

California State University, San Bernardino

## CSUSB ScholarWorks

---

Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings

Bridges That Carried Us Over Digital Archive

---

10-7-2014

### Zoie Coleman and Annette Overstreet

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation, "Zoie Coleman and Annette Overstreet" (2014). *Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings*. 99.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/99>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Bridges That Carried Us Over Digital Archive at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bridges Digital Archive: Audio and Video Recordings by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@csusb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@csusb.edu).

# Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Zoie Coleman, Annette Overstreet

**Interviewer:**

Hania Mubashir

**Interview Date:**

October 7, 2014

**Interview Location:**

Colton, CA

**Length:**

00:58:18

**Interview Summary completed by:**

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

**Description:**

Hania Mubashir interviews Zoie Coleman and Annette Overstreet, women with a deep history in San Bernardino. The audio recording starts with an explanation of the women moving from Pasadena to San Bernardino in 1949. When moving, they noticed the major difference between both cities is that San Bernardino had no sidewalks, electricity, or inside toilets. The women also mentioned that they grew up in the Valley Truck Farm area, where their father grew crops such as black-eyed peas, corn, boysenberries, tomatoes, okra, greens, and turnips. Mubashir then asked about expectations that the women had from their family, which came back to outside farm work, inside domestic work, and church services every Sunday. After moving to San Bernardino, Coleman and Overstreet joined more church activities in comparison to when they were in Pasadena. Their parents, however, were wary of dancing and listening to non-religious music as it might lead to interaction with non-Christians. They also had little recreational activities and mostly cleaned, read, and stayed inside. Coleman had been able to leave the family home at the age of 24, once she was married. Within the topic of jobs and prejudice, Overstreet mentioned how during her time working as a Harris Company operator, she had been called a racial slur over the phone. Coleman herself was given a lower job than her qualifications allowed due to her ethnicity. They mention that their parents never liked to make a big scene if there was a racist altercation and that their parents never talked about their own experiences. All three women then recollect memories of hairstyles and fashion from the past, such as the flip and the full-slip dress. The conversation moves to their educational journeys, the defunct system of schools' 13th and 14th grades, and learning about Black history from non-family. After talking about Little Tim, their preacher relative who preached from a coffin, and about church conventions, the two interviewees Valley Truck Farm churches. They explain that there were churches on every corner, and the recording ends with the names of Allen Chapel, AME, St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, Canaan Temple, Holiness Church, Church of God in Christ, and Full Gospel.

**Subject Topic:**

- Moving
- Lack of Sidewalks
- Lack of Electricity
- The Valley Truck Farms
- Farming
- Crops
- Faith
- Religious Duties
- Strict Household
- Entertainment
- Marriage
- Jobs
- Racism
- Fashion
- Education
- College
- Civil Rights
- Church Conventions
- Churches

**Spatial Coverage:**

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
Harris Company	San Bernardino, CA (Defunct Location)
Norton Air Force Base	San Bernardino, CA (Defunct Location)

**Temporal Coverage:**

1949 - 2014

**Key Events:**

- Overstreet and Coleman moved to the Inland Empire from Pasadena in July 1949
- The biggest difference between Pasadena and the Inland Empire was no sidewalks
- There were no inside toilets or electricity
- The Valley Truck Farms was where Coleman and Overstreet had lived
- The farming was done to sustain the family and the excess was either given or sold
- Father raised black-eyed peas, corn, boysenberries, tomatoes, okra, greens, turnips
- Father owned 5 acres and rented more property
- Maintaining the water and carrying it to who was doing so
- Expectations by their parents for them in the 1940s and 1950s
- Being assigned as an outside person, such as with animals
- An inside person would have to cook and clean
- The most important rule at that time, no matter what, was to attend church services
- There was also Wednesday Baptist training, and continued after leaving Pasadena
- Living in San Bernardino, Sundays meant church services for the whole day
- They also took part in the usher board, choir, and junior church
- They were not allowed to go to local centers in San Bernardino and Pasadena
- Their parents did not believe in dancing or mingling with non-Christians
- They had no outside recreational activities besides cleaning or reading
- Not sleeping past 8 AM and listening to the radio

- Later watched television as their first set was bought in December 1953
- They were not allowed to listen to jazz
- Coleman left the family home at 24 when she got married
- Coleman's mother-in-law left her and her husband's home.
- This was because she and Coleman could not agree on the time to do chores
- Both women had jobs within their church
- Overstreet's first job was cleaning dishes for the *Sun-Telegram* company
- A lot of the shopping was done downtown San Bernardino
- Overstreet was also an operator in the Harris Company beauty salon
- Overstreet had also been called a racial slur over the phone as an operator
- Coleman's first job was at the Norton Air Force Base and taking the job as the typist
- Coleman later became a secretary to important people
- Some memories of San Bernardino's Jim Crow Era
- Coleman was never given an interview for a secretary position due to her ethnicity
- Being told to keep swimming even though Coleman's swimming cap had split
- Their parents did not like to make a big scene
- What the parents experienced from prejudice they did tell the interviewers
- Popular hairstyles for women and girls in their time
- Back then, men had extremely short hairstyles
- Overstreet and her husband's many businesses
- Overstreet's father-in-law's drive-thru and growing cotton for its decoration
- The impact from the 215 Freeway on businesses
- Were able to listen to non-religious music when out of the house
- The fashion of the time like the half slips, full slips, and felt skirts
- Parents expected them to go to college
- The school system that had up to 14th grades that were connected to college
- This school system was changed in the 50s
- The interviewees learned about Black readers from church and school, not home
- Important things that happened in life do not have emphasis until afterwards
- Going to the Thousand Pines Summer Camp in Crestline
- Little Tim was a cousin of theirs who had preached from a coffin
- Had attended a lot of church conventions with their parents
- Naming all of the churches that were in the corners of the Valley Truck Farms

**Key Organizations:**

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

**Interview Index:**

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Audio	00:01:26 - 00:13:18	Living San Bernardino and the role of religion in the family.
Digital Audio	00:22:37 - 00:24:09	The racism that the interviewees had faced while working.

Digital Audio	00:36:16 - 00:38:52	Coleman, Overstreet, and Mubashir recollect hairstyles from the past.
Digital Audio	00:57:21 - 00:58:24	Naming the various churches that had been at the Valley Truck Farms.

### **Related Materials**

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

HANIA MUBASHIR: Today's date is Tuesday, October the 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014. My name is [Hania Mubashir?] and I am interviewing Zoie Coleman and Annette Overstreet for the Archiving Black History in the Inland Empire Project. Their names are spelled Zoie, Z-O-I-E Colman, C-O-L-M-A-N. And An--

ZOIE COLEMAN: C--

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- huh?

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- C-O-L-E-M-A-N.

HANIA MUBASHIR: C-O-L-E-M-A-N. And Annette, A-N-N-E-T-T-E Overstreet, O-V-E-R-S-T-R-E-E-T. We are interviewing Mrs. Colean and Mrs. Overstreet at the home of Annette Overstreet in Colton, California. Thank you, [00:01:00] Mrs. Coleman and Mrs. Overstreet, for taking out the time to conduct this interview with us. Now, before we begin, how would you like me to address you during this interview? As Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. Overstreet? Zoie, Annette?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Zoie is fine.

HANIA MUBASHIR: All right, Zoie.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Annette.

HANIA MUBASHIR: And Annette, all right. First, when did you move from -- you're originally in Pasadena and then you moved out here to the Inland Empire, is that correct?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's correct. In July of 1949.

HANIA MUBASHIR: July 1949, wow. How old were you at the time?

ZOIE COLEMAN: I was 18.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And I was 10.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wow. (laughter) What initially impressed you in terms of the difference [00:02:00] between Pasadena and -- well, where -- you came to San Bernadino area?

ZOIE COLEMAN: San Bernadino.

HANIA MUBASHIR: San Bernadino.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: What was your initial impression of the difference between Pasadena and the Inland Empire?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Well, for me, we had been coming out here prior to this every summer because our grandparents lived out here and we came. But the thing that made a big impression on me as a child: there were no sidewalks where I -- (laughter) no sidewalks where we lived.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's the same thing I wanted to say. There were no sidewalks.

ZOIE COLEMAN: There were no skates. I couldn't ride skates. I mean, skate on skates. And I could not ride the bicycle or my brother's skate coaster. So, those were two things that were -- made me -- very impressionable on that.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: The more important thing that impressed me was there were no inside toilets. We had to go back to using the outhouse [00:03:00] and our home that Dad moved in -- for us (inaudible) electricity or running water.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Are you serious? There was no electricity? I mean, it wasn't that -- you didn't have any in that house or that it wasn't out --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: It wasn't hooked up.

ZOIE COLEMAN: To our house.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: There wasn't -- no electricity in that area right there at that time.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wow. (laughs)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That part of our street.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes. (laughs)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Now, I've heard the area where -- there were a lot of African American families who had land in an area called the Valley Truck Farm? Can you -- and I'm asking this from the perspective of someone who has moved out to the Inland Empire and I don't know a lot of the history of African Americans in the Inland Empire. What was the Valley Truck Farm?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: It was an area in the area that [00:04:00] was accommodated, I believe, by Mill Street on the north and Redlands Boulevard, maybe not that far, on the south. Tippecanoe to the east and Arrowhead to the west. And that area was where the majority of the Black families lived and raised their children and also had farm animals and farms.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Is that where you all lived?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's where we lived. We lived on what is called -- it was Pioneer Street then and now it's [Rancho?] Road.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Now it's --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: The area was divided by Waterman Avenue and we lived on the east side and then the other larger group of people lived on the west side and [00:05:00] the -- I think the west side was more populated than the east side and had less farm area. There was more farming, I think, done on the east side.



HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: More open land.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Open land, yes.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Now, was this farming for commercial or farming for food for your family?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Basically, it was food for the family. But lot of the homeowners did have excessive growth of food and they did either give that to their neighbors or they sold it to their neighbors.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Sell it.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: My father raised, and Zoie, correct me, Black-eyed peas, corn, boysenberries.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Tomatoes.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Tomatoes, okra, [00:06:00].

ZOIE COLEMAN: Greens.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, greens. Oh, there was so many things, turnips, that we had to learn to eat and to like. (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Zoie, you're frowning. Is that a turnip memory?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: The first year we moved --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Definitely.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- it was in the summertime. First year we moved down here, we, I think, existed on fried chicken, corn, tomatoes, okra, and Black-eyed peas. (laughter) With me shelling them. (laughter) And in that time, my aunts would come from Arizona or Pasadena, wherever they came from, and they would get out there after the peas were picked. We'd have picking parties. I mean pea-shelling party.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Pea-shelling party, yep.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Right (inaudible) (laughter) yes.

HANIA MUBASHIR: So, how much land did your father have for all of these crops that you had on this land that you guys had to tend?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Well, [00:07:00] I think he had approximately five acres or more. But he rented or used more property than that because I can remember walking down a long length of corn to the border on the east of Valley Truck Farm when they planted the corn to take water to my grandfather, who was way down at the end, watering the corn. And the corn was high over our heads and it's --

HANIA MUBASHIR: All right, so, you had to take --

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- I --

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- a glass of water --

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- no, no, no.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- or a pitcher of water down this --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: My father had a well --

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- okay, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- and that well is what he irrigated the crops with. Because of the way the well was set up, someone had to sit there and keep water in the vehicle that was running the well to keep [00:08:00] it going. And the older children would do that. Girls, usually, would do that. But, yes, we had to take water to grandfathers and uncles, whoever was -- maintained that.

ZOIE COLEMAN: That was our job.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And my thought was they'd come home for lunch and they didn't bring the water. So, we had to go back up to the well to get the

water and bring it back to them. (laughter) My thought was (inaudible) why didn't they bring the water with them? (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: But you were 10, 11 --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Right?

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- 12.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And I said --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, you were pre-teen, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- yeah, and it's -- (laughter) you're right.

(laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: They had jobs that they felt were for children and they had adult jobs.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yes.

ZOIE COLEMAN: And that was the way it was.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yes.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes, I tell you, those were some times.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Tell [00:09:00] me, what were some of the rules that your parents had? We're looking at the '40s, going -- no, no, going into the '50s, what were some of the rules that they had for you in terms of things you were required to do, absolute no-nos, and the -- you know, the way you carried yourselves around your peers and around adults? 'Cause you guys mentioned things that you were expected to do, like carrying the water. That was a child's job. But what were some of the rules your parents had?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Well, if you were -- it was kind of like an assignment. If you were assigned to be an outside person, then you had to feed the chickens and help feed the other -- the pigs and the cows and horses and all those kind of things and clean up. And if you were inside working, then you could

help to cook and clean and do all those kind of things. But overall, [00:10:00] that -- and we're talking about '40s and '50s, even in Pasadena, the one major thing that we had to do was go to church. No matter what was going on, we went to Sunday school, we went -- when we got older, we went to church. But midweek, there was -- the church had a -- what was it called? A Bible --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Bible study?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- on Wednesday (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) prayer meeting. No --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Right.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- it was prayer meeting. But --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah, it was.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- young people's --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Was it Baptist training? Well, I --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- yes (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- grew up in a Baptist training and it was BTU on Wednesdays.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- on Sunday.

ZOIE COLEMAN: We went on Sunday night, BTU.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: But anyway, we went every Wednesday to this and it was this -- Mrs. [O'Neill?] was there. She played the piano, blinky-blinky-blink. (laughter) But she played and we sang. We learned to sing, we learned the Bible, we learned to read the Bible, and it was wonderful. We [00:11:00] did that even up until the time we left Pasadena. That was one of the main things we did.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Were either of you on the usher board or in the choir or --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I was too young to be on either one of those. And when we came to San Bernadino, I was in all of that.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

F: Is that --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We went to church all day Sunday and you went to junior church. That's what it was called.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We went --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- we went to a prayer meeting on Wednesdays here and we went to choir rehearsals --

ZOIE COLEMAN: (inaudible) Tuesday.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- on Friday for me. And so, when I started going to junior high school, the kids were all going to what is called the rec. Was called the rec. It was a recreation center over on the west side. [00:12:00] And Mrs. Shirrells --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wait, wait, wait, wait, now remember, I'm new to the Inland Empire. So, what's that -- where's the west side?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Over on the -- in the [Muscoy?], Muscott --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- Muscott Street.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Mus--

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Muscott.

ZOIE COLEMAN: North San Bernadino. Northwest.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes. Muscott.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, okay. But you said -- okay, but that's not --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I said Muscoy. But I said the wrong word.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- but the name of the street is Muscott.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Muscott. And you see the park that is named after Anne Shirrells. Mrs. Shirrells ran the rec center. But we were not allowed to go because our folks didn't believe in that.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh.

ZOIE COLEMAN: That was one thing. Some things we weren't able to do. We didn't go -- the same thing happened when we were lived in Pasadena and I was young and I was a teenager, there was a place on South Fair Oaks, [00:13:00] LTL, and we weren't allowed to go down there because my folks did not believe in dancing and that was one of the -- but they didn't know if all the kids that went there were Christians. So, we were brought up very strictly.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah. So, what did young people do for entertainment in San Bernadino?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We don't know. (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: We entertained ourselves at home, you know?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Did a lot of signing with the family around the house, and our chores -- I mean, those chores -- ironing.

ZOIE COLEMAN: We did a lot of reading.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes. But ironing and washing and ironing, it took up a lot of our time. We didn't do a lot of extra outside things. I had a friend that -- Mrs. [Poley's?] children that lived right down the street from me. Sharon and I would interact. But we [00:14:00] didn't do too many other things.

HANIA MUBASHIR: What time'd you guys usually go to bed?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: When it got dark at night.

F: (inaudible) (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Well, depending on the time of the year --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: The time of year.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- you were going to bed early.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Exactly.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And I don't remember any time changes then. Do you remember, Zoie?

ZOIE COLEMAN: No, I don't (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

F: -- come in till later.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Now, my mother wouldn't let us sleep past eight o'clock.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We got up at six.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, that's -- I was going to ask you that.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: You made that bed and you didn't go back and get in it.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Exactly. Not even for a nap.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Nothing.

HANIA MUBASHIR: You had to be sick.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: No -- and that's it. (laughter) That's it. We listened to the radio, though.

ZOIE COLEMAN: That's right.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We did listen to the radio, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Then, eventually, we got a TV.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Do you remember when you guys got your first TV? When the first --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- well, when I say -- when the first --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- 1953, was that the --

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- well, when I say when the first TV came in the house.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: (inaudible)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I don't know.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- [me and Oliver bought?]?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh, yeah, probably was.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Probably 1953. December of 1953. My brother [00:15:00] and I had gotten jobs at Norton and we went together and went out to Fedco and bought --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, my God --

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- [a family?] --

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- I remember Fedco!

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- yes. (laughter) I miss Fedco.

HANIA MUBASHIR: I love Fedco!

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I [miss?], too, I --

HANIA MUBASHIR: You could stay in there all day, get everything! (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- we talk about that, how much -- (laughter) and we bought a TV and then, lo and behold, the TV began to go out and a boss of mine, one of my bosses found out there was a short in it and there was nothing we could do about it, so --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- that -- but we did enjoy that TV.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Could you guys feel a difference in the flow in the household once the television came in in terms of your interaction with each other?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Annette, you answer that, 'cause I was gone a lot. I was working then.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I think so, but not very much. I mean, we still had the interaction with our [00:16:00] brothers and sisters and our parents. And Daddy would watch TV a lot. Mama wouldn't necessarily watch anything on TV.



HANIA MUBASHIR: So, it was usually whatever --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- your father wanted to watch, yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: They didn't let us get too attached to --

ZOIE COLEMAN: No.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- anything like that.

ZOIE COLEMAN: And there were certain things you didn't watch on TV.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's right.

ZOIE COLEMAN: You know?

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Just like radio when we were in Pasadena growing up. We weren't supposed to watch jazz. (laughter) And my brothers -- or listen to --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Listen to jazz.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- yeah, and my younger brother said, "Mama, they're just listening to jazz."

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: When they want to tell on us.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah. (laughter) Yeah, "They're just listening to jazz." (laughs)

HANIA MUBASHIR: So, Zoie, how old were you when you left the family home?

ZOIE COLEMAN: I was 24. I got married in August of 1955, here in San Bernadino. And I moved to [00:17:00] the midtown San Bernadino area. My husband had come to San Bernadino earlier, in 1951, and bought a house on Temple Street. And he and his mother had lived there and I was told that I would be moving in with he and his mother. However, his mother gave us a week after we married. We didn't have a honeymoon. And she decided, after, like, a few weeks

that she would move into her own house that she had already on Cleveland Street and leave us alone. (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ZOIE COLEMAN: So --

HANIA MUBASHIR: (laughter) Okay.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- we could not come to agreement on when I should do my chores. She felt that I --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wait, you mean, as a married woman, when you should do your chores?

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- yes, because I had other activities that I did for the church. Like, on Saturday morning, I would go down to the church and help down there. Well, she thought I should [00:18:00] stay home, do my washing and cleaning and all that --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, okay, all right.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- before I went outside the house to do other things. So, I guess that was one of the things that bothered her. (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We both did -- had jobs in the church. She was a secretary and she did the programs and those kinds of things. And when I got -- well, my other sister, Patsy, was next and she did it. And then, after that, I was after Patsy and I would do it. That was that old mimeograph machine.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Mm-hmm, with the purple ink.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah, and run those off. You'd do the --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah!

ZOIE COLEMAN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Some ditto machines!

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's it!

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah, (laughter) yeah. That's what we did. That's what we did (inaudible)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: So, we were there, I -- we were there, Saturday morning, [just -- she said, probably tell?] -- from nine to 12. But another thing [00:19:00] I did is when I got to be at junior high school age, I -- my mother was asked by a lady that worked for the *Sun-Telegram* company if I could come and have a job up there to be -- to -- she worked in the kitchen. She cooked for the employees in the *Sun-Telegram* -- but if I could come and wash the dishes from nine to one. So, I went, that was my first actual paying job, and I made \$6.07 every Saturday from nine to one. (laughter) And I was good, just --

HANIA MUBASHIR: And happy, huh? (laughs)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- instead of buying clothes outright, I would lay them away at that time and they would -- I mean, you could buy quality stuff for a little bit of money in that time. So, that was one [00:20:00] of the jobs that I had. And right to this day, I have that rocking chair in the living room in there that that lady, Mrs. Coleman, gave to me.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Where did you guys go shopping?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: In downtown San Bernadino. Lerner's, [Leeds?] was there, [Kinney's?].

HANIA MUBASHIR: I remember Lerner's, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Harris Company.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, Harris Company.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Montgomery Ward and Sears.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Like, I -- yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, wait, okay, on which street -- is that where the Inland --  
no, no, it's where the --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: They were E Street. Most of those were on E  
Street.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- the -- E Street?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Kinney's was on --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- 5<sup>th</sup> and E.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Third and E was the main drag of San Bernadino. That's  
where Harris Company was.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: And then you go north on E Street and Montgomery Ward's  
was on the left.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: [Cress's?], Woolworth, Lerner's.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Sav-On's.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Sav-On's, Penney's. And they were up at 5<sup>th</sup> Street by then.  
And you come back down to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and go west, Sears [00:21:00] was to the  
west of Harris Company.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: And then, they had numerous small little dress shops that I  
liked to go to 'cause when I was working at Norton, I would buy something every  
couple of weeks or so, I'd go there. And I remember one time we were looking for a  
half slip and a lot of these shops -- I don't know if I should do this, but anyway, they  
were owned by Jewish people. And they were good salespeople. I remember we'd

go into one of these shops and we wanted a half slip. We told the lady what we wanted and she brought out one but we didn't like it because of some reason.

"Well, this is what you asked for. I got" -- oh, my you went through a whole rigamarole with those people, 'cause if you said you wanted it and they had it, you were supposed to buy it. Was almost like an agreement. But that was just something that turned out -- you know?

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Well, you know, I told you earlier that I worked in cosmetology [00:22:00] in the --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- Redlands. Well, I was the first Black to work at the Harris Company in cosmetology. And so, just like she said, the Jewish, Mr. and Mrs. Harris were Jewish. I worked for their son-in-law. And they actually, I was told, had, oh, I can't even think of the name of this store they had, the son-in-law and his wife. But anyway, Sheldon had went around and asked all the operators if they mind working with me. And they said, no, that they would work with me. And so, that's how I became an operator in the Harris Company beauty salon. Another thing is one day, I was sitting there, waiting for a customer and the phone rang and I got up to answer it. And the lady said, "Oh, I would like to have an appointment with, [00:23:00] oh, I can't think of her name. But that little nigger gal."

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, Lord, yeah, yeah, yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I said, "Well, she can't take you." So, I booked myself out and booked her with one of my friends. And when she came in, I made it a point to go over to where Bridget was doing her hair. She could see me coming for all the mirrors that were there. And she had her head up looking. And she said,

“Oh, there’s my girl.” I said, “Yes, I am” -- she said, “I asked for you.” I said, “Yes, I know. I answered the phone.” She fell back a bit. (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: ‘Cause she remembered what she had said.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: She fell back in that shampoo bowl and I turned around and walked out. And so, by the time she got her hair set, I was doing a manicure. And she came over to talk to me. And she said, “You know, I’m so sorry I said what I said.” And I told her, I didn’t know what [00:24:00] I was saying but I told her, I said, “Yeah, my husband said when you play with a puppy it will lick you in the mouth.” So, I didn’t know what I was saying, you know, say -- (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: [My sister’s?] thinking about those conversations.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: So, anyway, she never asked for me again.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh!

F: Okay, go ahead.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Those kind of prejudice things, what happened with my very first real job, too, I got a job at Norton Air Force Base. My shorthand teacher, there were two Black girls in her class and she said, “You and Miss” --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Larkin.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- “Larkin need to go and take that federal test this Saturday. It’s gonna out here. Be sure and take that test. It’s a federal civil service test. So, we took the test and I ended up getting on the list for a job with the federal -- so, I went to Norton and I got a job and they sent me over to supply to get this secretarial job. I showed up [00:25:00] and this little old white guy said, “Oh, I didn’t have a job for a secretary. They must have -- personnel must have made a mistake. But let me go around here to the typist pool and let me see if [Prince?] has something.” He was her boss, so he went around there, lo and behold, they found me a job as a typist. And me not knowing that I should have protested, I should -- I took the job. I

was just glad to be working. I was a kid still. So, I took the job and worked out so well. Prince liked me and a couple o' years later, some people came out from Ohio and I -- and she helped me. She knew what I wanted. She knew what had happened to me. She helped me get a job as a secretary. And then, later, I transferred to procurement, got a promotion, and went to be a secretary to a boss and two guys. And then, [00:26:00] later on, I got to be the secretary to the guy that was in charge of our quality control department. And I'm not saying that for my pride or anything. But people -- you have to do the right things and be at the right place at the right time and not have, you know, a lot of prejudice in yourself to get where you're going in this world. And I believe that from way back up until now, the same way with Annette, the way she was. She made progress because we didn't argue or, you know --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET:        Yeah, you did it with --

ZOIE COLEMAN:    -- put down the other people.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET:        -- with dignity.

ZOIE COLEMAN:    We just did our jobs, you know?

HANIA MUBASHIR: What -- I'm glad you guys opened this up, 'cause I'm, you know, I taught African American studies at Poly High School, you know, before I [00:27:00] retired, combined with the stories that my mother would tell about, you know, being the first Black person or opening those doors. What are some of the experiences that stand out for you in terms of Jim Crow or racism or prejudice in the Inland Empire that you had to confront and get past and continue moving -- what, when you go back over your lives, what are some of those instances that stand out?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET:        I don't remember having -- actually, that one was the only one I think I ever had that I came face to face with [00:28:00] prejudice. In school, I don't think I had any.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Where did you go to?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I went to Sturges Junior High School and Pacific High School.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Was that an integrated school?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes, both of them were integrated. And then, I went to Ferguson's Beauty School and then to San Bernadino Valley College and then I took some classes at the University of Redlands. And so, all of --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, all of --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- mine just kind of went ahead --

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- all the way up. Were -- you know, when I read about things that happened in the South and I experienced to some extent when I was in Johannesburg, when you were shopping, were there any prohibitions, things that you couldn't try on or stores that you just didn't go into or anything like that?

ZOIE COLEMAN: I remember one time we were in Harris Company and they did not want you to try on hats [00:29:00] at Harris Company for a while. But we got past that and it wasn't really a big thing. The other big thing that happened to me before I went to work for Norton is I also took a test for the city to be a secretary. And I realized and -- that Florence Larkin and I were probably the two top secretaries in our class and we took the -- we both took the test and I called to find out how I came out. And I think my grade was very high. But do you know they never called me for an interview for secretary? They knew that I was Black and they never called me. And I'm sure that I passed that test. If I passed the federal test, I'm sure I passed there. But other than that, there weren't -- I don't remember. Nothing else stands out as very blatantly -- and, oh, [00:30:00] there were instances where you'd go to the market -- I remember in the Stater Bros. on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and you'd be in line waiting for your -- to talk to the butcher to get -- and they would take



all the white people around you. And my mother had done this before, so I did it. I was, "I'm next." "Oh! (laughter) I'm sorry, I didn't keep track, ma'am." [And so, what?] -- and then my -- even my children nowadays tell me that they have followed that, too. And my husband used to get so upset if I tried to defend myself and get my -- I remember one time at Stater Bros., he thought I was going to say something to the cashier and he went over by the door where you walk out 'cause he didn't want to get involved. He was going to be embarrassed. (laughter) But no, that's -- (laughs)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, but so, you did it just like my mother and I learned that from her, you know? I learned how to say --

ZOIE COLEMAN: "I'm next."

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- "Who's next?" "I'm next." (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: You know? And the message was very clear but at the same time you were [00:31:00] doing it with dignity.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: [But it's -- don't trip?], okay? (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: That's what we were taught.

HANIA MUBASHIR: I think it was more prejudice against men than there were against women, overall, really.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh, that's interesting. Were there any areas of San Bernadino or the Inland Empire where you knew not to go, it was understood, if you were Black, you just didn't go in those areas?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Well, one of the areas was up at Paris Hill Park, in that area.

And --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Where's that?

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- it's on Highland, on the other side of St. Bernadine's Hospital.

We went there during the high school days to take swimming. We had swimming classes there. And you know how Black people feel about their hair.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Right.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Well, my swimming class [00:32:00] was first period. And, you know, on Saturdays, I had just got my hair pressed and curled and -- or Sunday morning, whatever it was. So, going to school Monday morning, I got dressed and then we -- they took us over to Paris Hill Park in a bus. And you swim and you -- then you got ready to go back to your school. So, I had been swimming and the cap split. And I went to my instructor, "Mrs. [Milley?], my cap has split!" I was close enough under her, she was out, up on the top of the swimming pool, you know, right on the edge, and I had my head up out of the water. And she said -- she kind of gave me a push and said, "It's all right. Go ahead back in there." What could I do?

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wow.

ZOIE COLEMAN: I didn't know anything.

HANIA MUBASHIR: I know!

ZOIE COLEMAN: I didn't know --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, poor thing!

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- that she -- I didn't know that she [00:33:00] shoulda -- you shouldn't have even pushed me.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: But the next thing was I had my hair wet and nappy for the rest of the day.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: They didn't have 'fros in --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- at that time, you know? You were (inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, the 'fro saved us. (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: But yes, that's what happened and that has always stood out for me in my life because I endured that, you know, kinky hair as we would call it, all the rest of the day. And, you know, going up there, you think you're cute and --

HANIA MUBASHIR: And it's Monday!

ZOIE COLEMAN: And Monday, yes!

HANIA MUBASHIR: It's first period Monday!

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes! That's my first period Monday.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Sure.

ZOIE COLEMAN: And you know they ain't going to do it midweek.

HANIA MUBASHIR: No, that [cost much?]. My mother had this -- you just have to wait till you get home. I'll pull out the hot comb.

ZOIE COLEMAN: That's what would happen.

HANIA MUBASHIR: You know, that was it.

ZOIE COLEMAN: But she would still would do it --

HANIA MUBASHIR: And Mama couldn't do my ends the way the beautician could do 'em.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Mm-hmm. But she still didn't do it 'till Saturday. It didn't come up the next day.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, man. Oh, man.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes, it was a Saturday thing for us, getting our hair one.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, [00:34:00] my goodness.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes, but that was [all the real thing?].

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I'm sure that there were places that I knew of that we shouldn't go. But because they were -- that that was true about them, we didn't worry about it too much and we didn't -- and I can't think of any real places that I didn't go to. We just kind of worked our lives around a lot of things, so --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Right, yeah, yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- I think. Daddy didn't like a lot of emphasis on making a scene on that kind of thing, so we knew.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That -- because that was one thing. Our parents, even though my dad came from -- was born in Texas and his family, because of something that happened, had to move quickly and emergency and move to Oklahoma. So, there were things that they experienced that [00:35:00] they knew about. But my mother and my dad did not belay or talk about prejudice and the things that people did to them. That was one thing they let us experience on our own. Whatever happened, we learned it on our own. They did not tell us. If we learned -- we knew about prej-- we knew that things went on in the South but they didn't try to color our thinking or whatever against -- I learned more from my husband than I did from my father and other about -- so, they didn't discuss it.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, yeah, my mother was the same way, so that what we learned and did in the household, that was --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That was it.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- the standard. Well --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: It's the standard, you're right.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- yeah, it was the standard and that's why I always confused whenever she would take us to Disneyland and I would see a lot of white people

that I didn't see in my neighborhood, you know? Compton, by then, Compton was all Black [00:36:00] and that was just the standard. So, later on, when they started talking about soul food, I kept saying, "What's soul food?"

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: What's soul food, yeah?

HANIA MUBASHIR: And then, when they explained what it was, I said, "That's just food."

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's all what we've been eating, all the time.

(laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: That's just food.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's just what we eat. (laughs)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, it was the standard.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: You mentioned your hair and so I was curious what were some of the hair styles for girls back then? Girls and young women? What were the popular hairstyles? How'd you guys wear your hair?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Well, straight -- well, when I was -- one of the -- when I was 14, the biggest thing I wanted was -- my hair was growing very slowly. I wanted it to come straight down and just curl up, just [barely?].

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, the flip. The flip.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, yeah, they call it the flip now. They called it something else but I can't think of it. And I remember walking with this other girl who had this beautiful hair and, you know, came up below her shoulder and that's what I wanted my hair --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Black girl? [00:37:00]

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- yes, she was Black. What did they -- I can't remember what they called it. And then, also, there was -- the other style was that you had the big bouffant thing in the front of your hair.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Pompadour.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Pompadour, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: You have a pompadour?

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah. (laughter) Oh, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: We had the pompadour.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, yeah, my mama was stylin'. (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: Mine was just --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, and then they French braid it a lot -- some. Not a lot but a little. But those were the two styles.

HANIA MUBASHIR: And what was that one where they comb all the hair back and then kind of --

F: (inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- twist it and then put pins in it?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: French roll?

HANIA MUBASHIR: French roll, yeah, there you go.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I used to do that.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Okay.

HANIA MUBASHIR: There you go.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, too. In the -- clients, I would do French rolls. My hair wasn't ever really long enough [00:38:00] to do all of those things until they started back combing and they could put it in there and spray it and it would

stay. But mine was just [putting in some rings?], some curls up here and just kind of curl it, you know? But wasn't fancy.

HANIA MUBASHIR: What was the style for young men? 'Cause I would guess --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh, they got their hair from -- barber shop. They got it cut off short then. But not --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Really?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- not bald but short.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Short, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh.

ZOIE COLEMAN: My husband was a barber and my -- well, this -- he was --

F: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- he'd come a lot later, but -- and I don't know whether they still -- but my son got, when he got 11 to 12, he wanted to go to some other barber.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Uh-oh! Uh-oh! (laughter) Uh-oh!

ZOIE COLEMAN: Dad [wouldn't -- just didn't vary?]. (laughter) He was still cutting short.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: When we -- when I married Oscar and we had that little café on the corner of Central and Waterman -- [00:39:00]

HANIA MUBASHIR: What -- yeah, I know where that is.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Right down there.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Is the building still there?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: No, the buildings are all gone. It was a string of buildings because they had the café, we had a store, we had a pool hall, we had a printing shop, and we had a barber shop.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wow.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: All those in there. But, see, the city didn't -- Oscar's parents weren't aggressive to go ahead and build and make that -- establish into big businesses. And the city had them tear those buildings down. Also, on the corner of Norman Road and Waterman, Oscar's dad had built a drive-in and it's --

HANIA MUBASHIR: You mean, like a drive-in theater?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- no, a drive-in --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Drive-thru.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- drive-thru.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, a drive-thru.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And they fixed hamburgers and different things. And my father-in-law had, for decoration, he had planted cotton around it.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Going back to the [00:40:00] South. (laughter) They had him dig up the cotton, the city did. And then, few years later, they had him tear down --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Tear down --

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- the building, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- I'm learning, you know, as people talk more and more about the thriving businesses along the old Route 66, Mount Vernon Avenue, something about when the -- I'm probably pointing in the wrong direction. When the 215, yeah, 215 freeway came through, how that killed businesses, how -- were you guys in the area at that time? Do you recall that? Any feelings or things that people said?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I don't, because --



ZOIE COLEMAN: We were young. But, yes, they affected businesses over on Mount Vernon and they had the -- people [00:41:00] had to recoup and get their businesses back up and running. And they did. But I don't know any specific --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Any specific -- okay.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- impact that it had because, for one thing, the Black businesses and Mexican businesses were on Mount Vernon anyway. So, that was -- it didn't change that any. But it probably meant that less people --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Right, coming through there.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- shopped over there.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: In that direction. And it got to a point where you were asking where people -- where you don't go. It got to a point where a lot of white people were -- like, they said they were afraid to go over on Mount Vernon between 5<sup>th</sup> Street and, oh, Base Line --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Base Line.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- and all because of the Mexicans [00:42:00] and the Blacks. You would [hear them?] --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Were they coming down there at all?

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- they were -- 'cause some were coming and just like they would -- they had good restaurants over there but they wouldn't go over there at night for dinner. They might go over there for lunch from --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- and that was because I knew -- I worked for the -- Norton or the school district or whatever and I knew what people said, that they were -- they just thought it was dangerous for them to go over there and -- because it was, you know, all minority. It was a mixed neighborhood, so --

HANIA MUBASHIR: No, you guys told me that you couldn't listen to jazz. Could you listen to any R&B or Elvis or --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That was -- as we grew up, we heard that. But it wasn't something that was played regularly.

HANIA MUBASHIR: In the house.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: In the household, no. Ours was church music.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Okay. (laughter)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And after we left home, we ended up [00:43:00] (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) a lot of things that -- oh, was it the standard Baptist -- standard hymnal or something that --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, yeah!

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- [Greenwood's?].

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, that's still in my mother's church. They still have one.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Where does she go?

HANIA MUBASHIR: First Baptist Church of [Paris?].

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh, okay, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, still got that one. Okay, now I'm going to take you back a little bit more now. What were the latest fashions when you guys were young? You know, teenagers and young ladies. What -- 'cause I remember you mentioned a half slip. I had to introduce that to my girls.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh!

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: And the full slip. I actually pulled, you know, pulled out the sewing machine and bought some fabric and I made --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Made --

HANIA MUBASHIR:-- them some slips, 'cause, you know, we went through the entire Ontario Mills mall, couldn't find a --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- couldn't find a half slip.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Half slip.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Wow.

HANIA MUBASHIR:-- you know, this lady, no, I was looking for a full slip --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Full slip.

HANIA MUBASHIR:-- and this lady showed us a half one. And, of course, you know, she just barely out of her mama's womb. I said, "No, baby, that's not a full slip."

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And we had drawers of --

HANIA MUBASHIR: I know!

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- half slip and full slips.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: I know! [00:44:00]

ZOIE COLEMAN: And we would wear both of 'em. We'd wear the full slip and the half slips.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, if it wasn't long enough, you'd cover the body or if --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Sure did.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- it wasn't full enough that you had -- you wore the --

ZOIE COLEMAN: [Fell?] skirts.

HANIA MUBASHIR: I remember those.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: What did you say?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Fell skirt.

HANIA MUBASHIR: The fell skirt.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh, yeah, [they're all gone, there?] --

ZOIE COLEMAN: (inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, with the poodle on it.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, the poodle. I remember when I was in junior college and they were, they -- you could spin and they'd go all the way --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yes!

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- that's -- yes.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: 'Cause you had petticoats.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes, yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: I had to explain that to my girl, what --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And, you know, when you -- I was talking about laying away clothes, I would layaway -- at that time, cashmere and that stuff wasn't that expensive.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: I mean, it was more expensive than I -- than I can afford. But I'd layaway -- but you could acquire it then. And I had another sister -- I would work that \$6.07, go and buy my little stuff, put it in my drawer. She went to college, she'd get my little stuff and where it [through?] [00:45:00] college and come home, take it off. (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah, she'd hit me up, too. (laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: See, that's the [sister's way?].

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That's the sister's --

HANIA MUBASHIR: That happened with my sister and me, too. (laughter)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- it was around 1958, '57, '58, there was a dress came out and I can't remember the name of it. But it was -- and I've never seen it again. It was made so that the back of it came down straight. Came down straight but there was a, like, a big pleat from your shoulders down to your hips.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, I know what you're talking about.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And you had to be real thin --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Thin.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- skinny to wear it. And I had had Leroy and I had started out at 140 and then I went up to 150. And so, I was 'round 150 and I could just barely wear that. But I was so proud. And I wore it until I heard -- I found out I was pregnant with my second child and I couldn't wear it. And I've never seen -- I had to give it to [Irma Jean?], [00:46:00] another sister. Another sister. And Irma was interested in sewing and she went to L.A. and lived with some relatives and got to be a real good, certified seamstress. And she opened her own shop. And she used to sew for me. I thought that was the greatest thing since hot dogs.

ZOIE COLEMAN: She went to, oh, I can't think of that -- she went to college. L.A.

--

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Tech and Trade.

HANIA MUBASHIR: L.A. Trade Tech.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- yes.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah, that's where my mother went.

ZOIE COLEMAN: That's where she went. And then, when she got married and they went to service, she -- and her husband was in the military, they -- in New Jersey, they opened up -- [Zeljean's?] was here. But they --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: [EJ's?].

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- EJ's Clothing. And then, she opened up upholstery, too.

Upholstery business, yeah. You're not even getting anything of her (inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: No, I -- I know. [00:47:00] (laughter)

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, you know -- I just have a few more questions.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Okay.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Just a few more questions. What expectations did your parents have for you as far as education was concerned? In other words, could you have stopped at sixth grade or seventh grade or did they expect college --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: (inaudible)

ZOIE COLEMAN: No.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- or trade school or --

ZOIE COLEMAN: You didn't stop. They didn't say what they desired of you but you knew you were --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- expected to go on to college [and to high?] -- finish school as much as possible because -- I wanted to go to Tuskegee University. My dad had wanted to go there and his folks couldn't afford it. He couldn't afford it. And he knew that I wanted to go there but they couldn't afford it. But they -- that didn't stop them from wanting us to go on to wherever we could. As a matter of fact, our parents were [00:48:00] very diligent in checking your report cards through middle school and high school. And if they thought you weren't taking the right classes or you picked out some class that they didn't think was going to do you any good, they would change it. And so, I remember one of my sisters was having trouble spelling. Lot of people have trouble with spelling. And she wanted to take something else

and they made her take spelling and penmanship. Penmanship and spelling. And to this day, I mean, till -- up until time she passed, she had the most beautiful handwriting you ever saw. I don't know what --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: (inaudible)

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, wow.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: My daughter went to Tuskegee after that.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah, and my daughter --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: My daughter --

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- went to Tuskegee for a while, too, but --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, see? The dream fulfilled.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- but see, when we were raised in Pasadena, and even -- I know San Bernadino had the system at one time. You went to sixth grade [00:49:00] and then you went to seventh to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. You graduated and then you went from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup>. Well, by the time you graduated from the 14<sup>th</sup>, you were halfway through college. And it was cheaper because you were still living at home and the only thing that you really had to pay for was books. And so, you got a real progressive education. But they changed that system -- it must have been in the '50s, early '50s they changed that system. And so, where if we had stayed in Pasadena because of the way our folks had been bringing us up and because of that system, we probably would have gotten more college than we did, than most --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Can you say that again? That was interesting, the grade at Pasadena --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Oh, okay, in Pasadena and they did it here in San Bernadino. You went from the first through the sixth grade and then you went the seventh to

the 10<sup>th</sup>, that was junior high. [00:50:00] And then, you went from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> and that was junior college. And Pasadena had two junior colleges for the kids. And so if -- when you finished the 12<sup>th</sup> and you got into going to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, you know, California has free education up through 12<sup>th</sup>.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Your door --

ZOIE COLEMAN: So, when you give it to --

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- I'm sorry, your front door just --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Front door's open.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- opened by itself.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Okay.

ZOIE COLEMAN: So, when you get to the 13<sup>th</sup> -- and because they didn't have to pay for housing and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Be careful! Be careful!

F: No, keep on talking.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- about the college then would normally do so. And I think they had that system here in San Bernadino, too. I think both systems ended about the same time. And I wish they would bring it back.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Oh, yeah, more kids would eventually go to college.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Could get a -- [00:51:00] education and then they could --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Thank you.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- they could pick up their last two years at another, you know, institution.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: More like a university.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes, like a finishing school or something.



HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah. Okay, last question, and you may have already answered this. What were you taught about outstanding Black leaders in the '50s or the '60s? 'Cause they were active in the South.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: They didn't teach us a lot. We learned whatever we learned. I did, from --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Church and school.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- and from school. But my parents never did talk too much about outstanding Black leaders. I don't know what their thoughts were.

ZOIE COLEMAN: The [00:52:00] NAACP was active during those days.

HANIA MUBASHIR: In San Bernadino?

ZOIE COLEMAN: In San --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- and especially in Pasadena, too. And so, a lot of, if you really paid attention to that, there were educational things that came out of the organization meetings and things like that but --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We did have junior NAACP meetings, too. That was a younger (inaudible) younger people involved in it. Yeah, 'cause Miss Shirrells was involved in that, too.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yeah, she was. And in the '60s, it was just, like -- I know in, like, 1954, things happened with civil rights and thing-- but at that time, we were -- and I was -- 1954, I was working and whatever. And it was just, like, you learned about these things but because [00:53:00] they were happening in your time, you didn't put a lot of real emphasis on it till later in life, when you realized that something dynamic --

HANIA MUBASHIR: It's historic, yeah.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- had really happened to the United States or in our country to bring about better relations, you know, or pass new laws and the -- but a lot of companies like Golden State Insurance Company and even other -- started putting out things like calendars with --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Black leaders.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- Black leaders and putting out information. Some of, like -- and I'd say the churches.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, we would go to summer camps and some of the times they would bring those lessons in for us.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Where did you go to summer camp?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: We went to, yeah, what is -- it's, like, Thousand Pines.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Thousand Pines [00:54:00] up in Crestline.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Up in Crestline.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, okay. Was that something the church had organized?

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And it was a -- like, the Baptist --

ZOIE COLEMAN: A lot of churches.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- Baptist --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Western Baptist State Convention.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- Western Baptist State Convention, yeah.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, yeah, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: And it still exists today.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Wesleyan Baptist State Convention, our uncle, my mother's uncle, was TM Chambers and he was involved in a lot of the religious kind of things, preaching, and he was well known.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes.

ZOIE COLEMAN: He had a son, and I think I found that -- left that paper in there, too. He had a son that emulated -- and they called him Little Tim. We didn't really know him but -- and he would do things like preaching from a coffin. Did you ever hear that?

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, yes! My mother talked about --

ZOIE COLEMAN: That was our cousin.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That was our cousin.

HANIA MUBASHIR: For real?

ZOIE COLEMAN: And this is --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- for real.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wait, no, and this isn't the same one who would do --

ZOIE COLEMAN: Yes.

HANIA MUBASHIR: -- do the sunrise service?

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Easter --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, it's the same one. [00:55:00]

ZOIE COLEMAN: That was Tim.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, my goodness! (laughter)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: You ever heard "Bless My Bones"?

HANIA MUBASHIR: Yeah!

ZOIE COLEMAN: That's him.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That was our uncle. My [mother's?] brother.

(laughter)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Wait till I tell my mother! (laughter)

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah. "Precious Lord, take my hand!" That was his song. "[Lead me along, let me stand?]" --

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, my goodness.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yeah, that was our uncle.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Oh, my goodness. Yeah, see, I'm among royalty.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: You know, there were -- you know, one of the things that, in our lives, that happened and because we were -- Dad and Mom kept us so close in church, there were always -- maybe one or two times a year where they had conventions. And your church would send you as a delegate and you'd go to Los Angeles. It would be over the weekend, three or four days, and you'd go and stay at people's homes [00:56:00] and go to these meetings and where they'd have preaching and singing and classes. And I went to lot of those. And I really enjoyed them. And you heard ministers who they brought from Back East and ministers from the -- California and all over. And it was a way that a lot of Black youth gained more knowledge about Christ, about church, and about the world, about just doing things and learning to grow up and be on their own and things. So, that was a good thing, to have those youth conventions and regular conventions. And (inaudible)

HANIA MUBASHIR: Well, let me -- I want to see your pictures. Well, so let me end this.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Okay.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Okay.

HANIA MUBASHIR: Thank you [00:57:00], Zoie Coleman and Annette Overstreet, so much for the interview. (break in recording) All right, we just need to add a little bit more here. They're going to have a fit trying to edit all this but it's such good stuff. Zoie's just mentioned that in the Valley Truck Farm, also known as the Valley, there was a church on every corner and they were naming off churches.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Yes.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Allen Chapel, AME.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Canaan Temple. Holiness Church.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: Church of God in Christ.

ZOIE COLEMAN: Church of God in Christ. What was Elder [Beaumont's?] Church? I can't think --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: [Full?] Gospel. His was -- it was on Waterman, [00:58:00] South Waterman, right at Pioneer. So, I think that might be some --

ZOIE COLEMAN: You said there was a church down on Pioneer? What --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: That was Elder Beaumont's church, that one.

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- okay, the --

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: It -- Pioneer [dead-end -- dead?] into that --

ZOIE COLEMAN: -- oh, yeah, okay.

ANNETTE OVERSTREET: -- facility. And there was one over in what we call [Okieville?] but I can't remember its name. But I think that's about all of them we can remember.

HANIA MUBASHIR: All right, all right, I'm going to stop.

**End of Interview:**

[00:58:18]