

Civil Rights History Project
Interview completed by the Southern Oral History Program
under contract to the
Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History & Culture
and the Library of Congress, 2011

Interviewee: Dr. Robert B. Hayling
Interview Date: September 14, 2011
Location: Meeting room, Hilton Bayfront Hotel, St. Augustine, FL
Interviewer: Joseph Mosnier, Ph.D.
Videographer: John Bishop
Length: 1:54:48

John Bishop: We're rolling.

Joseph Mosnier: Uh, today is Wednesday, September fourteen, 2011. My name is – I'm hearing some voices, John. Do you want to pause for just –?

JB: Let's, let's finish the intro and then we'll pause.

JM: Okay. Um, Wednesday, July, September fourteen, 2011. My name is Joe Mosnier, uh, of the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I'm with videographer John Bishop. We are in St. Augustine, Florida, uh, at the Bayfront Hilton Hotel to do, um, interviews 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. And, um, broadly speaking, um, our host on this visit has been local civil rights, uh, pioneer Dr. Robert B. Hayling. And Dr. Hayling, thank you for all that you've done to make our visit possible and, and we're really looking forward to the conversation.

Dr. Robert Hayling: Thank you and we're so indebted to all of you who have made this possible. Thank you so much.

JM: Oh, well, uh, we're, we're delighted to have the chance to, to visit. Um, let me ask you to start today by just talking a little bit about, um, about your family, um, in, in Tallahassee, coming up.

RH: Yes. I was born in Tallahassee, Florida, November the 20th, 1929. My father was an instructor on the faculty of Florida A&M, which was college at that time in the industrial education department. His specialty was tailoring and my mother, for many, many years in our developmental years, was a homemaker, but she was out of New Orleans, Louisiana, of Creole extraction. My father was from Grenada and therefore, he had to acquire his citizenship and all, and he taught at Florida A&M for – I'll generalize, uh, because some say thirty-two and some say thirty-four, so I say thirty-three years. I, there were four children in the family. I have an older brother, Charles Hayling Jr., uh, who was eighteen months older than I am. I have a sister who is deceased now, Frances Hayling, and then my youngest sister, Yvonne Hayling Clarke is now retired, living in Sarasota, Florida. We all acquired our educations, bas-, basic education of college through Florida A&M and then went on. Every, uh, uh, child in the family acquired an advanced degree beyond a college degree and, um, the other three were involved in education and guidance and so forth.

And I was fortunate enough to go into the Air Force as a college graduate on August of, uh, 1951. After three months of basic training in the Air Force at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, I was admitted to the hospital or we said medical assisting training program that the Air Force had at Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Texas. And after I completed that training, I was, uh, admitted to the staff of the local hospital on the Air Force base as a medical

technician and there I served until, uh, to allow me time and to acquire the knowledge as a laboratory technician, to make an application to Officers Candidate School. And I was fortunate enough to be accepted and graduated from the Air Force Academy's, uh, Officers Candidate School. [5:00] Well, don't put academy. We can cross that out. It's just the Air Force, uh, Officers Candidate School. Uh, cross out "academy."

JM: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm.

RH: Yes, because we have the Air Force Academy now in Colorado Springs.

JM: That's right, now it does, yes.

RH: But, um, and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the class of, uh, 52D, which was December of 1952 and as luck would have it, I was assigned to an extremely good assignment of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, as an aero-medical researcher. And the biomedical laboratory that I was assigned to and my department field was toxicology, and our research ran from forensic to biological to all forms of, uh, toxicology and I enjoyed that work immensely and was way out of my class because as a lieutenant, those kinds of assignments were stranger than hen's teeth in that that's a plum to be assigned to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with all the in-depth and high-type research that was going on. And many times, all my peers were captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels and on up the line.

But after a period of time, I had carved out a space for a first lieutenant to participate and all and to my chagrin, after being accepted to dental school and asking for an early release from the Air Force to attend dental school, I was counter-offered with a promotion, an early promotion to captain if I would consent to stay and continue the work that I was involved in. I said, "No way." All my life, I had always wanted to be a dentist or a veterinarian and once I was accepted to dental school, there was no turning back even though in the interim period, I had married my

college sweetheart and brought her as a schoolteacher from Miami, Florida, to Dayton, Ohio. And we enjoyed a year of whatever because she was the homemaker as the wife and had the privileges to the officers' club and to the camp, um, commissary for shopping and everything else. And we also had acquired a Boxer puppy, a dog, and we named the dog Madonna. And, um, we enjoyed training, watching the dog grow and training the dog and all the activities.

And she had, uh, real misgivings about giving up that line of livelihood and also status of living because we were still in the very segregated phases of America and even though we were in Ohio and everything else, we didn't feel extreme pressures or whatever, but, um, we knew that a wave of change was sweeping over the USA. And, um, she consented even though we had to break up the apartment and everything else and all and she went back to Miami to live with her parents and everything else and, uh, spent some time in Tallahassee with my parents and while we were getting adjusted because, um, everything was so, school started in, uh, '55, September.

JM: At Meharry [Medical College, Nashville, TN].

RH: And, at Meharry, and we had to kind of break down everything else and whatever and, um, get her situated and all and then get me into Nashville and all in, in short order. But we made the necessary adjustments and I found that the, uh, adjustment to studying took a period of time and especially with my peer group of recently [10:00] out of college and many had advanced degrees and everything in the various medical fields. And so it, I fortunately had the honor of graduating with a class where one of our top, top scholars in my class eventually rose to be the dean of the dental school at Meharry and all. And, uh, so Fred Fielder and now he's retired and everything and, uh, but, uh, that's, and many of the other class members, uh, attained tremendous honors and, uh, credits in their chosen field and several went on to be, um, uh, part-time entrepreneurs and, um, financial consultants.

JM: Sure.

RH: And, and things like that.

JM: May, may I ask about your –

JB: Can we pause for a second?

JM: Okay, we're going –

[Recording pauses.]

JB: We're on.

RH: Alright.

JM: We're back after a very short break to, for a quick adjustment to the microphones.

Um, Dr. Hayling, I wanted to ask, um, there's, there's so much that we could spend time on. I would love to hear about your experience in dental school, but since our focus broadly today is civil rights, let me ask about, you were in Nashville during some very interesting years and became involved, um, with some folks who would, like yourself, have very important roles in the Movement as it continued to, to develop. And I wonder if you could talk a little bit about Nashville and how you became engaged in that kind of work and activism.

RH: Yes, um, as a student, I was, uh, aware of the civil rights activities of Nashville, but not intimately involved, but my jurisprudence or dental law instructor was Z. Alexander Luby and it ended up that he was the lead attorney for the desegregation of the Nashville, uh, or the Tennessee area public schools and it produced the occasion of having his home dynamited and he was on a street adjacent to the dormitory that I was living in at Meharry. And the morning that they dynamited the front part of his house blew out windows of the dormitory, some windows in the dormitory that I was housed in. It happened that the wing that I was in of the dormitory was further away from his house. So I can't claim that it blew out the window in my room, but, um, I

was a marshal in the dormitory and so forth and therefore, we were concerned about the glass cleanup and getting the windows covered and everything else because it was, um, the exact date I cannot say, but being school time, school started in September. I can furnish the exact date. I have that, um, with me, but, uh, the leaders of the Movement that I ended up making acquaintance with were John Lewis, Diane Nash, C. T. Vivian, uh, Lafayette, uh, I would have to get Lafayette's first name.

JM: Bernard.

RH: Bernard Lafayette and, uh, James Bevel. And all of these ended up being leaders in latter years in the Civil Rights Movement and all, and even James Bevel and Diane Nash married and they divorced later on, but I think they produced a family out of that, siblings actually, uh, produced children out of, of that union and all. And I had to get an excuse. I don't remember now whether I went to the infirmary for illness or I slipped out of a class or what have you, but I had to be part of the march because students from Fisk University and, um, Tennessee A&I University in Nashville and all had a mass march on city hall in Nashville for a protest [15:00] and all with the dynamiting of Mr. Luby's home. And that was a great day and everything else, and I think it brought the powers that be in Nashville to their senses that something had to be done and it went on that an action or even I would almost say school desegregation went further rather than to be resisted or, uh, set back or anything like that.

JM: Was that the first occasion when you would have taken an active role in a civil rights demonstration?

RH: Ah, I would have to say and check on the years and times.

JM: Yeah.

RH: But my visits back to Tallahassee, Rev. C. K. Steele and then we had, um, Patricia Due [Patricia Stephens Due of Tallahassee, who married civil rights attorney John D. Due Jr.], and [Patricia Stephens' sister] Priscilla Due [he misspoke; Priscilla's surname was Stephens], there were two movements in Tallahassee going on. One dealt with the desegregation of the movie theaters and I think restaurants, and C. K. Steele led the movement to the transportation system, the buses, the bus system, uh, in Tallahassee. And his movement was so powerful that it led to the bankruptcy of the bus system and all and now at the bus station in Tallahassee, there's a life-sized monument of C. K. Steele for all the world to see.

And I had also made the acquaintance of Patricia and her husband, who was John Due, who came here as a young attorney to help us in St. Augustine and they went on to achieve prominence in the civil rights field and they also wrote a book or co-wrote a book called *Freedom in the Family* and to this day, they are still speaking and touring and attending conferences and meetings. I'm speaking of their ventures because the most prominent one that I remember, these two young ladies were housed in a jail cell setup in Tallahassee with wire fencing around them in a setup where they had access to, I think, a commode or a facility and a face bowl, but no, uh –

JM: Privacy.

RH: Privacy. And they had to guard each other, take off their clothes, and shield the other one as best as possible to try to retain some sense of dignity when taking care of their personal needs and all. And I still don't know at this time how a city like Tallahassee, because Tallahassee was the seat at that time of Florida State University for Women and the University of Florida in Gainesville was for men, and I should say for *white* women and *white* men and all. And then we had Florida A&M, um, College at that time in Tallahassee and was the capital. So we weren't

talking about some backwoods, uh, outback-type community and all, but there were extreme battles and resistance for Tallahassee for complying and to racial desegregation. But, uh, all of these magnificent people and, uh, Rev. C. K. Steele and Rev. Dan Speed made trips from Tallahassee to come to our freedom rallies in St. Augustine and many times spoke either was the principle speakers or auxiliary speakers for the various rallies, and naturally, they sent us financial support.

JM: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm. Tell, tell me if you would about, um, how the experience in Nashville in those years you were in, in dental school, how it shaped your emerging sense of what role, if any, you might have in ongoing civil rights activities.

RH: Had, at this point in time, had no idea [20:00], never, ever thought about leading a movement or participating. Naturally, I would attend rallies and I was a proud NAACP card-carrying member and things like that.

JM: How did you make your choice to come to St. Augustine?

RH: Alright. I had, uh, Florida had a educational system set up because Florida did not have dental schools and, uh, at that time, the white students from Florida went to Emory University in Atlanta, the dental school, and the Meharry was given a supplement or a bonus of a thousand dollars per year for any black male or female attending dental school from the state of Florida. And therefore, I think along with my service record or academic record or what have you, helped me gain entrance to Meharry because the school, in addition to all of my tuition and all and then I would also have to admit because of my service in the Air Force, I had the benefit of the GI Bill and that made, uh, my educational finances at Meharry a bit able to, um, shall we say, uh, carry itself or at least not put me in, in an extreme hole that many students have today for having to borrow money.

JM: Sure.

RH: Or make student loans and so forth.

JM: Sure.

RH: I also had the good fortune of working in New York each summer as a skycap for the Port Authority System of New York, and I was a skycap at Newark Airforce, Newark Airport of Newark, New Jersey, from twelve o'clock at night until eight o'clock in the morning and from June until Labor Day, I worked many times six and seven days a work. And in the daytime, I served lunch or dinner at a big two-story restaurant in New York in Sheepshead Bay, which is on the way to Coney Island and this magnificent seafood restaurant and, uh, from anywhere from four to four thirty to five o'clock in the evenings until eight thirty or nine o'clock at night, caught the subway up to Grand Central Station and the bus over to Newark Airport.

And this was enhanced in that my relatives, my father's sister, Aunt Hester, and other relatives and all gave us accommodations for living because my wife came up to be with me and all and she enjoyed playing the role of the wife because we had a system that once I got to Grand Central Station, I would call them and they would get my tub, my bathwater and everything else ready and all and my breakfast. When I came in, I had breakfast and had a good hot bath to go to bed to get in some sleep time between arriving in Brooklyn and having to be at the restaurant for 4:00 to 4:30 in the evenings.

But this restaurant and that experience was so magnificent because they used between a hundred to a hundred and fifty waiters at a time. This was a massive place and they were world famous for seafood. They owned their own shrimping boats and fishing boats and everything else. And many blacks, especially young black males on the road up because Howard University in Washington, D.C., furnished law students and medical and dental students and then I don't

remember, yes, two or three of Meharry students also joined us as waiters in, in New York. But I don't think many of them stuck throughout the entire summer. The turnover at this restaurant was so if you had a buddy system and could get in through the hiring mechanism, you could work weekends or strategic times and so forth.

JM: Yeah. Let me, let me bring you back to, um, that, that was a strategy, obviously, for, for surviving financially during, during [25:00] the dental school years. How did you make your choice to come towards, um, St. Augustine?

RH: Okay. I had acquired a convertible Volkswagen, red bottom with a white top, and we had an additional automobile. So after taking the dental exam in Florida for, um, the, um, efficiency or what is called the Dental Board Exam, July the 4th weekend of, uh, 1960, and there's a time period where the scores have to be evaluated and everything else and all and where you would know whether you were permitted to practice dentistry in the state of Florida. So I started on the east coast of Florida, went all the way down through visiting the various cities where, and especially that had black dentists, and all down to, I went all the way to Key West and then came back on the west side up through the Sarasota and then into Tampa and all of that area and then went all the way out to Pensacola and came back to Tallahassee.

And so it ended up, of the cities that I evaluated, St. Augustine had a very prominent dentist who had met a tragic automobile accident, encountered early death and all, Rudolf Gordon, and his office facilities were available. And in Panama City, two brothers, the Buford brothers [Dr. Edward T. Buford Jr. and Dr. Clinton H. Buford, African American brothers, who were practicing in Panama City, FL, by the late 1940s], one was a dentist and the other one was a physician and they had built a nice office facility in Panama City. And after evaluating and all, I,

being located in Panama City, I would have been ninety miles from Pensacola or ninety miles from Tallahassee.

So I was sitting out there in the panhandle and what have you and somehow I am one, because even in St. Augustine and I hate to admit this, but I used to get in my car and drive at night after I finished my office hours to Jacksonville to some of the night spots or some of the late night restaurants just to meet civilization because one of my first comments through the various people was they rolled up the sidewalks in St. Augustine at sundown and, uh, which isn't totally true. I found they drew the curtains and the people had their affairs or what have you or parties inside, that the general public didn't know about.

But, uh, it was a wonderful thing to have Mrs. Gordon, the widow of Dr. Gordon, uh, accept me and also offer to introduce me to her, uh, constituency or his other, uh, older patients and all. And so in December of, uh, '60, we had a housewarming and everything else and it was a bit delayed or put off and all to a certain point because Dr. Gordon was a chain cigar smoker and the entire office reeked of the very expensive Cuban cigars that he bought by the carton and he was a gregarious kind of, of charismatic fellow, spoke three languages and dabbled in two others. And his practice was fifty to sixty or sixty to seventy percent white and I kind of inherited that kind of goodwill and all. So my practice started off with a boom because many people came in saying that they hadn't been to the dentist in the two years or eighteen-month period when the office was non-functional. So that made it quite well.

I was also accepted as the city jail dentist, [30:00] the county jail dentist, and the state prison farm dentist of the city, of the County of St. Johns and the city of St. Augustine. Now it ends up that that wasn't totally because of my professional capabilities and all, but many of the white dentists, because if they brought you patients from the jail, the attending, um, officer had

to have a sidearm, a pistol on his waist and many patients and even the nurses in the doctor's office felt uncomfortable with that and so I, being a, a start-up dentist, blocked off periods of time. Now I didn't refuse walk-ins, but I scheduled no patients at the time that they would meet in my reception room going or coming or being there because even when I had the patient in the treatment room, the officer – we would leave the doors open and so forth so they could hear what was going on and what was taking place. But they generally stayed out in the reception room or stood in the doorway and all with the treatment that was being administered. Many of the deputies came to me as private patients and what have you and I don't mind saying now because of that contact and everything, their general treatment was usually on the house and even to the point that the gov, the, uh, sheriff, L. O. Davis [St. Johns County Sheriff], who was also a chain cigar smoker, had been to my office as a patient and –

JM: And you mentioned that you typically did not charge white law enforcement. Is that – ?

RH: Uh, I think, um, anyway, it was set up in St. Augustine, uh, because of the economy of St. Augustine, I had to devise a self-finance payment system. Therefore, very few of my patients paid, shall we say, out of pocket, cash. So if they made a deposit and all and started some payment on a treatment plan that we had rigged up for them, we would expect pay – monthly payments or whenever they said they could afford to pay. So, um, I definitely would not say they didn't pay anything, but they knew that there was nobody breathing down their necks or any hardship about finances for the various treatments that they required to the point that many of them brought their wives and their children and especially for checkups and for dental evaluations.

JM: Yeah, yeah. I, I may have not put my question very clearly. I, I thought you said that you didn't charge white law enforcement as a group and wondered if there was a reason for that.

RH: We only had one black deputy sheriff.

JM: Yeah, right.

RH: Okay, and we had a black who, Fred Waters, who patrolled the black community, Lincolnville, at night.

JM: Right, right.

RH: He was permitted to have a pistol, but he had civilian clothes.

JM: Yeah. Was there anything coercive about the arrangement with someone like L. O. Davis coming to your business that you would have been worried about billing him?

RH: Not at the time. I didn't become, uh, uh, shall we say, radioactive – [laughter]

JM: Until later.

RH: Until I got involved with civil rights.

JM: Right, right.

RH: Uh, before then, I was a good fellow.

JM: No, I know. Anyway, I was just, I, I wondered if maybe you were trying to suggest that –

RH: Yes.

JM: That you were, in effect, had no real choice but to, but to provide service to people like L. O. Davis without charge.

RH: Never, ever, no, no arrangement, no formal arrangement –

JM: That wasn't an issue.

RH: Was ever made or anything like that.

JM: So they paid their bills, somebody like L. O. Davis.

RH: But it was definitely, it was known ahead of time –

JM: Oh okay. I just misunderstood.

RH: That whatever treatment administered was on the house or whatever.

JM: Oh it was on the house.

RH: Yeah.

JM: Well, let me move on to the [clears throat], let me move on the question of between your settling in and opening your practice in late 1960 and all of what will begin to happen in '63, can you tell me the story of how in that span of a couple years, you moved towards what would become the prominent leader, leadership position in the local movement?

RH: Well, nothing was structured. [35:00] I'd heard later that the NAACP, since we moved under the banner of the NAACP –

JM: Initially, yeah.

RH: Had sent me to St. Augustine to lead the movement and so forth and all. Well, if the NAACP could ever arrange to send a professional person to an area or to, uh, help establish a movement or a chapter or something, they would really be, uh, way above the, uh, status that I knew of. Uh, I had made certain contacts within the community and gotten to know many of the young people either as adolescents, uh, uh, youngsters who I had encountered in my visits in opening, uh, relationships with various organizations within the city and all. And they had also started a movement.

Audrey Nell Edwards [now Hamilton] mentioned yesterday that they had been meeting and it was under the advisorship of Rev. Thomas Wright, who was a local minister, Baptist minister, and also an instructor at the black college, Florida Memorial College in St. Augustine.

His wife was an elementary school teacher. But once they got started as youngsters as a youth group and a protest movement, the establishment looked into it and found out that Rev. Wright was the advisor. His wife was fired from the school system and pressure was put on the college to get him to cease his sponsorship of the youth council and all, and when he refused to do that, he had to leave St. Augustine and move his family to Gainesville, Florida, and he acquired a good Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Gainesville, Florida, and, uh, Mrs. Wright went over to Gainesville and acquired a job as a schoolteacher. And as luck would have it, his oldest daughter was the first black to integrate the high school of Gainesville, Florida.

JM: How about that, yeah.

RH: So he kept on with the Movement even though he had to leave St. Augustine. Well, a delegation of youngsters came to my office and ended up asking me, that they had lost their advisor, would I consider advising them and helping them with, uh, the movement that they had started. And at that time, as far as I know, it was only picketing and demonstrating and carrying picket signs and things and all.

JM: So it's 1963.

RH: Yes, okay.

JM: Yeah.

RH: And so, uh, the management and the owners of the various shops were not moved. In other words, they tolerated it and naturally many of them had to be instructed as to how to stay on the sidewalk, how to keep moving and all, and only certain numbers would be allowed per establishment and all. And we made a, a valid attempt to follow all of the rules.

JM: Why did you, why did you –

JB: [makes request for a brief pause]

JM: We're going to pause.

[Recording pauses.]

JB: We're back.

JM: We're back after a short break. Dr. Hayling, what were the reasons you decided to agree to take on that role as advisor and can you talk too in the answer maybe a little bit about the structure of the local NAACP and how that leadership structure would have related to this group of adolescents?

RH: I never considered the racial climate of St. Augustine as being, uh, antagonistic. In fact, I guess my entry into the community had not been that deep in that, uh, all of the drugstores had no problem in filling my prescriptions for all pain medication or anything else that I would prescribe and the relationship was very good over the telephone and all. [40:00] I'll admit now looking back that I don't think I had ever made an in-person visit to those various establishments, but even then, it would have been a walk in and a walk out because I don't think I was to that point of trying, as my young people eventually got around to saying all they wanted was a hamburger and a Coke. But that was what we had to devise for the news media, uh, in the end because, uh, at the lunch counter when you sat down, if the waitress asked you what can I serve you or what do you want, they would usually say, "I want to order a hamburger and a Coke," and that was acceptable. But as I said at the time, we had no great overall structure. I don't ever remember receiving any, uh, instructions on how to carry out a movement from the NAACP, especially a youth movement and all.

JM: Did, did you talk in these, in these days with the women who were heading up the community chapter of the NAACP?

RH: Yes, yes. A lady by the name of Fannie Fullerwood was the president of the local NAACP chapter and, um, Mrs. Hawthorne, I think it's, uh, Elizabeth Hawthorne was the secretary for the NAACP and she offered herself as, uh, secretary for our youth council and all. And Mrs. Hawthorne rode a bicycle and she lived on the west, on the north side of town and we [coughing] were considered on the south side. And she would ride across the city even though she had a mental, a back deformity and back in those days, that, um, ailment was referred to as hunchback and, uh, but she had a beautiful personality and, uh, did excellent secretarial work and we were so fortunate to have her because, uh, she was my stabilizer at the time.

Uh, Mrs. Fullerwood, through the regional director of the NAACP, a lady by the name of Ruby Hurley, who was headquartered in Atlanta, had gotten wind of the movement in St. Augustine and, uh, word had filtered back up through the, uh, line of communication that the youth had ideas of stepping up the non-responsive picketing and demonstrating methods that they had been using. And, um, they intervened and said that, uh, the NAACP was not ready to take on a major movement, uh, in St. Augustine because of the size and the economy of St. Augustine.

Well, to counterbalance this, the St. Augustine, the city of St. Augustine was getting ready to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of the city and the federal government had appropriated four hundred thousand dollars to the city to help celebrate and commemorate the entire anniversary period and all. Not one black, even though at the time the black population was somewhere close to twenty percent of the city, had been appro – had been appointed to [traffic or airplane noise] any of the committees involved with the complete year of celebrating the 400th anniversary. And that was a wakeup call to the racial attitudes of St. Augustine because we had black principals of the various schools. We had a black who was superintendent of the

black schools, Mrs. Reddick, and all. And so, and then we had black professors at the college, [45:00] Florida Memorial College, and the president, Dr. [Royal] Puryear, was considered an erudite, educated person who would have been very, uh, appropriately appointed to any committees and so forth and all.

Well, we finally came down to the fact that the city was having a big anniversary dinner, a, a complete day of celebration that included the, uh, ambassador from Spain, a visit by the Vice President of the United States and naturally, the two senators and the representatives, the governor and his cabinet and all. We had many, many dignitaries in St. Augustine for that particular day to celebrate and attend the dinner, the big formal dinner at –

JM: And, and this would have been late spring 1963.

RH: Yes.

JM: Yeah.

RH: At the Ponce de Leon Hotel, which is a big magnificent edifice that was, uh, so suited because they had a grand ballroom, uh, dinner room and all. So we fired off – “we” – I fired off a letter to the Vice President to ask him not to attend this segregated function and all because of the exclusion of the black citizenry. And it generated enough heat that Lyndon Johnson at the time sent in his representative, a fellow by the name of George Reedy, about at least a week ahead of the appropriated time for the dinner and all and he made many visits to my office, met with many of the other people involved and what have you because the news media had gotten wind of the letter and all and they could see that the, uh, pressure was being generated because we had offered the idea that we were going to demonstrate or boycott or do something for this because of the exclusion of the black citizens of St. Augustine.

Well, Mr. Reedy – and being neophytes in this tremendous precious game, pressure game, convinced us that the Vice President was interested and had, uh, read the letter and all and had agreed that if we did not picket or demonstrate or do anything to disrupt the flow and the feeling of the city at that time, that he would do his best to see that something was done about it. And we had enough sense, I guess, to say, “Well, will we be attending?” They went one ahead of us and said, “Yes, six.” It was either six or eight that they agreed could attend and we thought at the time we were going to be seated in the grand ballroom, but when we arrived, we were seated in an alcove that looked down on the grand ballroom. [clears throat] The only whites that we had the dinner with were, um, the –

JM: Secret Service.

RH: Secret Service and FBI agents. Now many didn't identify themselves one way or the other and I may have to check with others, but I think Mr. Reedy stayed and ate with us.

JM: I see, I see.

RH: And we were still such neophytes in this high pressure game that we agreed to the next morning of a meeting and we thought we were going to meet with the city commission and the mayor.

JM: That had been your request and that was the bargain.

RH: Yes.

JM: Yeah.

RH: And that was agreed to, we thought. We came again dressed in our little Sunday go-to-meeting clothes and [50:00] we got to the designated place and there was the mayor's secretary and her tape recorder. Not a single commissioner, not the mayor, and not one representative from Washington.

JM: So no Mr. Reedy.

RH: No Mr. Reedy or anyone representing him. So we had really been outfoxed, but we still didn't know any better. Each member presented their name and address and their position and the various amounts of their involvement with the request because our main request at the time was a biracial committee to hear and at least, uh, give the agreed black citizens the permission to air their grievances before a formal city board or whatever. The secretary played the tape so that we knew we were on tape and everything and thanked us for coming, and we left. To this day, as far as I know, we never, ever received a response to that request.

They outfoxed us another way that they took the black policeman, who functioned in Lincolntonville, the black community at night, as the police force in that area who wore civilian clothes, but he was allowed to have a pistol they called a sidearm, dressed him in a police uniform and a cap and all, and put him right downtown St. Augustine around what was known then as the slave market, which is a main traffic area directing traffic on the bay. A news reporter broke down the door at my office coming in, "Dr. Hayling, Dr. Hayling, I thought you said you didn't have a black policeman on the force and all."

JM: That was the day of the big dinner.

RH: That was the day of the dinner and all.

JM: Wow, yeah, yeah.

RH: And he had a presence in the city. So that kind of, that was an attempt to say that we had made a false request.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

RH: Because they had a black policeman and all.

JM: You, you soon will become quite strategic then in your subsequent decisions about how to proceed and carry the Movement forward. So I'd love to have you talk about how you were feeling after George Reedy episode and how you decided to recalculate and move forward.

RH: Uh, I wish I could say we had a battle plan or a strategy, uh, but many times with the various defeats that we encountered, we had to gather our forces and go back to our think tanks and everything because within a certain, uh, I'm going to use a word, we had been outfoxed. And we had been made to look a bit chagrined in that the establishment was fully in charge and, uh, they were able to say that you are making false claims or you are not stating the truth in your accusations and so forth. So we had to counter that and at the same time, the pressures from the national office and the regional office of the NAACP, uh, had started saying, "You are generating more heat than we are prepared to deal with," because it meant that various lawsuits and at least public exposure to the media that the city had betrayed us and that the bicentennial committee celebrating the anniversary and everything else and we had considered filing a lawsuit to try to stop the usage of the federal funds and all.

JM: Quadricentennial, yeah, yeah, yeah. [55:00]

RH: Yeah.

JM: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm.

RH: And, uh, so it meant that we were getting a bit too large for our britches.

JH: So did that news come to you by telephone typically? Your phone would ring and it would be Ruby Hurley or someone else passing on that kind of request.

RH: She made, she made visits.

JH: I see, made visits too, yeah.

RH: Yeah, yeah, I think so, yeah.

JH: To try to, yeah

RH: And we had dinner –

JH: Yeah.

RH: – at the various. We had a restaurant right across the street from my office at that time and, uh, that restaurant was a godsend because Mr. Pennington was the owner and the operator and he had an arrangement with me that any of the demonstrators, anybody who came in town and was connected with Dr. Hayling and the youth movement and all could go and get a meal. He had world famous – they custom made their ice creams using peaches and bananas and fresh fruit and everything else. So the ice cream was world famous and all. And he would come—he had a routine at the end of the day—and rap on the back of my door at the office: “Dr. Hayling?” “Yes, come on in.” “I fed six people and we had dinners and this and that.” “Okay, Mr. Pennington. Come and give me a chance.” And we issued him a check.

JM: I see, I see.

RH: Or cash money for whatever he had, uh, contributed at that time.

JM: Right.

RH: At this point I also want to give thanks to the Elks members because they eventually made a facility on the second floor of what then was known as the Elks Rest and, uh, available to us for meetings and for conferences because we had a large portion of the media people gathering then, and the TV camera people and all gathering because they had to have, uh, an area to set up their cameras and what have you and all.

JM: How, how did the, how did the members –

JB: Pause for just a sec.

JM: Okay.

[Recording pauses.]

JB: We're back.

JM: Okay, we're back from break. How did the, um, the young, uh, members of the, of the youth, uh, council, how did they respond after the episodes you've described with the big dinner and Johnson's visit and the, the outfoxing and, um, how did you manage your relationship with them? What, what was the character of that relationship? What was your role? How did your role of advisor unfold?

RH: Well, it was a, a dual-head movement in that none of the youth were involved in the negotiations and none of the youth were involved in attending the dinners. At that time, I had acquired the support and I guess the collaboration of Mr. Henry Twine, Mr. Oscar Turner, uh, Mr. Clyde Jenkins, uh, I would have, and I think even then initially, I think Rev. [Thomas] Wright was still in town and many of us. It ended up that we had six or eight members that could be relied upon to be spokespersons and attend meetings and conferences and all because now we had on paper the, uh, request for the biracial committee and we had enumerated, uh, things like allowing blacks to take the fireman's examination, allowing blacks to take the police examination so that they could either qualify or begin to make arrangements to see if they could gain employment in those various departments. At that time, other than janitorial and maid service, no blacks worked at city hall and all and even with the county administration, the same was the thing.

So we had done our homework on the actual local situation and therefore, we presented them with the facts that – as we saw it and very few ever bothered to counter those, uh, facts or presentations that we made, but and the young people never demanded [60:00] that they be intimately involved. They were, uh, content, apparently, to allow the senior citizens and we

would almost say like property owners and, uh, prominent people of the area. Now in the meantime, the establishment had notified all the black schoolteachers and, and, uh, also notified Dr. Puryear and all that because at that time, the school, the college had three hundred to four hundred full-time and part-time students, plus a staff of I would say fifty to a hundred part-time and full-time faculty members. If we could have corralled that type of human, uh, energetic power, we wouldn't have needed any outside help, but they cut us off at the knees in that all of these people were instructed that they were not to be involved or they would be in real trouble and that threat was so, uh, truthful that many people were totally fearful to the point that they contributed, I think, under the table, but there was no outward, uh, showing of support.

JM: Yeah.

RH: And even many of the young people – and we had college students who broke ranks and came with us who were literally threatened by their instructors because they had to make, make up work and work in the exams that were administered on certain days. One or two instructors almost refused and we had to let them know that if they did not give this person, uh, makeup work and so forth, the school would be in jeopardy of a lawsuit and what have you and all. So we had several battles going on and we had junior law students and law aides, but we were able to acquire the services of a Tobias Simon out of Miami, who was ACLU attorney and a tremendous fireball civil rights activist and he was taken away from us all too soon. He participated in the Boston marathons and had run a very credible time and everything else and all and within a day or two after completing that race and all, he suffered a heart attack and died.

JM: Can you, can you tell me about, um, how you responded, um, in the summer of '63 as the, as the momentum heated up on the occasion when some students went downtown and

were arrested in what would lead to the hearing in front of Judge Mathis [county judge Charles Mathis]?

RH: Yes. Well, in the meantime, we also had a prominent St. Augustine fellow who was a student in North Carolina. I'm going to say A&T, uh, but I, I would stand corrected if it's not, but I know it was in and his name was Hank Thomas, Henry Thomas, before I go further to say he has since gone on to become an extreme entrepreneur on two or three McDonalds in Atlanta and two or three Marriott, uh, hotels and so we are very, very proud of Hank Thomas.

JM: And had been a Freedom Rider.

RH: And was a Freedom Rider and all. But he even did a one man sit-in at one of the drugstores and all and was arrested and his bond was a hundred dollars. And at that time, that was a big bond and through the grapevine and all, the NAACP let it be known that Sammy Davis, Jr. had put up the hundred-dollar bond to get Hank Thomas out of jail. But also part of the instructions from the local establishment [1:05:00] was, "Get him out of town." [laughs] So after he was released, he had to leave St. Augustine and all, but at least the, um, uh, Movement had been started because, uh, the word came throughout the community and all that Hank Thomas had been arrested and retained overnight, but was released after the NAACP had ponce – had posted the, uh, hundred-dollar bond. And, uh, so, but the tie-in that we did not know at the time of Sammy Davis Jr. and putting up the, the bond money and all.

And we had to escalate our movement in that the young people got tired of coming and being instructed in non-violence and having, uh, conferences and presentations and all because they became conscious of the newspaper publicity and so forth and many of them didn't take newspapers at home. So whenever we came across articles and news of interest and all, we made sure that all of the members attending our various youth movements had access to that bit of

information because many of them had parents and, uh, family members working throughout the community. So various people had relationships with, uh, as we heard yesterday and all, Mrs. [Gwendolyn] Duncan [president, the 40th Anniversary to Commemorate the Civil Rights Demonstrations, Inc., a non-profit established in 2003 to promote awareness of local movement history] mention that Mayor Shelley [Dr. Joseph A. Shelley], who was a practicing physician, was her family physician and all. And even I had met Mayor Shelley at various medical and dental conferences and meetings in that I had been accepted to the local dental association and had gained active membership and all.

JM: As the first African American dental member, yeah.

RH: As the first, yes, and that through the local membership qual – uh, qualified me for state membership. So I was able to attain the rank of the first African American dentist admitted to the local county state chapter of the American Dental Association with full membership and privileges. Others, I think, had, black dentists in various locations had been kind of made honorary membership, but not practicing. But as luck would also have it, the Dental Association rotated their, uh, positions in the organization and when it came time for election of officers, I went to that meeting, but apparently enough pressure had been put on the dentists that they said the meeting had been canceled and all because I would have been in line since it was a rotating, uh, position and what have you. If they had allowed me to vote at that time and get in line, I could have moved up and they had envisioned over a period of time I could have ascended to full presidency or leadership of the local chapter and organization. So that meeting was cancelled and I think by then it had become known that, um, they had, uh, created kind of a, a misstep or sin –

JM: Yeah, yeah.

RH: In that, uh, uh, various times I knew about the other meetings by other dentists calling me saying, “Are you coming to the meeting tonight and all?”

JM: Yeah.

RH: And then I would have to say, “Oh is there a meeting?”

JM: Yeah.

RH: And whatever else. The secretary hasn't called my secretary to tell me that we would be meeting.

JM: Sure. Excuse me just one sec. John, let's pause for just a sec.

[Recording pauses.]

JB: We're back.

JM: Okay. Um, in, in September of '63, uh, the Klan scheduled a major rally and you and some others had a very, uh, fateful day. I wonder if you could describe that day and what happened. [1:10:00]

RH: Yes. The, um, local Klan, um, chapter apparently, I think it called it Klavern, uh, had been all downtown passing out handbills announcing this big Klan rally and people traveling up and down U.S. 1 had seen over a period of time over in a field that they were erecting this gigantic cross and all and this was, and I guess they were putting out chairs or benches or what have you. But a Klan leader by the name of Connie Lynch out of California was coming to, uh, be the main speaker at this rally and also I must admit that the other Klan leaders like J. B. Stoner out of Atlanta and all, they had called in the big guns of the Klan movement to come in to do what they had to do to put a damper on this St. Augustine, um, movement.

And so we felt so moved that we would go out that night and thought that we would not be in – infringing on the Movement or on the Klan rally or anything or park along U.S. 1 on the

roadside that we could look over into where the Klan rally and everything else was being held. Before we knew anything after we parked and stopped, they knew the car and all and there were four of us: uh, James Jackson, uh, Mr. Hauser, I think it's James Hauser, I think, and Clyde Jenkins and myself. When we looked up, there were Klansmen with guns in the front of the car and in the rear of the car and Hauser was driving the car and he thought he knew a side road or whatever. Uh, we were thinking escape and he took a side road and lo and behold, the Klan had dug a moat, a ditch across the roadway and we had to come to a stop to keep from going into that ditch.

And when we knew anything, we were surrounded by Klansmen, ordered out of the car and all, and, um, the physical punishment started at that time. And they took our wallets and, you know, personal effects and in my wallet, they saw my identity and everything else and also discovered an NAACP card and therefore, that was the, I understand the impetus for them to really start beating us. The beating was so severe with ax handles and baseball bats and all that we were ushered up to and eventually on stage of the, uh, where the speaker was and we were piled on top of each other semi-conscious like cord wood on top of each other.

JM: On the stage.

RH: On the stage. And by then, the violence was so that many of the Klan attendees had started leaving the area and everything else. And, uh, Rev. Cheney, Ivan Cheney, uh, an Episcopal priest out of Daytona had infiltrated the group and wore a personal recorder and had been able to record the speakers and everything going on at the Klan rally, but he saw how this thing was escalating and he backed out of the meeting and everything [1:15:00], got to his car, and went to a pay phone and called Tallahassee, the highway patrol in Tallahassee, and reported what was happening at this Klan rally and what he saw and everything else. And the state got on

and I think they possibly called L. O. Davis and the law enforcement in St. Augustine and all. And they started sending in auxiliary and also support people and everything else. So the powers that be knew that outside law enforcement was coming in because the announcer had, um, on the microphone had announced if any of them had ever had the privilege of smelling a nigger burn and I guess the answer came back no or something. Well, for those who have not had that privilege, when so and so – and they called the name of the person involved returns – which I guess he meant some accelerant, but –

JM: They had sent someone to get –

RH: He may have mentioned gasoline.

JM: Gasoline.

RH: That he had sent somebody to get, they would be treated to the privilege of smelling niggers burn because it was his intent or stated intent that they were going to douse us with gasoline and set us on fire. But by that time, uh, things had degenerated so that, uh, people were fleeing and, um, I can't say when the auxiliary policemen arrived or who broke up the meeting or what have you, but fate would have it that we were rescued and put in, uh, accommodations to be taken immediately to the hospital and all. And even at the hospital, we were not comfortable going to Flagler Hospital. That was the local hospital. So we were only treated in the emergency rooms and all and then the local, um, mortician, Mr. Chase, made his hearse available to us as an ambulance to take us to Brewster Hospital in Jacksonville where we were treated by black physicians and felt more comfortable because that was the black hospital in Jacksonville, but we knew at that time we would not be, I guess, have a chance to be double crossed or mistreated by Klan or Klan sympathizers.

JM: You, you were very badly injured. Can you describe your injuries a little bit?

RH: Well, uh, I usually summarize it by saying that the injuries I encountered I will take to my grave and so [pauses] because I had injuries. I lost eleven teeth and my, uh, right arm was – because my patients and all were in attendance at the Klan rally and I can distinctly remember somebody say or maybe I read it in, uh, Mr., uh, Cheney's, uh, because he wrote a tremendous, uh, resume of his experience, but they pointed out that I was a right-handed dentist and they made sure that they did tremendous damage to my right arm and all. And, uh, if I had not been in certain physical condition, um, to rehabilitate the muscles and the ligament in this arm, I would have been, I would have had to quit –

JM: Lost your practice.

RH: – my practice, yes. So it's the kind of thing that, uh, I don't ever like to, oh, emphasize that or make like, uh, that allowed me to become a rebel or at least was justification for the so-called militancy that I acquired or something and so forth because I thought by serving in the Air Force as an honorable [1:20:00] recruit and volunteer and giving four years of my life and going all the way through officers candidate school at least allowed me to acquire full citizenship, but I found out that that, even that did not allow me to participate and to, uh, practice the rights and privileges of the average American white citizen.

So, uh, that was a setback in my line of thought and that no one ever could have accused me. Well, it went so far as I've read now in a resume of L. O. Davis saying that the community decided that I was a communist and all of those things and so forth. Well, the leader of the Klan was a convicted moonshiner, "Hoss" Manucy [Holstead R. Manucy, Exalted Cyclops of the Ku Klux Klan] and it's still not known at this time whether Hoss Manucy had ever gone through the rights and privileges of having his citizenship restored because he had done time in federal pen for moonshining. So I could not and still can't equate equal leadership and what have you.

Here's an Air Force officer and a citizen of good character and all leading a movement and here is a convicted moonshiner and all, a person of questionable character and all leading a movement. And these were equated as equals and the sheriff and, uh, Hoss Manucy were very, very close so that the sheriff deputized many of the Klan members as auxiliary deputies of his department.

JM: Tell me about how you thought your way through at the end of '63 to, uh, step away from the NAACP and turn your attention towards SCLC as possible allies in this effort.

RH: Okay. We had run into the, um – in other words, we have ruffled the feathers of the complete NAACP national establishment to the point that Roy Wilkins was the president or CEO. He was the big honcho situated in New York City and I received several calls at my office, um, from his office and at times he came online or something, but they attempted to give instructions to us as to how the Movement should move forward. And I remember distinctly telling him or one of the secretaries or somebody involved that if they had anyone throughout the country that they thought could do a better job of leading the St. Augustine movement, send him on down. But as long as I was on the scene and all and head of the movement, I was going to do what I thought was best for the movement and for me.

And so that meant that I had broken ranks and was not willing to take, uh, instructions from above. And so in a day or two later, a call came from Mr. Wilkins and all, and I answered the phone and talked with him. We were very courteous with each other and “how is the weather down there” and everything else and whatever. And he mentioned that if we were not prepared to follow instructions and everything from the NAACP, the NAACP was prepared to withdraw our charter and this was like, I'm going to say, a Tuesday or a Wednesday. And, uh, so without thinking and without even getting permission from the, uh, my local support group or even the

youth group, I, um, said, “Mr. Wilkins, when will you, will you be in your office on Saturday?”
[1:25:00] And he wanted to know, “Well, what does that have to do with anything?” and all. I said, “Because my feelings are at this time the mailman will bring you your charter.” In other words, you’re telling me we’re fired. I’m saying, “We resign.”

And I packaged up through Mrs., uh, uh, uh, Hawthorne and all and, and sent air mail special delivery the charter with a return receipt to New York to let them know what, uh, we were going to go on with what we were doing in St. Augustine as best we could without their support because, uh, we thought what we were doing was required.

JM: Right, sure, and this is after Birmingham and all.

RH: Yeah.

JM: You’ve seen a lot of national civil rights landscape by that point and you wanted to go a different direction.

RH: Yes.

JM: Tell me about how you were able –

RH: And, and we were able to mention at the time that we had been double crossed.

JM: Yeah, yeah. Tell me about your decision and how you pursued the relationship that would unfold with Dr. King and SCLC.

RH: It was very, very, in, in other words, we were out there up the creek without a paddle because I, on weekends, I made trips to Atlanta and, um, naturally, trying to carry a practice on in the middle of it throughout the week, but on, I think, Saturdays and Sundays for sure, I was in Atlanta and I made visits with people like Julian Bond, uh, all of the SNCC people.

JM: I’m sorry?

RH: SNCC.

JM: All, all the SNCC folks, yeah, yeah, sure.

RH: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

JM: Sure.

RH: And even met the house mother, Mrs., is it Bell? Baker. Mrs. Baker.

JM: Mmm hmm, okay, sure.

RH: And, uh, got to know them and everything else. Then on another weekend and all, I got to know people who knew “Daddy” King and members who were members of Ebenezer Baptist Church and all. And I couldn’t say with the certainty that I met either Dr. King on a passing visit or even, um, [Rev. Ralph] Abernathy on a passing visit, but see at that time, uh, C. K. Steele was in the leadership of the, uh, board or whatever of SCLC and he had been a tremendous supporter and he helped me make various contacts and everything else on my visit and all because, uh, nobody wanted to pick up a troublemaking chapter and a renegaded, renegade group that could cause them trouble. And it was pointed out that Selma and Birmingham and all of these areas had been so severe and SNCC was heavily involved in Mississippi and all that they had almost been fought to a standstill, brought to a standstill.

And, um, I’m going ahead of myself, but, uh, when it came time for the passage of the Civil Rights Act, Lyndon Johnson now who had, with the Kennedy’s murder or assassination and all, had moved from Vice President to President and all and he had the good graces of the various civil rights organizations that he wanted two weeks of cessation of two demonstrations and, uh, Dr. King and the powers that be had agreed and the other organizations had agreed. But see we had been double crossed several times and all and when it came down to the St. Augustine chapter, we said, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.” And so we said we were not going to stop demonstrating and all until the Civil Rights Act had been

signed. So they had to speed up the signing and everything else and all. And we have checked our records now because I had made statements that Dr. King left St. Augustine and went to Washington for the signing of the Civil Rights Act, but I can say with certainty now that on June [1:30:00] the 30th, he was in St. Augustine and the Civil Rights Act was signed July the 2nd.

JM: Correct, yeah.

RH: But he would have had to go to Atlanta or to Daytona to catch a plane to get to Washington. So some daylight times intervened. So please don't hold me to the quote of leaving exact St. Augustine to get to Washington for July the 2nd.

JM: Right. Dr. King would first come to St. Augustine himself in May of '64.

RH: Okay.

JM: But prior to that point and I, you had mentioned that you had, you had developed a, a, you know, a very, uh, uh, close relation or a very extensive relationship with the folks in the SNCC office in Atlanta. They were obviously planning Freedom Summer for '64 and you planned something for sort of the spring break period.

RH: Yes.

JM: Can you describe that for St. Augustine? It was very interesting, led to all kinds of interesting developments.

RH: Yes. Rev. [William] Sloane Coffin, who was involved with the Yale Divinity School, had contacted us and allowed us to and Rev., uh, [David] Robinson, um, to develop a relationship and they had recruited between the Yale students that rather than to take a spring break and go to the beaches and all, they would come to St. Augustine and conduct a tutorial program and clean up, fix up, paint up or whatever needed to be done for about a two-week

period to lend their support to the civil rights act – activities of St. Augustine. That was a coup. That was a publicity, uh, dream that we never could have, uh, concocted on our own.

JM: Did that come through SNCC or did that come from the folks at, let's say, uh, Rev. Sloane Coffin knowing through press reports about St. Augustine? How was that connection forged?

RH: Uh, I don't think we had the support of a national organization.

JM: Okay, okay.

RH: Yeah, because, uh, those students and their families and everything raised the monies to get them there and everything else on their own. But now we also had a setup, as I told you, through the feeding setup and all that the people who came to us, we gave them at least breakfast, lunch. Lunch many, many times was a sandwich. We were users of peanut butter and jelly and cheese and a fruit, either an apple or an orange, and usually a cold drink. And then they had the rights to go to Mr. Pennington's restaurant and order a meal or whatever they wanted.

JM: By the way, what was the name of that restaurant?

RH: I'm going to say The Freeze or, um, I would have to –

JM: That's okay.

RH: Yes, check, and I'll get the full name.

JM: Yeah, I'll, I'll, I'll double check.

RH: Yes.

JM: So after, um, after that spring break season when a number of northern white college students came to town.

RH: Yes.

JM: Um, the momentum was really accelerating towards May and June.

RH: Well, the reason I say the publicity coup, many of the participants who came, we had white, uh, male and females who had never been exposed to black families and see in St. Augustine, to their credit, many of the black families agreed to house these volunteers in their homes. So they had a chance to meet these people at the various church functions and all. They met people and everything else. And then also in the meantime, somewhere along the line, Dr. King had participated in a rally in Tallahassee and all, and we made a trip, Mr. Twine and a group of us made a trip from St. Augustine to be in Tallahassee for that full day and so I had a chance fleetingly to talk to Dr. King and other, um, support members of SCLC and so forth.

JM: Yeah, yeah. Um, we, uh, I, I would love to spend time talking about your perspective on how your, your, how the, the specifics of the relationship with Dr. King [1:35:00] and SCLC and you worked out the events of May and June.

RH: Uh, see these weekend trips had escalated in that I made trips into New York, to Boston, and all of those areas and, uh, uh, uh, made visits to, um, Harvard and MIT and other various. Mrs. Burgess, who was – her husband, Bishop Burgess, was the first black Episcopal bishop in the United States and he covered an area in the Massachusetts area and all. So we had developed through meetings and forums and all a relationship with various people and also I want to point out that many of the students who came from Yale went back and they even developed a drama, a stage play and everything to dramat – uh, to dramatize their experience in St. Augustine. And somebody played L. O. Davis and somebody played Judge Mathis and the entire thing, that they presented throughout the New Haven community and all.

And, uh, they had influential parents who eventually sent us financial support and all because it, it is known and has been known, St. Augustine could not carry the movement financially and what have you and so we had to have outside support. And, um, with the people

from, uh, Yale and the people from the Boston area because I think you know that Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Rowe, whose husband was an industrialist, uh, millionaire, Mrs. Campbell, whose husband was an industrialist millionaire from that area, and Mrs. Mary Peabody [Mary Parkman Peabody, the 72-year old mother of the then-governor of Massachusetts] of the infamous Peabody family and all came to St. Augustine and many other dignitaries who gave us support, including, uh, our various attorneys and everything else –

JM: Yeah.

RH: And what have you, had agreed to speak and conduct rallies, including Jackie Robinson and all.

JM: Right.

RH: But they were not consenting to be arrested.

JM: Right.

RH: And definitely they did not consent to go to jail.

JM: Right, and tell me if you would just for the tape, um, who Mrs. Peabody was.

RH: The mother of the sitting governor, Chuck Peabody, Charles Peabody, of the state of Massachusetts. And she was the matron of the – at seventy-two years of age – of the Peabody clan.

JM: And I, I mean, it's really a testament, I think, to your capacity to develop all of these powerful relationships because as you say, as, as the record shows, you were successful in, I mean, heck, Mrs. Peabody spent a couple nights in local jail here in St. Augustine as the governor, as the mother of the sitting governor of Massachusetts, and –

RH: I, I was arrested with her –

JM: Exactly.

RH: – at the, at the Monson restaurant.

JM: At the Monson, yeah, Monson Motor Lodge restaurant.

RH: Yes.

JM: Um, which is actually, I'll just say for the tape, it's where this building we're now in stands, the motel having been demolished and replaced by, by this structure.

RH: Yes.

JM: Um, I'm, I'm, just in interest of, of time, we, we have probably about ten minutes left and I'm sorry that—

RH: Okay.

JM: That's the, the limit of our time.

RH: Any direction you want to give me, please.

JM: Um, we have to drive over to Gainesville.

RH: Yes.

JM: Um, I want to ask about two final things. One is, um, just to have you reflect a little bit more on the relationship of all that you did in its culmination in late June, June, through the, through, through June and the signing in, in D.C. of the Civil Rights Act, just how you think about the relation of the one to the other as you look back.

RH: St. Augustine, I hate to say, um, never, ever, um, admitted, uh, I'm going to say the general citizenry of St. Augustine in that James Brock died. This is – [1:40:00]

JM: He had owned the Monson Motor Lodge.

RH: Owned the Monson Motor Lodge, had the infamous picture of him putting acid in the water –

JM: Shaking –

RH: With the Freedom demonstrators, uh, in the water in the pool and that picture went all the way around the world. I understand in Russia, *Izvestia* [large-circulation newspaper in the Soviet Union], the newspaper, had him on the front page of the newspaper putting acid in the water when human beings were in the swimming pool. But he went to his grave an unrequited, uncompromised segregationist. We have since met his daughter. I didn't meet her personally. She has moved from St. Augustine to North Carolina somewhere now, but she mentioned that she went to high school with black students and all and that she did not retain the same attitude as her father. But he literally took, um, um, George Wallace-type segregationist yesterday, segregationist today and segregationist tomorrow, so segregationist for life.

JM: Tell me about, um, just the last question, tell me about your decision in '65 just a year later to, to move away from St. Augustine. You would not have your, the, the remainder of your professional life would not be here.

RH: Well, it was a dual-type thing in that I had five years to give to the state of Florida to pay for the tuition help that they had given me in dental school, after five years in a location that they designated because as I told you, uh, they had consented that St. Augustine or Panama City, Florida, would have satisfied their requirement as an area of need for a black dentist. So by staying here those five years, I paid back the state. And then also I, an opportunity had arisen in, uh, Cocoa, Florida, which is right next to Cape Kennedy and all. And I went down and met the local citizens there and developed a friendship of a black mortician, Rudy Stone, who gave me, uh, living facilities and all and helped open the doors through the black churches of Cocoa to me coming in and opening a practice. And right away because of the workers at the Cape, my practice took off even though, it, it was a makeshift office. We were in an Elks building and I

was next door to a black physician, Dr. Jerkins, who was an older man, but he had a practice going and he helped by referring patients to me and coming as his family and so forth.

And, um, it was wonderful, but Lyndon Johnson caught us again in that the main heart of that whole establishment at Cape Kennedy was the control center and because of the electronic era, the control center could be anywhere and he intervened and had the control center with all that big payroll moved to Houston.

JM: Yeah, exactly.

RH: Yes.

JM: Was, was there a, besides the, besides the, um, opportunity that, that Cocoa presented, were there dimensions of your decision that touched on all that you'd gone through here and the implications for your family and such? Or was it exclusively a professional choice to, to go to Cocoa?

RH: Professional and also the relationship with, uh, Rudy Stone and the people that I met there and then a younger educated environment because many of my patients starting off worked at the Cape and many were technicians and other scientists involved with, uh, NASA and everything else. In fact, uh, several of my patients ended up being connected to the astronaut families and all because my dentist, my family dentist in Tallahassee, Dr. Campbell, [1:45:00] had offered through my mother to "tell Robert to come on to Tallahassee and he can either practice with me or I will give him my practice in Tallahassee." But as I said at the time, uh, I just didn't give complete thought because it would have been more economical for me at the – costs in moving and all, because my brother had put in four years in the Air Force and had moved back to Tallahassee now and was housekeeping in Tallahassee and my family had a big

house, a four-bedroom house and everything that we grew up in and all. There would have been accommodations for me and my family.

But I chose Cocoa and bought, uh, a two-bedroom house, uh, and I thought that by buying the three-bedroom house, uh, next door, my plans were to join those two houses. But I found out that was in violation [laughs] of, uh, code in that you can only have one water meter to a house and therefore, I was diminishing the second water meter and without prop, proper authorization and all. So we commuted. The kids went from house to house, the main house and then back to the other house, but we never made a union or a junction there because, uh, it was illegal.

JM: Was it easier – a final thought – was it easier, do you think, for your children to come up in Cocoa than, than here after all that had happened here?

RH: Uh, with my wife being a schoolteacher with a masters degree in biology and all, I have to give her credit for all that my kids attained and did in that, um, they were, uh, I guess, compatible with whatever went on in the family in that, um, they were all good scholars and, uh, excellent leaders and so forth.

And I guess, uh, since time is a factor, I had the good fortune and I'm just coming down from cloud nine. The city of St. Augustine gave me the de Aviles Award [since 1988, given annually by the City of St. Augustine to honor a resident for exemplary public service] on July the 2nd and presented this award to me with the mayor and at least three commissioners and one or two other city officials present at our annual ACCORD luncheon where Dr. Dorothy Cotton spoke from her affiliation with SCLC and Dr. King and we honored the Rev. Goldie Eubanks's family with the Dr. Hayling Award of Valor. We give a Waterford crystal eagle in flight, um, symbol and it's, um, inscribed as the recipient requests or designates. And the Eubanks family,

many of Rev. Eubanks's siblings came and extended family members and all, because I saw those young people grow up as teenagers and all and now we're at the point that many pursued successful careers, including school teaching and all and have now reached the age of retirement.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

RH: And my daughter, youngest daughter, who was a graduate of Yale, Crystal, and an MBA from Stanford, came with her husband Christopher, who is a Princeton grad and a Wharton School of Business grad and he is an employee of Apple Corporation in the Far East branch. And they came from Singapore.

JM: For the event.

RH: On their vacation to be present at the event of the presentation and brought my two grandsons, Roman, who was eight years of age at that time, and Avery, who was six. So that complete weekend, July the second, '011, has been an experience for me [110:00] because my oldest daughter and her husband, Robin and David, came from Mississippi. My youngest sister and her, Yvonne and her husband came from Sarasota, and I had many other extended family members to come from afar to be with me. So it was a real celebration and, uh.

JM: It's lovely.

RH: Yes.

JM: Let me say as just a final word, I know that, that even now your work continues. You're still active with, with, um, with, uh, 40th ACCORD, um, with Ms. [Barbara] Vickers.

RH: Yes.

JM: And, uh, I think you're meeting with a bunch of folks tonight as you continue efforts here, here to help continue to improve the city, so –

RH: Yes.

JM: – it's just been a great privilege and pleasure to be with you, Dr. Hayling.

RH: I hope we're still recording because I don't think I gave emphasis to the establishment of the, um, freedom for the foot soldiers.

JM: Well, we were, yeah, we were, we were. Let me have you say a word about that. We were happy, of course, to have the conversation yesterday with Mrs. Vickers, yeah.

RH: Okay.

JB: Can I pause for a second?

JM: Okay, we'll –

[Recording pauses.]

JB: We're back.

JM: We're back.

RH: Okay.

JM: So, so you wanted to say a final note about the, about, um, Mrs. Vickers and that effort.

RH: Yes. Mrs. Barbara Vickers, who was my neighbor from across the street on, it was Scott Street then. Now it's Dr. [Robert] Hayling Place. The street was named, uh, for me on '06, June the twentieth of '06, not, um, I, forgive me, of '03, June the twentieth of '03. And my daughter and her husband came from California at the time. They were living in San Mateo and brought my six, seven-month-old son, Roman.

JM: Grandson, yeah.

RH: Grandson in a baby carriage, in a stroller and all, to be present for the street-naming ceremony. We had twenty-one Haylings.

JM: Lovely.

RH: For the street-naming ceremony and part of the activity was moved up in that they had mentioned and especially Commissioner Errol Jones that most cities had paid tribute to their leaders, um, in absentia after they had passed and he wanted to try to give me this honor while I was still able to smell the roses and so forth. And so there was a tremendous tribute in that Errol Jones' mother, Mrs. Mattie Jones, had been an assistant to me for about three years or more, such a brave lady because she came to work every day, stayed and supported me when many of my patients and many of my friends and others were afraid. I was like a leper in that, a person with leprosy, in that I was, um –

JM: Your office might be attacked.

RH: To be avoided.

JM: Yeah.

RH: And that my office would possibly be shot up or dynamited and everything. If they were there, they would have been involved.

JM: Yeah.

RH: But Mrs. Jones came and stayed as long and as late as we needed to, to have the office open.

JM: Yeah.

RH: And so forth.

JM: Can I ask you to share the sign?

RH: Yes. I am so proud to present the sign and I bring it with me to all the meetings and we have a ceremony where the various people involved have to come up and touch the sign and try to say which portion of this sign that they helped earn and qualify for.

JM: Nice.

RH: So it's a little routine and that's the reason I have this with me, that we do it and wherever the, the activist people have gathered, we give them that offer. I did not bring the citation and all because it's encased in a glass in case and therefore, we would have been subjecting it to breakage and everything. So I decided not to bring it in the car.

JB: Yeah. Could you lift it up just to about – that's good. Let, let me just focus on it and you can smile. [laughter]

JB: That's great. Thank you.

JM: Wonderful. Dr. Hayling, thank you so much.

RH: Well, please, please, please, the honor –

[Recording ends at 1:54:48]

END OF INTERVIEW