged now.

WG: Right, very true. Okay. Alright, well, I thank you. Is there anything else you would like to add to your story?

MJ: Well, I think I've said it all.

WG: Okay. Well, thank you so much, Mrs. Jenkins, for offering us your time to share with you and the Civil Rights History Project.

JB: Yeah, thank you. That was great.

[Recording ends at 40:47]

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Sally C. Council