

MS. EVA JENKINS' INTERVIEW

By
Dr. Maxine Jones

(Dr. M. Jones) This is a interview with Ms. Eva Jenkins, Friday, September 24, 1993. Ms. Jenkins could you state your full name and date of birth.

(Ms. Jenkins) I am Eva E. Jenkins. I was born October 15, 1910.

(Dr. M. Jones) You have a birthday coming up not too long.

(Ms. Jenkins) I do.

(Dr. M. Jones) Ah, can you tell me something about your parents?

(Ms. Jenkins) Yes, ah, just my mother and father or . . .

(Dr. M. Jones) You can start off with your mother then father.

(Ms. Jenkins) First, my mother was one of the Goins' family. She was the daughter of Edmund Goins who came from North Carolina in 1885 and settled in Rosewood, Florida. He brought his business to Rosewood. My father was William James Marshall.

(Dr. M. Jones) Marshall?

(Ms. Jenkins) Yes, see my mother was a Goins.

(Dr. M. Jones) Okay.

(Ms. Jenkins) My father married Agnes Goins, that was my mother's name. I had two, I wont say two brothers because my mother died in the birth of the third son. I was the middle, the second child and I was not in Rosewood in 1923. She died in 1917 in childbirth and I was taken to Gainesville to live with her oldest sister.

(Dr. M. Jones) So whats your connection with Rosewood? Did you get to know the Goins side of your family?

(Ms. Jenkins) I was born there.

(Dr. M. Jones) You were born there.

(Ms. Jenkins) I was born there.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you much about what happened there in ah . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) Not about the massacre but I had been asked how Rosewood, you know, used to be and who the people were. It was a very nice community. We had a . . . I was a member of, my family was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E. Church), and there was some baptist churches, but I never went there but I understand that there was one there, and there was a Masonic Hall where they had school, because they didn't have a school building.

(Dr. M. Jones) Okay, so the Hall was where they had school.

(Ms. Jenkins) The Hall was where they had school.

(Dr. M. Jones) And was the Hall near, it was near the Baptist Church, near one of the churches?

(Ms. Jenkins) It was nearer the A.M.E. Church. I really don't have a picture in my mind of where the Baptist Church was but it was a distant from the Hall.

(Dr. M. Jones) Well, after you left Rosewood, did you go back for visits, or to . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) I went back to visit my father before he passed, he had us to come back. to spend a summer with him. I think it was around 1918.

(Dr. M. Jones) How did your father make his living?

(Ms. Jenkins) He worked for my grandfather, see my grandfather owned this turpentine still that he brought to his, all of his machinery, all of his everything that he used he brought by rail from North Carolina, Southern Pines, North Carolina, and set it up in Rosewood. We have, would you like to see a picture of it?

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh, sure.

(Ms. Jenkins) Let me see, where is my picture of it. This is a picture of it. Yeah, he had a big business.

(Dr. M. Jones) Where did you find this?

(Ms. Jenkins) That came from a magazine that we had. It was in town, in our family. And this is a picture that was taken in our home. Now you know, they didn't have studios at that time, so this shows that you would think that we didn't have furniture or anything, but this is a upholster furniture and we had . . . now that baby is my picture.

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh really?

(Ms. Jenkins) Ah, and that's my brother, my oldest brother. I was born in Rosewood and born around this, you know . . .

(Dr. M. Jones) Ah, do you know where your grandfather's house was?

(Ms. Jenkins) Where it was?

(Dr. M. Jones) Yes.

(Ms. Jenkins) It was near the still, it was near the still, I can't say how far but not too far, but so many yards.

(Dr. M. Jones) And this was separate from Goins' quarters?

(Ms. Jenkins) They didn't have a Goins' quarters. We didn't have a Goins' quarters. They had people that lived and worked for him, but people that lived in the neighbor, we didn't have a quarters as such, never had. His children, his sons worked for him and other people in the neighborhood, but they lived, you know, it wasn't in a quarters setting.

(Dr. M. Jones) Now your mother, was your mother born in Rosewood?

(Ms. Jenkins) No.

(Dr. M. Jones) She came from . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) My mother, came from, was from North Carolina. She and my grandmother, let me see, let me show her some of these things . . . you like to see them?

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh, sure.

(Ms. Jenkins) Start with this one. This ah, my grandfather was Edmund Goins and Sarah and . . . was his wife, and he was a Freedman, and then he came to Florida with his ten sons and daughters. There was five sons and four daughter, they had ten children together, but see three of them attended, that is Rebecca the oldest girl, my mother Agnes, and Rouvena Goins, Santa Veistine College in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Rouvena died there, so I never knew her. When they came to Florida, they just came with five boys and four girls, and my mother was Agnes. Okay, William the oldest boy, Rebecca the oldest girl, John that's my uncle John, Agnes was my mother, Perry was my uncle, that's Dorothy's father, Rouvena was this one that died, and Charlie was one who never married, and aunt Minnie had these four children, two of them accidentally burned up, uncle George that's ah Annette's grandfather, and Pearl was the youngest daughter, these two were children and others were young people, I guess grown up something I don't know how old they were, but I understood that uncle George was nine and aunt Pearl was seven.

(Dr. M. Jones) Now, when Rosewood happened did they come to Gainesville to live with you, or . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, no, no. These people were grown, they had their own family, so they went different places, and the only ones that lived in Gainesville was uncle Wills, this oldest one, and these are his eight children and aunt Rebecca lived there, that's the one that I went to live with. But uncle John still, he was in Rosewood. I don't know where they went after, you know, after the massacre, but he was the one that was still in Rosewood, and uncle Perry, Dorothy said they went to Sumner and then some place else, but she's being interviewed too. And this aunt Rouvena was the one that died in Saint Augustine College, and she had no descendants. Uncle Charlie never married, and he had none. Aunt Pearl married, and she had one descendent. Look right in here (looking at pictures?), these are some of the descendants.

(Dr. M. Jones) Okay.

(Ms. Jenkins) Yvonne and Annette, this is my cousin Phyl she died. Annette and these are her children.

(Dr. M. Jones) So, she and Arnett Doctor are cousins?

(Ms. Jenkins) They are cousins.

(Dr. M. Jones) Cousins, okay alright. Well, when you where . . . how long did you live in Gainesville?

(Ms. Jenkins) Until I was grown. I stayed there until grown.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you remember the black community in Gainesville talking about Rosewood, or taking in . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) Not the black community. A lot of them I guess, a lot of people never heard of it before because their family said they didn't talk about it. But anyway a lot of people are just finding out about Rosewood, but the family always knew. We always knew what happened because Gainesville was one place where the train put off some of the people. I was a child, I guess I was twelve years old (I would of because it was being the first of January), and in October, I would have been thirteen. I came home from school one day and there were a lot of people on the front porch, and I knew that was unusual. When I got in the house, I found that they were from the riot. I hadn't even heard about the riot . . .

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh, do you remember any talk at all about a Klan rally being held the day before New Year's day?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, no, no, never heard that.

(Dr. M. Jones) Because reputedly one of the largest Klan's rally in the state had been held in Gainesville on the last day of December.

(Ms. Jenkins) We didn't hear that.

(Dr. M. Jones) You didn't hear anything about that.

(Ms. Jenkins) We didn't hear anything about that. We wouldn't hear, you know, I think at that time Klan rallies were probably kept secret. They were not, you know, they are having the open now, but once upon a time, we didn't hear things like that, I didn't.

(Dr. M. Jones) Have you, when was the last time you were in Rosewood? Have you gone back . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) I never did go back, not after 1918.

(Dr. M. Jones) You never did go back. Do you have any desire to go back?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, no, no. I don't know what to go back for. And then another thing you couldn't tell where you were.

(Dr. M. Jones) Right.

(Ms. Jenkins) After so long, the old roads they did not have any ah, there was no highways. They just had dirt roads where people drove over, just remember at that time, you know, there were very few cars, and I don't think I have any desire to go back, because I wouldn't know where I was. There is no, you know, post no place (I can't say it now) but anyhow nothing could show you where it was. There is one house there that I saw in a picture (magazine), the Wright's house. I understand that it is still there.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you know if the houses were spread out?

(Ms. Jenkins) They were spread out. They were not close together. Now take my godfather, they were right across from the Wright's house, across the railroad was my godfather's and godmother's house, a big two-story house.

(Dr. M. Jones) And they were?

(Ms. Jenkins) They were Wesley Bradley. Mrs. Wesley Bradley was my godmother.

(Dr. M. Jones) Alright.

(Ms. Jenkins) And he has children here now.

(Dr. M. Jones) Ah, how did you get involved with the Rosewood survivor report? How long have you being involved with it?

(Ms. Jenkins) You mean with the group?

(Dr. M. Jones) yes.

(Ms. Jenkins) Well, I always knew who my people were, and a lot of them was . . . all the Goins was all of my people, Colemans they intermarried. All these Goins young men married into the Carrier family, and one Uncle Perry married into the Coleman family. So they had homes in different places, they were not in a shanty city, you know, a little . . . but all the people that I have here and many more I knew.

(Dr. M. Jones) Did you much about Sumner and Wylly?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, no, now I knew there was Sumner and people used to go there, my father used to go there sometime dealing with the shop to pick up things maybe, but we never went, even my mother never went. And I never went to Wylly, I know that they said, ah, the capital, I mean the county . . .

(Dr. M. Jones) Bronson?

(Ms. Jenkins) Bronson, Bronson, I heard of Bronson, but I never went to Bronson until I got grown. I was working one time, you know, in the project teaching out there, and I happened to go sort of close to that place. But I know, we never was taken to any of those outside places.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you know anything about the people who taught school then in Rosewood? Who the teachers were?

(Ms. Jenkins) My mother was my first teacher, but now I don't know who the next after she passed . . . she didn't stop, I guess she stop with the birth of my brother, cause I know she stopped, but you know, being a child I wouldn't understand why. But I just realized now that she stopped, and I don't know -- can't remember who the next teacher was, and I was a little girl.

(Dr. M. Jones) Now your father (and I apologize, if I keep asking the same questions over again), remained in Rosewood.

(Ms. Jenkins) In Rosewood until 1920, he died in 1920.

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh, he died in 1920.

(Ms. Jenkins) He died in '20.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you remember when he arrived in Rosewood, what year it was?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, it was before I was born, but I have no idea, I don't know.

(Dr. M. Jones) Okay.

(Ms. Jenkins) I never heard him say when he came, and I never heard anybody say when he came, but he came to work for my ?, you know how young — people are, when the work — he was in North Carolina and they would go from place to place looking for work and he came to Rosewood looking for work, and worked for my grandfather and married my mother.

(Dr. M. Jones) So, he never? Did he ever own any land in Rosewood?

(Ms. Jenkins) I don't know that he did, I really don't.

(Dr. M. Jones) So, you were sent to Gainesville in . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) In 1917 the first time.

(Dr. M. Jones) 1917 alright.

(Ms. Jenkins) Yes.

(Dr. M. Jones) Was your father buried in a cemetery in Rosewood?

(Ms. Jenkins) Yes, I was not there being a little child, I did not get to go the funeral. I didn't see, but he is buried there.

(Dr. M. Jones) So, you went to Gainesville to live with your aunt Rebecca?

(Ms. Jenkins) Aunt Rebecca.

(Dr. M. Jones) She raised you and your brother?

(Ms. Jenkins) Right.

(Dr. M. Jones) And you live there . . .

(Ms. Jenkins) Two brothers.

(Dr. M. Jones) Two brothers, okay.

(Ms. Jenkins) I had a older brother and one younger brother.

(Dr. M. Jones) You went to the public schools in Gainesville?

(Ms. Jenkins) Yeah, Lincoln High School, I finished Lincoln High School in Gainesville.

(Dr. M. Jones) And did you go on to college, or anything?

(Ms. Jenkins) I came to FAMU for one year . . . in the nursing program, but they weren't accredited at that time, and so I transferred to DeGrady in Atlanta.

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh, okay and then what?

(Ms. Jenkins) Well, I had some subjects at Spelman, English and Psychology at Spelman, and then I went to finish at Florida Normal down here where it was in St. Augustine, years ago.

(Dr. M. Jones) And then you moved back to Gainesville?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, no, no; oh, yeah I lived in Gainesville until '66, till 1966.

(Dr. M. Jones) You made your living . . .

(Ms. Jenkins) Then I moved to Orlando.

(Dr. M. Jones) Okay, you made your living as a nurse.

(Ms. Jenkins) As a nurse.

(Dr. M. Jones) Which, as a private nurse, or in hospitals?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, very little hospital work. I worked in a hospital . . . twenty-two years for the state of Florida. I'm in the Mental Retardation Program with children, handicap children, so that's the extent of me.

(Dr. M. Jones) Well, I think there's some interesting history there. I've been writing about black women in Florida.

(Ms. Jenkins) You have?

(Dr. M. Jones) Hum hum, and ah, if its okay with you I may, if its okay you I might get in touch with you maybe later on to talk about your career.

(Ms. Jenkins) Okay.

(Dr. M. Jones) If its okay with you I would like to get in touch with you later on and talk about your career And talk about the community that you live in, and organizations and things that you were involved in. Have you had any children?

(Ms. Jenkins) Well, I have two, I had three, my son passed. I lost my son in '80, but I worked out in Atlanta in a public health service and then I went out in Hancock County, and that's where I really think I did something because I used to . . . you know, they didn't have a clinic. Years ago, they didn't have anything like that so I had my little satchel and my little bag and I will go around that whole clinic under a doctor in all these communities. They would—people would be there like they were going to church. I used to go around the whole clinic, and then I was told when I left there, they said if you haven't learned anything, you're going to learn more when you get out, and I was . . .

(Dr. M. Jones) Is it on, do you want me to turn it off?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, I just wanted to tell so. Well, I just going to tell her that I saw, I saw a baby delivered under a sheet.

(Dr. M. Jones) Really, I was going to ask you if you knew any mid-wives, or had seen any mid-wives deliver.

(Ms. Jenkins) No, I worked with doctors. The sheet was over it, he didn't even see it. I saw a person operated on the table (dining room table).

(Dr. M. Jones) Oh really.

(Ms. Jenkins) Hum huh, it was really something. A whole lot of things happened back there that don't happen now.

(Dr. M. Jones) Right.

(Ms. Jenkins) But that's been years ago.

(Dr. M. Jones) Can you think of anything about Rosewood, or anything about your family that I haven't asked you about that you think I ought to know about?

(Ms. Jenkins) I don't know anything else, anything else you know.

(other) All that you told us about the community and what it looked like, how people lived . . . all of that.

(Ms. Jenkins) Well, the people lived well. They found that some, they said that — I have heard that they said that the black people didn't farm with their own land and they farmed. We had our farm, our farm was a family farm and everybody worked the farm and everybody harvested it, and we had this big old smoke house that had meat in it all the year because it cured — and it was cured, you don't have any trouble with it. And I remember all of those things and the houses they lived in. They had . . . some people had . . . we had nice houses and in my mother's and father's house there was a big old grand piano . . .

(Dr. M. Jones) Wow!

(Ms. Jenkins) Ump, Hum, a big, old, black, grand piano, this thing was so big I used it for my playhouse in the winter. I put my little dolls and things under there and we had —our house had this three bedroom and this big hall down the middle (open hall) and a kitchen and dining room and it was onto the house; a lot of people said their's were separate from the house, but ours was all joined, we had front porch and back porch, and two big old Magnolia trees in the front yard, oak tree with a swing on it. But anyhow they had nice furniture, and I do remember my mother liked books and one thing that always fascinated me when I was (I guess I must have been just a yearling — a baby or something), I remember sitting in the floor looking at this book with the Titanic with it sticking out of the . . . it was a dark and dismal picture and I would turn the page. I was little but I remember looking at it, and looking at the books. I remember my first book, it was Willis . . . I never know if you heard of Willis Green and Red, you haven't. Well it was a standard book and it went from primer to eight grade, but now I remember the first story in the book was mom kneeling down at the baby's crib and said "mama loves baby and baby loves mama". That's the first lesson I ever learned and I remembered it. And we had it telling the children, we didn't have to have this because then they had slates, and I know you heard about the slates and they had slate pencils and you write on there it would write white. You just erase that and want to do something else, or write something else. But anyway things have changed.

(Dr. M. Jones) Did you aunt Rebecca talk much about your mother?

(Ms. Jenkins) She talked a whole lot about the family, that's a whole lot of where I got a lot of what I know about it, and I was always asking her things. And I didn't know that I would ever need some of that information, but I got a lot of my information from her.

(Dr. M. Jones) Did you ever call her mother?

(Ms. Jenkins) No, no, no, we always called her Annie.

(Dr. M. Jones) She was always called Annie?

(Ms. Jenkins) It was always Annie, to all of us. So, but she took care of us. Is there anything else that we know?

(other) How did your grandfather provide for the living conditions for the rest of the family, your daddy and mother and the other brothers and sisters?

(Ms. Jenkins) Ah, they lived — our house wasn't close to the still, but my grandfather took his meals, eat at with us, he took his meals with us, and the rest of them they all had their houses but in a little distance away. But we weren't not all of Rosewood, Rosewood had a lot of people who lived there

before 1885. I don't know whether they have history, or how much history they have, but the Carriers and the Bradleys were about the oldest families there, and after I got grown and had my children my godfather one day told me, he said "I . . ." and he was at Ms. Eliza Bradley's house . . . she was a seamstress. She was an excellent seamstress. There was one lady now who said she made a dress for her that she tried to keep, but she told me, she said "I made your mother's wedding gown, but people they were industrious and they lived well.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you know if there were many whites in the community?

(Ms. Jenkins) Don't know any whites, no, but just the Wrights that had the store at the station.

(Dr. M. Jones) Were there any other stores in the community?

(Ms. Jenkins) I don't know of any, not in the Rosewood community, but grandfather had a commissary, he had his own commissary, had his workshop where they made their crates and things, and where they even repaired shoes. I remembered tall lasts that you fit the shoes on, you know, and sized the children and sized the grown people. So grandfather had all the things that usually mostly the things we needed in the neighborhood.

(Dr. M. Jones) And this was Goins?

(Ms. Jenkins) Yes, Goins, and this train my aunt told me, she said the train used to stop there and pick-up his merchandise, his rosin he made, and was stopped to put off supplies and things that he needed. The little place where it stopped was called the Hilton Station. And that was named after uncle Martin his brother's son. His name was Hilton Goins. And that called the little stop where the train stopped to pick-up his things and to leave his supplies for the Hilton Station.

(Dr. M. Jones) So, how did you end up in Orlando, you took a job there and . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) I moved to Orlando, well in fact, my first husband lived in Orlando, and I lived there for five years until he passed. He had leukemia, and then after I went back to Gainesville and stayed seven years. I got married again, and had two more children and I came back in '66 and been there every since. Its been twenty-seven years.

(other) Was it your grand-daddy's habit of giving land to . . . ?

(Ms. Jenkins) Property? Oh, yeah, to his children.

(other) How did he do that?

(Ms. Jenkins) I don't know how he did it, but he gave uncle Will a home in Gainesville, and my mother owned the house that aunt Minnie lived in that got the two - two little girls got burned up . . . by the University of Florida.

(other) What about in Rosewood?

(Ms. Jenkins) In Rosewood?

(other) Yes, where the rest of the family lived, did they own that property?

(Ms. Jenkins) Grandfather, I don't, I don't really know how it was done. I would not know anything about the business, but I know that they lived very well.

(Dr. M. Jones) Okay, I think you answered all my questions, if you think of anything . . .

(Ms. Jenkins) I will have to get your name and address.

(Dr. M. Jones) No, I didn't bring any inside with me.

(Ms. Jenkins) Well that's okay.

(other) Its on there.

(Ms. Jenkins) Its on there?

(Dr. M. Jones) Yeah, yeah, and I will make a copy of that for you.

(Ms. Jenkins) Okay.

(Dr. M. Jones) And that's a real interesting picture of your grandfather ah . . .

(Ms. Jenkins) His still?

(Dr. M. Jones) Ah hum. I wish you can have a photograph made of it.

(other) There's a place in Orlando that makes them.

(Dr. M. Jones) Well, if you do, have two made and I will reimburse you, I would love to have one.

(other) Tell her about your daddy's work.

(Ms. Jenkins) Oh, he was what they called the "rider." He would ride over and inspect his trees where they were chipping to get the rosin out of the trees (the pine trees). He was what they called the rider, always riding, he would ride all

over his property and inspect the work and inspect what the work trees and things that they were working, that was what he did.

(Dr. M. Jones) Do you know how old he was when he died?

(Ms. Jenkins) Ah my father, no I don't, I certainly don't. I don't have any idea.

(Dr. M. Jones) I guess your mother was relatively young.

(Ms. Jenkins) She was thirty-three.

(Dr. M. Jones) She was thirty-three, then he died three years after she did?

(Ms. Jenkins) Right.

(Dr. M. Jones) Hum, was he ill?

(Ms. Jenkins) Wait a minute, three-years he died in twenty.

(Dr. M. Jones) In 1920, and she died in 1917?

(Ms. Jenkins) That's right, that's three years.

(Dr. M. Jones) Was he ill?

(Ms. Jenkins) I don't know, but I think that they said he had typhoid fever, some kind of fever, but I never found out.

(Dr. M. Jones) His last name was Marshall?

(Ms. Jenkins) Marshall, William James Marshall. In one place, he is on one of these things, I have the names of the people that - my aunts and uncles and my mother married.

(Dr. M. Jones) Alright, are you eager to get back to the hotel to get a little rest?

(Ms. Jenkins) Yeah, a little rest.

Interviewer: David Colburn
Interviewee: Mr. Elmer Johnson
Place: Sanford, Florida
Date: November 10, 1993

Questions asked of Mr. Johnson concerning Rosewood.

Mr. Johnson: We were not in Rosewood. We were in Sumner and my father was a mill foreman in Sumner.

Mr. Colburn: What was the name of the plant there.

Mr. Johnson: The Cummer Lumber Company. We were a separate community about a mile or mile and a half away. Actually Rosewood was not a community, it was just a bunch of houses spread out through the woods and they had a couple of churches a masonic hall, which was a little run down black building. There wasn't a whole lot to it - a little bitty thing. The only store in Rosewood was Mr. Wright's store. It wasn't even painted. One of his main sales was ammunition because it was in the Gulf Hammock there and big hunting area. He had a few groceries and stuff like that. He lived in a great big white house that you could see by the road. We knew him quite well and visited him quite frequently. During the grape season, he had a great big grape orchard out there and we really enjoyed his grapes. They were really nice people. These guys threatened to kill him because he had sold ammunition to the Negroes. What get me is all this talk and the main black family were named Bradley. You don't hear of them at all. 60 Minutes, a year and half or two years ago, had an article on the thing, and Bradley(CBS Television Interviewer) put it on and nowhere in the whole show did they ever mention the name Bradley.

Mr. Colburn: That was ironic, wasn't it?

Mr. Johnson: It was contrived as far as I'm concerned because it never happened like people say it did. I know-see our colored woman was named Liza Bradley and she was the daughter of Raleigh and Nancy Bradley.