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Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier

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Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Marcella “Susie” Pruitt Grier

Interviewer:

Jennifer Tilton

Interview Date:

January 2022

Interview Location:

Claremont, California

Length:

01:02:56

Interview Summary completed by:

Makaley Montano, 2022.

Caroline Blanchard, 2024.

Description:

Marcella Pruitt (later Grier) was born and raised in Redlands where her grandmother moved in the early 40s. She shares stories of her grandmother who raised her children, and Marcella, as a single mom working cleaning houses. In 1947, a Black real-estate agent, Mr. Burton helped her grandma purchase a house on Herald street in a predominantly Mexican neighborhood. Marcella “Susie” Pruitt Grier describes the tight knit Redlands community she grew up in, the diversity of north side neighborhoods and the strong connections among Black families. She shares stories of Second Baptist Church where her grandmother put on plays and her father Kenny Pruitt was in a church singing group. Marcella attended Redlands High School and was a recipient of the Caesar Hangan scholarship. Despite growing up during the Civil Rights movement, Susie Pruitt did not feel her race limited her and she experienced no direct racism, though her uncle did. Overall, she shares fond childhood memories of growing up in Redlands and worries that race relations seem worse today than she remembers growing up.

Subject Topic:

- San Bernardino (Calif.)
- Redlands (Calif.)
- Education
- Housing
- Mexican Americans

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
1013 Herald Street	1013 High Street, Redlands CA
Conference Hall next to the Bowl where played music hear described as conference hall	Redlands, CA
House on Washington St. and Lugonia	Redlands, CA
Bungalow Houses	By AME Church in Redlands, across from the Butlers
Parsonage house that belongs to Second Baptist	Sharon Road, Redlands, CA
Texonia Park/Texonian Housing Development	Redlands, CA
Palmore Family 2 story house	Corner of Texas and Colton Avenue
House and Neighborly Service	San Bernardino, Mt Vernon St.
Orange Show Fairgrounds	San Bernardino, CA

Temporal Coverage:

1940s-1960s

Key Events:

- Watts Riots

Key Organizations:

- The Swan's Club of the Inland Empire
- Redlands High School

- Second Baptist Church
- Caesar Hangan Memorial Scholarship

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
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Audio File	00:04:33 – 00:07:44	Experiences in different neighborhoods
Audio File	00:07:44 – 00:08:53	Marcella and grandma's involvement in the church
Audio File	00:08:53 – 00:10:49	Detailed description of her grandma and Marcell's reasoning for doing well in school and being involved
Audio File	00:10:49 – 00:17:17	Description of church events and families that attended
Audio File	00:17:17 – 00:18:45	Story of Reverend Hopkins teaching her father to sing
Audio File	00:18:45 – 00:23:16	Brief description of church singing group, the Hopkins Jubilee, Jubileers
Audio File	00:23:16 – 00:24:24	Shared knowledge and experiences with the Hangan Family and how she won the Caesar Hangan Scholarship
Audio File	00:24:24 – 00:27:00	Marcella's graduation year and her experience as being one of the only Black girls to graduate
Audio File	00:27:00 – 00:29:33	Friendship with Anna Mae Dixon
Audio File	00:29:33 – 00:34:31	Stories of the Ice Packing House

Audio File	00:34:31 – 00:43:03	Descriptions of neighborhoods and specific streets as well as events thrown in the neighborhoods
Audio File	00:43:03 – 00:47:05	What it was like growing up in the 60s and how little she knew of social movements like the Watts Riots
Audio File	00:47:05 – 00:47:30	School integration and busing
Audio File	00:47:30 – 00:49:04	Her Uncle's violent experience of racism in Redlands
Audio File	00:49:04 – 00:50:06	Strong Latino influence in Redlands, Integrated neighborhoods
Audio File	00:50:06 – 00:58:22	Details of joining and being a part of the Swans
Audio File	00:58:22 – 01:00:14	Changes seen in Redlands
Audio File	01:00:14 – 01:02:56	Advice to future generations and how things have worsened

Related Materials:

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation's "Bridges that Carries Us Over Project" on CSUSB ScholarWorks, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>.

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Jennifer Tilton [00:00:01] All right. So we are here today in Claremont, California, with Susie Pruitt or Marcella Susie Pruitt Grier and doing an interview for the bridges that carried us over archive. So we make sure we have your name correct. Would you spell your name for us on the tape?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:00:23] The my first name? Yeah, yeah.
M-A-R-C-E-L-L-A.

Jennifer Tilton [00:00:28] And then Sue Pruitt. So, P-R-U-I-T-T?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:00:33] P-R-U-I-T-T

Jennifer Tilton [00:00:34] OK, fantastic. Great. So we're here to really share some memories of your family and experiences growing up in Redlands, California. And so to start off, maybe you can introduce yourself just a little bit and tell us how your family ended up moving to the Inland Empire and particularly to Redlands, as far as you know.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:00:54] OK. From what I understand and remember, hearing my mother's family was the Meadows to Lois Meadows and her family moved from Colorado to Redlands in the early forties. My father, Jack Kenneth Pruitt, and his mom and his brother, Dean Pruitt, relocated from, I think it was Galveston, Texas, and settled there because my grandmother had siblings, two siblings in Los Angeles already. So she came out to join them and start her life over.

Jennifer Tilton [00:01:34] Do you have any idea how she ended up in Redlands, specifically compared to Los Angeles where the rest of her family was?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:01:40] No

Jennifer Tilton [00:01:42] No, just ended up there.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:01:43] I think they also knew some people in San Bernardino because she worked at a couple of cafes over there and my dad spent. And his brother spent a lot of time there. So I think there were churches and other people that they knew.

Jennifer Tilton [00:01:59] Yeah, yeah. And did your grandma ever share any memories or stories about when she first came to Redlands even before you were born, when your dad was a kid?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:02:08] Um, struggles. She was a divorced mom and they were very young and it was difficult, which I remember her saying very much, very often because she worked as a day worker, cleaned houses, and she also did. She worked at several bars in San Bernardino and also worked at cafes because she was a really good cook. So I can see she got experience from home and from doing that.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:02:51] And she.. since she wasn't married, like most of her friends in town, it was difficult for her to even rent something. But because of the lumber company and Mr. Dill, she was able to rent the house on High Street on the corner, and we have pictures of that front and side of of that. And so he was very instrumental, and Dill Lumber Company was just down the street. I think from that. So that's how she was able to get lived there, which happened to be directly across the street from the Butlers.

Jennifer Tilton [00:03:28] Do you know how she got connected to the Dill family?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:03:32] Probably through Mr. Butler and Mr. Burton and other members of the church?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:03:37] Mm-Hmm. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:03:38] And so she rented a home there for a little while and then eventually, she bought a home...

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:03:41] A little later. 1947, because of Mr. Burton, she was able to purchase a home on 1013 Herald Street, which was completely opposite every other black person that went to the church. We were on the other side of town. We were on the side where I went to elementary school, and it was because of what she could afford as as with the the house on High Street. So that's why we went that direction instead of where three other locations were other members lived. Mm-Hmm. We had to take care of ourselves.

Jennifer Tilton [00:04:22] Yeah, yeah. So tell me a little bit more about your memories of those different neighborhoods. Right?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:04:28] It was awesome.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:04:30] I..I.. OK.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:04:33] Because I I was adopted by my grandmother, pretty much guardian. And that's because all of the kids in town knew each other backwards and forwards, their whole families and the Meadows girls, and that Pruitt boys became friends. And at 15, she delivered me with Kenny. And so her life I remember hearing was not that great at home because their father was a kind of a mean person, and he had so many children, but they eventually separated and left town. And I was two, maybe three something like that. So I didn't see them anymore at

that time until I was about five. And then I was able to join them in Los Angeles, somebody they knew lived there and I could go visit. But overall, I was seven before I was told my grandmother was not my mother. Mm-Hmm. So it was a transition to deal with. But at three, I was too young to go to school. That November birthday keeps you at home the next time around. So she would take me to the House of Neighborly Service down on Texas and something. So I spent a year there and then went to Franklin Elementary up by where we moved to and started kindergarten

Jennifer Tilton [00:06:12] Do you have any memories of either the House of Neighborly Service or Franklin?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:06:15] I remember it being fun, but I was such an unhappy little girl because my grandmother had to leave every day. And so I remember crying and not wanting to standing there, but because of our friends, they would coax me into going. And then the times I wasn't there, I stayed with them. And I can remember running around the Butler's house and getting in trouble and their youngest, Lawrence. He used to chaperon me the most, but he would cause trouble for me. But I do. I do remember being one place of the other at different times, and I remember elementary school. I loved it. I can remember how they have the the cooking pans and the little refrigerators and the plastic stuff. I remember all those things. And I remember remember eating kumquats at a tree outside, never eating them since. And then all the times at the church because as little kids in the church, they really took care of us. It was a huge family. Yeah. So by the time I was nine, I was baptized. My mother had been baptized. My father had been baptized. But neither one of them were any longer in the church or in the town. They were doing other things trying to live.

Jennifer Tilton [00:07:40] Yeah, but your grandma was pretty active in the church and you then became pretty active?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:07:44] very active in the church early on. She was amazing. She could remember all kinds of books and plays and things like that. I mean, from memory. And she would use the the book or the item as a prop because she had it in her head. So they always put her on program to recite and do all these different things. By the time I had open heart surgery in June of 1962, I was playing clarinet. Well, of course, she put me on program, but I didn't mind that I was embarrassed to do that, but not when I was away from the church, when I was with my classmates or my tutor, or doing other things in town. And that was fun. I played clarinet all my life.

Jennifer Tilton [00:08:35] That's great. Tell me more a little bit more about what your grandma was like.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:08:39] She was, um, they called her matriarch later on in our little family. She was a very um.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:08:49] Mm hmm.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:08:53] Come up with the right word. Domineering, straightforward. Get out of my way, type woman. And everybody knew that. And she was hardly ever challenged male or female. But she would tell me all the time she had to take care of herself and she was. It was hard for her to grow up with her mom and dad because she and her mom didn't get along, which was very obvious later. By the way, our interaction was. But she adored her father. So there was a little difference. She she had a hard time helping me with my father because he was a teenager and he didn't want to live at home, so I didn't see him that often. But I worked around that, you know, I worked around that. I was very active in school and I was determined to be. She helped me with that because I would go with her sometimes as she cleaned houses, and she would say, If you don't want to do this for a living, be educated and make sure you take care of yourself. So. I listened to that because I want to do that. And it worked. I mean, I worked at high school, the vocational education program was there for me, playing the clarinet I actually played at the

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:10:20] The other place next to the bowl. It's a it's like, Um, I don't know if it was a conference hall or something, but I even played with my tutor. I stayed in music all the way through high school, junior high. So I was very active outside my home and I was determined to do better than everybody else in my family.

Jennifer Tilton [00:10:43] Yeah, yeah. Tell me

Jennifer Tilton [00:10:45] a little bit more about the church because you did a lot of kinds of activities in the church.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:10:49] Oh my Gosh. I loved the church. That was kind of like my savior, because when my grandmother and I would be together, it would be because she was teaching me a lesson on math or this or that, or she's working. I would go with her when she worked in the evenings to do parties. So when I got to church, that was more fun because everybody was there and there was always a program for us, no matter what the seasons were. There was a program, whether it was Christmas or Easter or whatever. We did pieces and memorized them. There was always someone to teach you something at church, and we always had Sunday school teachers.

Jennifer Tilton [00:11:40] And do you remember anything about any of those special programs or when you were a kid, any one stand out to you?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:11:47] There was one, I think I was almost 12 or 13, and we did an Easter celebration, and it was just amazing how the men and women of the church would get together and put on programs, and everybody had their individual segment and it would just come out so wonderful. I mean, it made you proud to be there. And we'd have a type of candlelight services and that was the place that they had funeral services. So this little kid would be scared every time if the service was on a Saturday and we went back to church on Sunday. Oh my goodness, I just sit there because the the main table offering table would be there and I would just go, I wonder

how that went, but I went to I had to go to funeral services, but I never wanted to go back to our church that next day after one had been there.

Jennifer Tilton [00:12:50] Why not?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:12:50] Because I was afraid of everything. Yeah. And I never had anybody to say that need to be afraid. This is what happens. Blah blah blah. I did that with my son. I made sure if you had questions or if I thought you would have questions because I never got anything answered.

Jennifer Tilton [00:13:09] Yeah, yeah, so. So you describe kind of those programs and that particular Easter program being really memorable. What are the kinds of things people would do in the program

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:13:19] Sing recite like she did. She was usually mistress of ceremony. We did Our Town. We did the Messiah. There were a couple other Christmas and Easter programs. I know our town was the main one. Oh, and we did

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:13:44] Sidney Poitier and.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:13:49] It was a play as well, and it was on not too long ago during Black History Month.

Jennifer Tilton [00:13:57] So you'd put on whole plays and people would have different roles.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:13:59] And yeah, and the people are amazing because lighting, you know, there was somebody in charge of everything. Yeah, it was. It was fun to watch. And then around 12, Clarence Butler and I became secretary and superintendent of Sunday School. That was fun. I tell you, I was the youngest person in the church to do that and to join the choir. So I had the memo is that the the little memo book and took notes for that morning service we collected and offering for that time. He oversaw the whole thing.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:14:44] And yeah,

Jennifer Tilton [00:14:46] so that's how I mean, I guess you grew up together, but that's you became closer, friends.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:14:50] Exactly because I had grown up by that time because their pictures and there were pictures where most of our pictures were outside the church that were taken, everybody took pictures outside the church. And so by that time, I was not this high and he was holding my hand. I was actually being a real person in the church, right?

Jennifer Tilton [00:15:14] Because you were the little kid in the neighborhood

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:15:16] I was the little kid. I was the youngest in the choir at that time as well.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:15:19] Right, right. Mhm.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:15:22] But we also had church dinners, afternoon dinners, evening dinners, sometimes after some of those plays or things, but mostly they would do dessert receptions after them. But we used to sell dinners and have dinners after different choirs would come and be with us. I'm telling you those ladies could cook, and the number one was Mrs. Butler. Hattie Butler. The food was amazing. And they taught us how to serve. We were always there to work. That was our church. We were the hosts. And I learned a lot from them and how how to be with other people and do what you're supposed to do politely and better.

Jennifer Tilton [00:16:16] I've heard from Clarence Butler and his mom would not was wonderful, but would not accept kids misbehaving in any way.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:16:24] And she should know she had a lot of them. I mean, I was around everybody that had more than three people in there and their children and family.

Jennifer Tilton [00:16:32] Mm hmm. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:16:35] So when you were growing up, who was the pastor of the church?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:16:40] Reverend Hopkins. Charles Hopkins. He was amazing. He actually taught you about the Bible. He didn't just like some of the speakers today. You didn't tower over you. He actually spoke to us. Plus, he was a singer, so he had a way of capturing the audience. Yeah, yeah. He was very lovely

Jennifer Tilton [00:17:05] would he sang as part of his sermon as well?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:17:07] And every once in a while, yeah, and he always promoted his quartets. He had two quartets.

Jennifer Tilton [00:17:13] Yeah, tell me a little bit about so do you know anything about him and kind of where he came from?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:17:17] No, no. You know, I remember there was Mrs. Hopkins, and I guess I was about four or five. They adopted their granddaughter, Ramona. And so we kind of went to school together a little bit. I I was very shy and inhibited until you gave me something to do. And then I opened up. So she and I didn't remain close very long because she was very quiet. Once once I knew I could do

something, then I, I was fine. But he also taught us how to do that. He would have little sessions before Sunday school if he could and just chat with us and talk to us about life and how things are when you're trying to grow up. And then we spent a lot of time at their home as well. For a while, I wasn't sure if they were relatives or what. But, you know, if things progress along and you hear more and you see more, so yeah, by teenage age than I knew. And my father said before he passed that Reverend Hopkins actually taught him to sing he didn't know he had a voice and he brought the voice out and he really admired him very much. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:18:39] So tell me a little bit about those singing groups because I know your dad within maybe the first one.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:18:45] I didn't know a lot about them because I was a little kid when he was doing that. All I knew is I'd be sitting there with everybody else, and they would be presented to sing because he didn't stay in town, so I didn't get to talk about it. But I knew everybody.

Jennifer Tilton [00:19:02] And what was that first group called again

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:19:05] The Jubileers? Yeah, I think that's right.

Jennifer Tilton [00:19:11] Yeah, the Hopkins Jubilee.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:19:12] Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then he did another one. So that must have been the Jubileers. Yeah, yeah, I think so. Clarence, no more on that. A little bit more him and Johnny. Yeah, they know a little bit more because Clarence and Johnny and whoever else is in the group today came following my dad much, much later, much later.

Jennifer Tilton [00:19:37] And did your dad tell you any later in life? Tell you any stories about any other stories about learning to sing?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:19:43] And yeah, he said he was very surprised. He was a good singer. He was the first tenor, and he sang a lot later on. But I wanted him and I didn't know why he wasn't in church so that he could sing in the choir and be there with me and all those types of things. But the guys were growing up and getting married and doing other things.

Jennifer Tilton [00:20:13] And so who? Who were the guys in the first group? So it was your dad?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:20:16] Yes, my father,

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:20:19] Claude Duckett, Ernie Thornton,

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:20:25] Ernie Thornton, Clabe Hangan and Clabe Hangan and lived here. Some his family lived here in Claremont, and he was singing when Joan Baez was here. So a lot of them moved on to keep singing.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:20:43] And then that was Joe Kelsey.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:20:45] And I was a little kid around them all and he got married and stayed in town. He was in town a long time. He was in town a long time. They were very nice. Young man, very nice. Yeah. And they recorded this particular group, recorded two two records. And my dad was the lead on the first one by itself. Does Jesus care? And then they did two others, and he was lead on one of those others. I tried to save them. My father once my grandmother passed. She gave these things and the records to my father, and he packed them where they went to lived again. But I still sent them to Clarence, and I kept pictures of what I sent to him.

Jennifer Tilton [00:21:42] Does so? Does Clarence have those records up there? OK, I've I've listened to the second to the mouton singers, but I haven't listened to any of the records of the earlier group. So I'll have to ask Clarence.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:21:54] Yeah, they they were amazing. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:21:57] What did the music? What do you remember about the music? Why? Why was it amazing?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:22:04] It was not the jumping, shouting gospel. They were just blended. Beautiful voices that would make you cry. Yeah, yeah. And my grandmother was extremely proud of her son. Yeah. And his voice. Yeah. I know she wanted more.

Jennifer Tilton [00:22:20] Great any other memories of the church, any other memories of family church that were sort of important?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:22:31] We were all close. Yeah, I guess I could say that we all sat together. We all sat together when there was the dinners or breakfasts or receptions, we all took pictures together. We did the Easter programs and Christmas programs, all those things.

Jennifer Tilton [00:22:58] And who are some of the family kind of the families that you remember kind of from the church in those old days?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:23:04] The Butlers...

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:23:05] Uh-Huh. Um. Guess I better look at the picture. Well...

Jennifer Tilton [00:23:16] Do you remember anything about the Hangan family? So because I've heard of Clabe Hangan and Caesar Hangan.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:23:24] Yeah, this is Clabe here. And it was his brother who passed away early from an injury. I believe it was when they were in high school. And I, myself and another young lady, black young lady who didn't live where any of us did. Nor were she a part of that growing up family. But we went to school together, went to high school together, and we because of our grades and our status and as seniors at the school, we both shared the scholarship that was provided for Caesar Hangan.

Jennifer Tilton [00:24:06] Oh, do you remember what her name was?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:24:10] No, I think it was Donna something but didn't know her, except for just going around school because she wasn't. There were only three my graduation year, let's put it that way. My graduation year consisted of me. Ramona, if she was around, I can't remember. Marianne Roberts and that's one of the other families the Roberts grandma. Her mother was Sarah Bell, and that was a huge family of kids. So it was that family. There was another reason why I said that. Oh, because of the family. All of all the families and the Texas St and Lugonia and Carlotta Court and over where Mrs Butler, Mr Butler lived and where we were. All of us church members and friends, the kids from two years before me and one year before me, they were all part of those housing groups and graduated before I did. So we were all friends, but I was one of the youngest of the group other than Anna Mae Dixon and her mom and dad. And that was another huge family. I can't remember Mrs Dixon's first name, but that was one of the huge families and one to three of her daughters sang, but they would basically only sing if they were asked to come and sing. So Anna Mae was my best friend. We grew up together three years old, but I wasn't singing like that like my father and all of them. But we were all close and Anna Mae and Ramona, Marianne myself. We were the only four are in 1960, nine out of all those families who graduated. I see everybody graduated before us, so we knew everybody. But most of my classes, my music, everything I did, I was the only black young lady. And from the town of everything. So I learned very early that race didn't matter to me because I did everything everybody did by myself. Pretty much. So there's the Dixons. Who else did I say? Oh my gosh there's so many people.

Jennifer Tilton [00:26:56] Tell me about Anna Mae Dixon, I've heard her name before, but I don't know about her.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:27:00] They used to call us Mutt and Jeff. She was so tall and lanky, and I was so short. And we did everything together, most of our lives. We would walk from one neighborhood to the other to visit everybody, and we would have curfew. We'd have to be there at her house by the time street lights came on or my house wherever I was living, because we moved again several other times because my grandmother gave up the Herald Street house to my uncle and his family. So we moved on Washington Street and then Lugonia was a favorite, even though it was a little tiny

duplex. That was the favorite because I was about 14 by then and that was in between everybody. We went to everybody's location, so Anna Mae and I. And they lived. I tried. I think I mentioned the condos that were off Redlands to Colton Avenue and Lugonia a little farther up cross Herald. And so we'd walk back and forth to her place and ours, and we were fine as long as somebody knew where we were. And she had brothers, and so there were two of them that would try and follow us around. But yeah, we got in trouble a lot because we never went home on time. And my grandmother did not have that. You are supposed to do what I told you to do. So every once in a while, we get in trouble for the most part. We were thick as thieves and we were at one house or the other. And in 1976, she passed away of a rare blood disease. But it was enjoyable times. We were such we wanted to be our own people. She was the same way we wanted to be. Our own people do our own thing.

Jennifer Tilton [00:29:01] Yeah. Now you mentioned kind of a number of different neighborhoods where people lived. I'd love to talk about a few of those kind of in. In a little bit more detail, so I wonder if you have early memories even before the freeway was built of the neighborhood right around the church? Oh yeah, because that seems odd now. Right, right. Because, you know, the freeway really changed things. So, you know, remember that neighborhood right around the church where the butlers lived and where you lived with your grandma kind of early on? What was that neighborhood like?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:29:32] It was quiet. There was the ice packing house down on on one end. Um, let's say that would be the West Side, maybe from there on the same street. There was a block of older homes where they still had outhouses.

Jennifer Tilton [00:29:52] Wow, what block was that?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:29:56] That's where the packing house was ice House. I understood my mother's teens, those teens used to go to the packing house and get ice and run around. I'm an ice eater and I got it from her.

Jennifer Tilton [00:30:10] And so they would just go and they'd they'd give them ice and kind of like

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:30:13] Oh yeah you get blocks of ice. Or either they were getting ready to bring it out in the drop it and crack it for them, that type of thing. By the time I grew up, that they had removed that, of course. And they were a little bungalow type houses. And that was going closer to the Methodist Church and across where the Butler's lived. And then there was a woman in church, Mrs Minor. She lived on the opposite side of that. That was one house I remember that had the outhouse. And then across the street, it was just like dirt road or whatever behind behind that area. But the street in front of the church was paved early on and you could go start one block up where Stuart and High and all those streets and just make circle back around.

Jennifer Tilton [00:31:11] And were there a lot of kids who lived in that neighborhood?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:31:15] No. Even some of the pictures that I have of my grandmother and my father, there were mostly teens that were in there. It just seemed like a quiet neighborhood with all kinds of trees. There used to be not not there was the terrace understand that Mr. Burton was responsible for. But there was another terrace from Church Street coming down to the church. And that one we all used to take a walk and come from Franklin Elementary School. I remember that and it was covered with all kinds of trees, but you could kind of hide out, play in the dirt all the time or whatever, but you still had a trail that led you to the church because it would just sit kind of like by itself. But there were houses and all the other locations from it. Little houses. Yeah, yeah. Marianne and her mom lived across the street with a lot of them. They moved out and found other places. And yeah, everybody kind of moved around a little bit that wasn't part of the other area.

Jennifer Tilton [00:32:28] Right, right. Well, do you remember sort of. So you remember kind of walking through the terrace down? And so, oh

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:32:36] yeah, we used to come through there as little kids. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:32:39] And so there were lots of trees and some big houses over there?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:32:42] Yeah the pepper trees were very prominent in Redlands, Smelly trees and the trees that made good switches.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:32:51] Yeah, they burned.

Jennifer Tilton [00:32:55] That's what happened when you would get in trouble?.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:32:56] Oh yeah. Oh yeah, it was funny. It wasn't just my grandmother, whoever was chastising their kids. They just pull a branch out of the tree and pull it apart and wind up with one piece of it. And there you go.

Jennifer Tilton [00:33:10] Yeah, I do remember how the building of the freeway sort of changed that neighborhood at all.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:33:19] Not really. Yeah, no.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:33:20] Yeah, I was, I'm sure, out here by then. I left Redlands in 1969 after I graduated

Jennifer Tilton [00:33:28] The freeway was built before then. But maybe you just weren't going down.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:33:34] Oh yeah, yeah.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:33:35] No, you are correct because

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:33:37] I had to go on the freeway to learn how to drive. So, no, you're absolutely right, but I can't speak to that. All I know is it was not very crowded with cars. But then it started to grow after I moved out of town and came back.

Jennifer Tilton [00:33:52] Right? Yeah, that makes sense.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:33:54] I had to picture it because again, I'm picturing myself where my father lived in San Bernardino. So, yeah, two different freeways. That's fun.

Jennifer Tilton [00:34:03] Now, a lot of families started to move out of that little neighborhood around the church. You were sort of talking about them to different neighborhoods. Partly, I think, is that redevelopment was happening as the free freeway happened, and I know I've heard both you talk and other people talk about both the Texonia Neighborhood the sort of Texonia housing projects there and of course, the Sharon and Karen and Carlotta court as like a couple of big neighborhoods. I wonder kind of what memories you have of those neighborhoods?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:34:31] Oh, it was freedom. That's how I looked at it. If I didn't want to be at home and I could leave home, those are the areas I would go to because I was either in school with some of the kids or the ones that were one grade in two grades above us. And we still were all friends with all of them. We could turn on a radio outside and just hang out. Nothing like now. Nothing. Nothing, nothing. It was just fun and there were always the swings and other type of equipment. And of course, teenagers are going to push a little ones off. And so we did those things, but mostly just walked around and visited and you could always going to somebody's home and they had refreshment or something. Everybody was just wonderful. No matter where you went. But I spent the most of my time up where Mrs Butler lived. Sharon, Sharon and Court Yeah. Yeah, because her daughter Lorraine, one of the oldest played was our organist, our pianist. So, um, and she was a little girl playing from what I understand. By the time I started growing up, then I got to know. Oh, you're the one that was doing that, you know, because you just you didn't. You didn't know a lot until you got a little bit older and was allowed to talk out in public.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:36:08] Yeah. So that was fun because she lived around the corner from her mom and dad. And then there was a gentleman Mr. Washington, my grandmother used to visit with. He lived across the street from the Butlers, and there was another family there in here. But I can't remember their name. I remember the daughter and her name was Gwen, and she gave me her dress and they made it over for me to be a Swans. And she and her mom left town early and then the parsonage house that belongs to the church that was also on Sharon Road. We lived there for a minute because my grandmother married one of the ministers.

Jennifer Tilton [00:36:48] Oh yeah. Do you know when the church bought that parsonage?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:36:52] No, no it was early on, I know. But Clarence, it probably that information and then his brother lived around the corner on Lugonia still is one of the largest, most gorgeous homes. He was a contractor and gardener.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:37:12] Oh oh.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:37:14] His place is amazing. Yeah

Jennifer Tilton [00:37:16] It's one of the older homes in the neighborhood?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:37:17] Yeah, gorgeous. I've always seen him outside doing something in his yard, and I knew his wife and all of them. Um, so yeah, Lorraine and Edward always lived in that area. Oh, and then when Mr. Mrs Butler and Lawrence moved out of the big house, then their daughter Lynell moved in to that house with her husband and family. So I used to go over there, too.

Jennifer Tilton [00:37:49] So that neighborhood, you kind of you just could wander around and go into anyone's house.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:37:52] I was the little kid. I was little Susie. That's what they called me. I went everywhere.

Jennifer Tilton [00:37:58] I've heard people say, maybe even Clarence Butler talk about how sometimes people would have wonderful dances for teenagers over at Texonia Park or at the Texonian housing development.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:38:07] Yeah, Uh-Huh. Outside, if it was at the projects and a couple of families. Oh, I can't remember their name. The mom is right here someplace. Um, the corner house, it was a big two story house and different people would rent that house. And this particular family? Gosh, I think it was Edward's wife's family, Goldie. Goldie. Yeah. And they would give parties for us teens and we would dance and they'd have snacks for us. I mean, it was just so normal. And then another family, the Sherman Palmore, not Polydor, but Palmore, P-a-l-m-o-r-e. That family, Sherman was the one of the teens and his sister was Yolanda, I can remember some names, as you can tell. Their family would open up their patio for us to come, and it was a group of us. It was 10 or 12 of us and we migrated around. The only place, oh yeah, we did get to dance at my house only once, but we went to all the neighborhoods who accepted us to do that. And we just played forty fives until they told us to go home. That's really cool. I can't believe he would remember that. But yeah, there was a group of us that got to that was our entertainment and being good kids.

Jennifer Tilton [00:39:53] Yeah, yeah, that's awesome. Where was that house on the corner? That two story house you were talking about?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:39:57] It was on the corner of Texas and Colton Ave.

Jennifer Tilton [00:40:03] Texas, and Colton. Okay. And part of that kind of housing development?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:40:06] No, no. It was just a house that you could rent and people were moving in and out of it in and out of it. And this particular time they they were home. And whichever us kids that went with that family, they did that for us.

Jennifer Tilton [00:40:24] That's lovely. Nice memories. Do you remember other kind of neighborhood businesses or hangouts kind of in the community?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:40:31] Hmm. No, only the lumber company. There was a nursery school near the lumber company. Anna Mae and I spent probably in between House of neighborly service and that daycare and then elementary school. Um, but I only remember Safeway, the liquor store. Uh.

Jennifer Tilton [00:41:07] Yeah, you told me you don't remember Robert Burton's grocery store, you weren't that was gone by the time you were a kid or do you remember?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:41:14] Tell me the location it was.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:41:17] Was it on Sixth Street?

Jennifer Tilton [00:41:18] It was right on. I think Stuart or I can't remember right there near the church.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:41:25] Sort of. Yeah, or yeah, I don't remember it, but I'm sure my family did.

Jennifer Tilton [00:41:30] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Now you mentioned that Robert Burton helped. You're somehow was connected to your mom buying that first house. Mm hmm.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:41:39] Being a realtor, Clarence confirmed it for me that he was the one that initiated her and mainly because she was poor and by herself. So they made arrangements. She paid that house off. When she passed in 2003, my father and I split the proceeds to that house that I wanted to redesign it and keep it. But he did. Yeah. So, yeah, yeah, it was part of our family that long.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:42:11] Wow.

Jennifer Tilton [00:42:19] I'm just checking my notes to see.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:42:21] Oh no your fine.

Jennifer Tilton [00:42:25] I guess, sort of. You talked a little bit about your memories of school. Mm-Hmm. You know, you were growing up in the fifties and especially in the sixties. A high moment of all kinds of social transformations by the civil rights movement is happening everywhere. Yeah. Youth movement is kind of happening everywhere. I guess I wonder what you noticed or how it was growing up in that era of so many changes and particularly was there any kind of awareness as a teenager of the civil rights movement happening around you? And what was that like?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:43:03] Yeah. At times it was scary because you didn't have the the information on why all those things were happening and why people felt the way they did. No matter what color they were. I was visiting my cousins on my grandmother's side in Los Angeles in 1965, when the Watts riot broke out. And it just so happened. I don't know if the grown ups were aware of it at first. She, too, had a number of children, and I broke out into a rash and had to have, um, calamine lotion or what? They didn't know what was wrong with me. I just broke out everywhere. And so we started traveling to find a drugstore to get something, and they had to notify my grandmother at the same time. And here we are, dead in the heart of the Watts riot. I didn't know, but maybe they did. Because, you know, during those times as a child and as a teen, you didn't find out a lot about things until they wanted you to know. And that was difficult because, yes, I was a young kid, but I think I should have known along with their kids and my grandmother came to town to pick me up, and she was just like losing it because we actually saw places being broken into and fires being started. And we very hurriedly came back to the Redlands and got out of there.

Jennifer Tilton [00:44:43] Wow. Yeah. Do you remember what you were thinking or feeling seeing that frightened?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:44:47] Yeah. And at the same time, there were other incidents similar to that. And she was the person I couldn't talk to. So I started talking to other families and asking them, if anybody knows what's making all of this happen? And I remember, uh, Jesse Jackson speaking, I don't think he might have been in Los Angeles or somewhere, and they started speaking about race riots and different things like that. And I just wanted to to be sure that

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:45:34] I could make my own way without running into those types of things or being a part of those types of things because of another circumstance. I wanted to just be normal and do what I could for myself as a teen and growing up. Yeah, I was never a part of any of that type of thing. And as as one black child going to different classes and graduating, by her self and all those things, I did everything I did drama, I did everything, and it was usually just me that was OK. Yeah, no one made a difference of me or the situation because of that. And it kind of even things out in a way where I'm normal, you're normal. It has nothing to do with this. And I grew up knowing I could live in the world without it mattering, and my grandmother worked for all kinds of different people. She never made a difference in people. She always did. Don't like you. I don't like you. And it was pretty much it. And I did ok.

Jennifer Tilton [00:46:50] yeah. Yeah. I mean, you were part of the generation that was part of the kind of desegregation of the public schools in Redlands. Right? Did anyone ever tell you what that was about even? Or did you just end up kind of going to a new middle school and you didn't know?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:47:05] No that was just it. You did what someone told you you should do. And that was that. No, it wasn't even said until, of course, later after your grown ups and you're hear these, well why didn't you tell us then? You know, yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:47:23] And did you were and your family members sort of experienced instances of racism in Redlands?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:47:30] No, never. Yeah. Well, my uncle did, I take that back? I didn't. My grandmother didn't, but my uncle did when he moved into the Herald Street house. There was a white family across the street and it was bad. I just think he and the man instantly didn't like each other, and they were neighbors once on the corner. And then one is the second house in across the street. And they fought all the time and the man would rev up his engine. My uncle had a couple of little kids and, you know, the front windows right here and their driveway is just across the street, and you didn't have, um, carports and garages, so they fought all the time and he shot my uncle. Um yeah, we went to him one night. He lived, but yeah, he shot him. So that was what I remembered, and that was heartbreaking because we lived in that neighborhood and there was none of that. There were Mexicans, there were white, some of my best friends from one block to the other. We didn't experience that. What happened with those families?

Jennifer Tilton [00:48:48] Yeah, yeah. Interesting. And and I remember you saying before that when your dad was growing up in the neighborhood kind of closer to the to the church that it was also a pretty mixed group of kids.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:49:02] Oh yeah. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:49:03] Latino or Mexican?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:49:04] I learned how to eat Mexican food in Redlands. Yeah. In both directions, my dad and my uncles spoke fluent Spanish. Um yeah. Most of their friends, black and Mexican, there were white guys, I don't think as many a part of the neighborhood, but mostly black and Mexican.

Jennifer Tilton [00:49:25] But and they they spoke Spanish because they just grew up speaking Spanish

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:49:29] They grew up speaking Spanish in the neighborhood. Mm hmm. You could not fool those guys.

Jennifer Tilton [00:49:34] That's really cool. Yep. Uh-Huh.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:49:37] And a lot of their friends are there are few in here, but.

Jennifer Tilton [00:49:43] In the picture of the church? So there was a couple, there was some Mexican families who went to the church as well?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:49:48] They hung out with us. They didn't go to church, but they hung out with us.

Jennifer Tilton [00:49:53] Right.

Jennifer Tilton [00:49:56] So you mentioned earlier a little bit about the Swans. So tell us how you sort of decided to become a Swans debutante.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:50:06] Well I wasn't sure, but I did get to go to one of the events, maybe two years before something like that when I was in high school and I knew the young lady who was presented and they spoke of it, not necessarily swans, because we didn't know them yet. But the people who spoke of the program said that it was similar to a Mexican family who presented their daughters to society

Jennifer Tilton [00:50:39] Like a quinceanera.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:50:40] And it was very similar to me. And I wanted to do that.

Jennifer Tilton [00:50:47] And did you have lots of friends who had quinceaneras? So you sort of saw that?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:50:50] Oh yeah, yeah. And it was it was fun. And there was only maybe two of us that belonged to the church who did that her year and mine. And that was special to me. It was, yeah. And I wanted to be a part of that. And so the adults got together and found out how to find out about this. And my grandmother took me over there. We had our interview and all those things and

Jennifer Tilton [00:51:23] Who interviewed you? Do you remember?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:51:25] Whoever signed this letter I believe.

Jennifer Tilton [00:51:27] Daisy Kirkland.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:51:28] Yeah. She was tall and had very short, curly hair, nice, nice people. But I worked hard. We had projects we had to do for the San Bernardino projects or, yeah, projects home of service like the one in Redlands. But for that particular group in San Bernardino. So the kids, little kids would come in and we'd

do little programs for them. We'd read to them and that was part of our assignments that we had to do. That was one of them

Jennifer Tilton [00:52:06] Home of Neighborly Service, right? Because they had one in San Bernardino.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:52:08] Yeah, it on Mt. Vernon. Mm hmm. So we spent a lot of time there utilizing that building as well for what we needed to do, what we had to do. We had separate parties, costume parties. We had to raise our own money to support our ads. So I sold five, 10, 20 dollar ads. There might have been a couple of other higher prices in there, so we had to use our expertize as young ladies and go out and request funds from friends, neighbors, businesses, all different types and the the ads that we sold were on the inside the book when it was. So I miss seeing that book and our names were attached to it.

Jennifer Tilton [00:53:01] And so do you remember where you sold cement? Like what? Who you got to?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:53:05] I know down. Town, because there was a dress shop that I frequented, like I don't know if it was a donut shop, I don't know, but everybody I can think of, I sold in a room.

Jennifer Tilton [00:53:21] And were you sort of prepared? So what were you taught? We were taught

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:53:26] to be young ladies and we did a little bit of modeling within the segment and there was a place near the Fox Theater that had a stage and all those types of things. We did that. There were several other things because and there was also competition. We were competing among each other,

Jennifer Tilton [00:53:55] competing for?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:53:59] Queen. OK, first prize first place. Second, Miss Congeniality, which was me. Oh, and third place. Mm hmm.

Jennifer Tilton [00:54:09] Congratulations. Thank you.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:54:11] Yeah, I. The plaque is someplace floated around between all the families. My grandmother and my father were extremely proud people. So yeah, it was. We had to show that we could, I guess, be young ladies. I don't I don't know how to say it, that we could speak for ourselves intelligently and sell those ads. Serve party. We had a tea and we served the tea and we all had to wear white. I don't think I had that picture. And we had to wear white gloves, white shoes. I mean, we had to be the perfect teen to serve tea to our visitors. That came. Yeah. So it was like special. Yeah. Yeah, very special.

Jennifer Tilton [00:55:05] And what was is there like a final party? That was the kind of

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:55:09] there was the Cotillion and Swan's debutante ball and it was at the Orange Show Orange Show Fairgrounds. Um, it was massive. I don't remember looking around a lot because how many of there was this anyway? There was a line of us. No, I don't think. Oh, I forgot. I might have a copy of it, but I guess there were at least 20 of us, maybe twenty five or something like that. And we had to have we had to choose an escort to escort us to the ball and to the tea. So I never had the same escort because there was always something happening with mine. One was in the service, so he took me to the tea, but he wasn't going to be able to take me to the ball, and he didn't go to any of the parties that they would have for us. We'd have costume parties and different things. And then. And that was hard to ask a young man to to be a part of something like that.

Jennifer Tilton [00:56:13] Yeah.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:56:14] Um, but I chose Rick Polidore for my escort, and he was thrilled. And he was one of those that graduated two or so years before. And it was amazing because I had to learn. We had to learn how to do the cotillion dance. And of course, that was what mid-century or whatever. And they were doing those kinds of things with the hoop skirts and the whole bit.

Jennifer Tilton [00:56:43] You had a hoop skirt?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:56:44] Oh yeah. Wow. Oh, my dress looks gorgeous. And I, yeah, actually, I brought the picture up just for you to see, Um, oh, I think I have one. Oh, sorry, I stopped doing that. Um yes. And we had to do the waltz with our father. Oh, so that was the only thing that he joined me with, but we learned how to expertly do the walls together. So father and daughter waltz.

Jennifer Tilton [00:57:17] That's sweet.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:57:18] Yeah. So it was mostly, um, cotillion from way back. Yeah, but they were. The Swans came up with that to help us young black women. And it worked.

Jennifer Tilton [00:57:31] And did that sort of connect you to a broader kind of black community in San Bernardino that you maybe not disconnected you before?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:57:40] No, no. Um, just more connection to Redlands. Mm hmm. Because we were photographed for the newspaper twice and with high school, I was awarded the Freedova School of modeling certificate. So I did that for a month. And um, and there was always something lady like for me to do, and that's cool. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [00:58:12] So I guess I wonder, I mean, you eventually left Redlands, but I wonder how you think you saw Redlands changed over the years, even when you say, go back and visit your.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:58:22] Oh, we always called it the little football town football college town. It was amazing to see it grow up and there was still as it would grow, there would still be that little mom and pop someplace either on Colton Avenue or, you know, the I don't know if it was a five and 10 or what it was, and especially downtown Redlands Boulevard, because we hung out after school after a well, when it was the junior high Redlands Junior High. And then when it was high school, we were always out there. I walked home from there to Washington Street was almost going down the highway where the dump was or whatever we call it. So we were always very active and very active. I remember that Um A and P grocery store on Redlands Boulevard Donut Shop, what do you call it? It's famous now. What do you call it? Mm, not Dunkin' Donuts, but the other one. Um, there were just several things. Mm hmm.

Jennifer Tilton [00:59:39] Yeah. Yeah, so fond memories. Mostly, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [00:59:43] Yeah, yeah. Had good memories in Redlands.

Jennifer Tilton [00:59:47] Well, I guess there's maybe the last question I would ask you is you were trying to document the history of these communities in the past, but also trying to think about giving messages to future generations. So thinking about kind of your experiences growing up in the Inland Empire as an African-American woman? What are the sort of messages you would give to the next generation?

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [01:00:14] Hmm. Well, be independent, be courageous.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [01:00:23] If you have dreams, strive for them, work toward them. Love each other. It's important I have friends today that I've had more than 30 years, 40 years. It's possible and they're all different races

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [01:00:44] And to look at how things are now and to work on some more changes. We're back where we need to take part in clearing up whatever all these ugly things that are happening and people dying and not allowing each other to to walk down the street because they're a different race. Yeah, it's it's worse than it used to be. Try and get it back to way. Hmm. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [01:01:14] Why do you say it's worse than it used to be? Or in what way does it feel like that from

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [01:01:17] from when I was growing up, it didn't seem the world didn't seem as torn apart as it is now. Yeah, it seems more torn apart to me now. Yeah. Um, the race issues seem more, I don't know, exaggerated. More hateful. Yeah. The reasons don't seem to to match what's happening. I don't know. Yeah. Yeah.

Jennifer Tilton [01:01:53] Um yeah. I wonder if that's something distinctive about where you grew up, because it's not like in nineteen sixty eight, the world was peaceful in terms of race

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [01:02:01] It was not not, but it was where I was.

Jennifer Tilton [01:02:03] You were right. Like this sort of. And it's interesting because the north side of Redlands in particular. Mm hmm. It was predominantly black and Latino, but also white. But but in this, it does seem like it was a sort of, interestingly, much more integrated space than a lot of other places in America.

Marcella "Susie" Pruitt Grier [01:02:18] And I think because it had a lot to do with economics, just everything because, um, because I was adopted by my grandmother and whatever, the welfare system was huge. There were so many non-married people or women as well. Lots of kids. Mm-Hmm. And it was hard. Mm hmm. It was very difficult. But I don't know. Maybe I stayed in my own little world too long? I don't know.

Jennifer Tilton [01:02:56] Yeah. But it also sounds like there was a community of support that yes. Yes, that was special. Well, thank you so much for sharing some stories and memories of the community with us.

End of Interview:
[01:02:56]