

An Interview with

Alfred T. Bogen

October 15, 2004

Interviewed by

Elbert R. Hilliard

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AU 090

Interviewee: Bogen, Alfred T.

Interviewer: Hilliard, Elbert R. (Elbert Riley)

Title: An interview with Alfred T. Bogen, October 15, 2004 /
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Scope Note: This recording was selected to be digitally remastered through
the National Endowment for the Humanities Civil Rights Era
Recordings Grant in 2004.

AU 090 – PART 1

- O'CONNELL: Identification. Recorded on October 15, 2004 in the board room of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 200 North Street, Jackson, Mississippi at approximately 10 a. m. Recorded on a Maxell US1 – Normal Bias C 90 with a mono Marantz PMD 201 using a Shure Omnidirectional Dynamic microphone.
- HILLIARD: Today is Friday, October 15, 2004, and we're delighted to be with Mr. Alfred T. Bogen, Jr., and this Bogen is spelled B-O-G-E-N and we'll talk about that later. But we're conducting this oral history interview in the board room of the William F. Winter Archives and History Building, the new building. We're very proud of it, and we appreciate, Mr. Bogen, all that you and all the taxpayers have done to make this possible. Mr. Bogen is very...you're a very interesting...very interesting individual, and you've had an interesting life. You have written a biography of your father, a fascinating story. You have written a genealogical history of the Bogen family, and you're currently working on an autobiography that's entitled...I believe you have it entitled I Did It My Way: The Life and Times of Alfred T. Bogen, Jr. Now, if you would, please sir, tell us where you live today.
- BOGEN: I live in Madison County, about a five-minute drive north of Madison on Old Canton Road just south of Deerfield, about 2 or 3 miles south of Deerfield at the intersection of Pearl River Church Road and Old Canton Road.
- HILLIARD: How long have you lived out there?
- BOGEN: This is year...twenty years.
- HILLIARD: You and I have witnessed tremendous changes in that part of Madison County.
- BOGEN: Absolutely, and we've finally got a government up there, too
- HILLIARD: I'm going to let you comment on the politics. I going to stay out of the politics.
- HILLIARD: But...but you were not born in Madison County.
- BOGEN: No, sir. I'm a native of Arizona. I was born January 14, 1919 at a little mining town called Superior, Arizona in Pinal...that's spelled P-I-N-A-L...County. It was the location of a major metallic ore mine owned by Magma Copper Company at the time. It started off as a silver mine but as they got into lower ducts, the silver played out and it turned into be a

fabulously wealthy copper mine. And my father went to work there during World War II. He came to this country from Hungary.

HILLIARD: Now, did he come during World War II or World War I?

BOGEN: I'm sorry, World War I.

HILLIARD: World War I.

BOGEN: Yes sir.

HILLIARD: And your father was a fascinating individual. It's a fascinating story there. Would you tell us a little bit about him?

BOGEN: Well, he was born to a couple [by]...his father was a civil engineer and an Army officer. And incidentally, I was the...either the third or fourth, I'd have to think about it...generation in that family that was either an engineer or an Army officer, and I was the first one to be both. So he built the railroad from the coast of the Aegean Sea to Budapest.

HILLIARD: Now, this is your grandfather?

BOGEN: My grandfather.

HILLIARD: Now, what was your grandfather's name?

BOGEN: His name was Albert, and the name was spelled B-O-G-E-N which is a German name. It means arch or arch or [inaudible] a bogen is an archer, a man who shoots a bow and arrow. You see it misspelled many, many different ways. B-O-G-A-N, which I don't like, but I don't make a big issue of it. When they get it into B-O-G-G-A-N, I draw the line.

HILLIARD: Now, was this your grandfather here?

BOGEN: Yeah. Ferdinand Phillip, father of [Alladar]. I told you the wrong name. His name was Ferdinand Phillip.

HILLIARD: Right. I think you said Albert, but...

BOGEN: Yeah, Albert, but that was my father's brother...

HILLIARD: That's right.

BOGEN: ...was named Albert, and he was an Army officer.

HILLIARD: And I think your...

BOGEN: And this is my moth...my maternal...my paternal grandmother, and her father was a contractor. And I traced that family back into the Tyrol of Italy, and I hit a brick wall and along about 1800, I couldn't find them any further. But he apparently...and you can surmise this...that my grandfather, being the engineer in charge of building this railroad and my maternal grandmo...paternal grandmother's father being a contractor, that it made sense that that's how they got together.

HILLIARD: What was your father's name?

BOGEN: His name was [Alladar] Joseph Bogen. He was born a Roman Catholic. But when he came to this country, he never used the name, [Alladar]. He went by initially A.T. Bogen and at times Alfred until I came along and usurped the name Alfred. And from then on it was always A.T. Bogen. I never...he was very tight-mouthed about his youth, but I...his brother, Albert. I corresponded with him for a number of years.

HILLIARD: Do you still have that correspondence?

BOGEN: You have it in your...

HILLIARD: You've given it to us here.

BOGEN: And you have the translations. All of it's in German or Hungarian and you have the translations with it.

HILLIARD: What did the...what did the "T" stand for in your father's name?

BOGEN: Tibor, which is a common Hungarian name.

HILLIARD: T-I-B-O-R?

BOGEN: T-I-B-O-R. And I was grown before I ever knew that it was anything but the river around Rome.

HILLIARD: So your...so your father was a Hungarian?

BOGEN: Yes sir. He was a native Hungarian, and his father died when he was...I forgot now the age...two or three years old and then his mother died before he was six or seven. And his brother, his oldest brother, Albert, put him in an orphanage. They were very poor people. They did not have any material wealth to speak of. And they all got their education, as was the custom in those days, of going into the military and attending an officers' training school. That was typical for the early nineteenth century of getting an education. And, so, they were all well educated people, but they were poor

as church mice. And he put him in the orphanage, and he...there he got his primary schooling. And when he finished that, my uncle, being in the Army, arranged for him to be admitted to the Austrian Naval Training Academy in Trieste. Apparently my...and my father never told me. This came from his uncle in the correspondence that he didn't cotton to the military life very well, so he disappeared. He ran away and got a job as a cabin boy on a ship that plied between Trieste and New York. I have the name of the ship in all of the books and whatnot. All of this has been researched and documented, and it's hard for me to pull it out of my memory. And so, he landed in New York, and he had a buddy that he met on the ship, and he made three or four crossings before he finally jumped ship in New York, he and his buddy. And they didn't have any money. They couldn't speak English, but they were in New York. And they went, somehow or other, to Coney Island, and they found an old German couple who were running a delicatessen and a confectionary, mainly. And, so, they made a deal with them that the boys could sleep in the store room if they'd do all the dirty work, mopping and cleaning, washing dishes and all this good stuff. And so, he...it's hard to...the record is not clear as to how long they stayed in New York. You can only surmise how long they stayed there. And then, the next thing you know...and you don't know how they got there or what prompted them to go...they wound up in Wyoming.

HILLIARD: Was it Wyoming or Montana?

BOGEN: Montana.

HILLIARD: Montana. Montana.

BOGEN: And what's the name of that town. It's in the book there.

HILLIARD: Louistown.

BOGEN: Louistown, Montana.

HILLIARD: Louistown, Montana.

BOGEN: And they became cowboys. And I have a picture of my father all decked out in a cowboy's suit with chaps and cowboy hat and pistols. The whole nine yards. And he and his buddy...and his name escapes me right now, but it's in the book.

HILLIARD: Anthony...

BOGEN: Anthony...

HILLIARD: Anthony Uranker. U-R...

- BOGEN: Uranker. Uranker. A very unusual name.
- HILLIARD: U-R-A-N-K-E-R.
- BOGEN: Yeah. A very unusual name. And they stayed there for a couple of years working for an old German rancher. He had come from Germany. And again, we don't know how or why or what the motivation was, but he quit and went to Indiana to...and enrolled in the University of Valparaiso in Indiana.
- HILLIARD: Now, that was a...that was a pivotal decision in his life, because that decision led to your being here.
- BOGEN: That's exactly right. There he met my mother. He was studying civil engineering, and, in those days, engineering was not as well fragmented like the medical profession is today. It was...you were either a civil engineer or you weren't an engineer. So he met my mother and he worked his way through up there. If you know anything about the Valparaiso University, the history of it, it was...it tended, to begin with, as a way for the people without any means to get a college education.
- HILLIARD: Now, your mother was a Mississippian.
- BOGEN: She was from Covington County. A little town down there, and I believe there's still a church there, called Ora, Mississippi, O-R-A, just north of Collins. At least, the road going...the turn-off from 49 going to Collins. And behind that church is my maternal grandmother's grave. And I had a heck of a time finding it, but I finally found it.
- HILLIARD: Is it marked?
- BOGEN: Yes, it had a marker on it, but, like all these old cemeteries, they're not too well kept, and I had a heck of a time finding it.
- HILLIARD: How did...how did your mother get up to from Ora, Mississippi to Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana.
- BOGEN: Well, I had a grand...maternal grandfather who was a very unique gentleman in his own right, and I have described him in my book I'm writing now as to what sort of a character he was.
- HILLIARD: Is he the...is he the gentleman whom you refer to as Papa?
- BOGEN: Papa. Yeah.

HILLIARD: Ok.

BOGEN: Papa. The children called him Papa and I called him Papa.

HILLIARD: Ok.

BOGEN: And so, when they graduated from college in 19...my mother and father...in 1915, he went out west. He...

HILLIARD: What...back to my...what led...what caused your mother to leave rural Mississippi and...

BOGEN: Well, she was majoring in music. I'm sorry, I did not make that clear. She majored in music, and she was an accomplished violinist, pianist, and organist. And I...my life was changed beyond belief by her premature death in childbirth when I was two years old. And my father took her out, well, first, he went out west and he found a job with Magma Copper and he came back to Mississippi and they got married. And then he took her back out there and...

HILLIARD: Were they...were they married in Covington County?

BOGEN: And they were married in Covington County and their marriage license is in all those papers. And there's a lady down there is a Rog...she married a Rogers...[Skeehan] is her name. She's getting along in years now, but she is a walking encyclopedia of the Rogers family.

HILLIARD: What was your mother's name?

BOGEN: Rogers. Vesta Rogers.

HILLIARD: V-E-S-T-A?

BOGEN: That's correct. And so, Mrs. [Skeehan] made available to me all of her knowledge of that family, and I was able to trace all the way back to the Revolutionary War. So they married and set up housekeeping in Superior, Arizona and in due course, I arrived. And apparently, from all reports, my mother was a very vivacious and very likable person, a very intelligent person.

HILLIARD: Did you inherit any of her musical talents?

BOGEN: Yes, but I inherited a love for music from her. I did not inherit from her the skills to master any musical instrument, and I regret it. I tried, when I was at Gulf Coast Military Academy, my aunt had me put in the music studies there, and I was learning to play a trumpet. But I never did cotton to that

very much. Just sitting in a room by myself tooting that thing and I was on end. It just didn't blow my skirt up. And so I never did anything with it. And, after I was grown and at the age of in my forties or fifties, I determined I was going to learn how to play and my wife is an accomplished organist. And so I bought her a Hammond organ, and I sat there and I taught myself how to play it enough that I could play a simple melody. I'll never forget the tune that I learned was "Edelweiss" from the movie. And I used to play that all the time. But that's as far as I ever...but I have I don't know how many tapes and CDs of operas and classical music. Popular music never meant much to me; although I would not turn...I could enjoy an evening of hillbilly music. I could see the virtue in it. And there used to be WJDX in Jackson on Saturday night a program. It was called "The Leake County Revelers." And they would get on there and play their country music, you know, and I used to...I liked it.

HILLIARD: What era was that for the Leake County Revelers?

BOGEN: That was the 20's.

HILLIARD: Was it Leake or Leaf?

BOGEN: L-E-A-K-E. Leake.

HILLIARD: Leake. Like in Carthage.

BOGEN: Leake County up in Carthage.

HILLIARD: Leake. Oh, ok. Leake. And that was back in the 1920's or...

BOGEN: Huh?

HILLIARD: Was that back in the 1920's.

BOGEN: 20's or 30's. I think they lasted from the late 20's into the early 30's as I recall. Incidentally, there's a gentleman out here that owns the old WJDX transmitter station out here on North State Street way out...in those days, it was way out in the country. And he's got a lot of the equipment out there that...and I encouraged him to make a museum out of the place.

HILLIARD: That's Mr. Broom, isn't it? Algy Broom?

BOGEN: Well, it's Sound...

HILLIARD: Sound Communications.

BOGEN: Communications. Yeah.

HILLIARD: Sound Communications.

BOGEN: Very interesting gentleman, and he really appreciates the old days of radio. And some of ...he located the transmitter, and I've forgotten, I think it was up at State College. I'm not sure. And I encouraged him to refurbish the place and make a museum out of it, but I don't think he did anything.

HILLIARD: What's your earliest memory? Do you have any memory of your childhood in Arizona?

BOGEN: The earliest memory I have of...we lived on a street called Speedway. Before that we lived...my father and mother and I lived in a rented place...well, all of them were rented. He didn't have the money to buy a place, but I don't know where it was. I just know from going and searching the city directory in Tucson that I found out where it was. But I did remember two things about my home on Speedway. And, incidentally, the house was still standing there in the 19...shu, time passes so fast...in the 1980's, I guess. First was that my father had learned the confectionary trade from his youth of sleeping in the store room and what not, and he was an expert confectionary. I've seen him dip his hand in a pot of boiling candy and he'd pull it out and not burn himself. How he did it, I don't know. But that's the way he would check the texture of the... He made excellent ice cream and all sorts of confections. And he couldn't find work, and, when he lost his job at Superior with the copper company, Magma Copper, he went to Tucson. He packed up and went to Tucson. And he couldn't find work. And this was right after World War I. And he finally decided to open a...I don't know what you would call it...a short order joint or confectionary, you know, sort of like Primos was down here on Capitol Street in the 30's. And it was an instant hit. He located the thing right at the main entrance to the University of Arizona which was just begun. And [inaudible] the students and the faculty, they made that their headquarters. It was eminently successful. And I remember being told. I have a scar on my right ankle. As a toddler I...my mother was scrubbing the floor with lye, and I stepped in the lye and, where the strap of my shoe went over the arch of my foot, it burned it, and she had the presence of mind enough to grab the lemons and squirt lemon juice on it to neutralize it. That's how perceptive she was. And she saved my foot, but the scar remained all my life and now it's above by ankles. It's grown. And, so, he was a very successful [inaudible]. She provided the business knowledge. She was...all the Rogers were very good business people. They didn't have any formal training in business, but everyone of them, they were very frugal people, and they knew how to manage money. And she handled that end of the business, and he handled the cooking and what not. And between them it was a wonderful team.

HILLIARD: Now, what...what brought you to Mississippi?

BOGEN: Well, she died in childbirth, and I believe in 1921 as I recall, with what would have been my brother. And of course the child died, too. And they both are buried in Tucson. And that's another story in my life that is very emotional to me. So during her latter stages of pregnancy, she needed help badly, and her youngest sister, Alice Rogers, was attending MSCW at the time, and they arranged for her to leave MSCW and come out there and enroll in the University of Arizona and in her spare time, to help my mother. So she was there when my mother died, and she told me that the last words my mother said was, "Take care of my boy." And my grandfather came out there and...

HILLIARD: What was your grandfather's name?

BOGEN: Joel C. Rogers. He went by the name of J. C. Rogers. He was an orphan at age five. His father died at the Siege of Vicksburg, and he died of malaria. I tried to locate the camp. Chambers, I believe is his name, had wrote a diary of his experience at the Siege of Vicksburg. It's in your library, and I read it [inaudible], and he describes an eyewitness account of my great-grandfather's death. And it's amazing how these things come back through the years. So papa went out and my father, he was just devastated by the loss. From all reports, it was an exceedingly happy marriage. And when she died, I think he just went...he lost his marriage. He didn't know what to do. And Papa stayed out there, and my father tried to get him interested in starting a chicken ranch, and papa was too smart to be taken in by that. And my father's forte was always dreaming up schemes, get rich quick schemes, and he died broke. But that's another story. So after about...I believe it was in the Fall when my mother died...and by the next Spring, I believe, his half-brother, Daniel Hill...D-A-N-I-E-L...Daniel Hill was his half-brother. His mother married again a dentist named Daniel Hill, and he had a half-brother. And his half-brother married into the Archer family in Coving...in Claiborne County near Port Gibson. They had a huge plantation down there. They came from Virginia in the late 1700's. And so they were prosperous. They had plenty. So my grandfather, things were just sitting on dead center 'til he got a telegram telling him that Uncle Daniel had had a stroke, and that he could...he was bedridden. He couldn't do anything. And for him to come hurriedly to Port Gibson and take over the farm. Now they had a crop in the field, and things were really desperate. So Papa packed up and was ready to go and then my father decided he'd sell his restaurant business there and then I'm on...you get into some...I don't know whether you want to get into this at this time here about the relationship between my father and Alice, his sister-in-law...but that's another story.

HILLIARD: And you have that recorded in your autobiography here which is...

BOGEN: But anyway, the upshot of the thing was that she brought me back to Mississippi and Papa went back to Port Gibson. And we first went to her older sister named Esther who was working for the State Extension Service in what was then called State College which is today Mississippi State. Her office was in Montgomery Hall. I remember that. And she had a house on Faculty Row. And I remember crawling under that house and eating wild onions that were growing under it and getting my rear end warmed for doing it. Passed one Christmas up there and, then, in January or February, Esther got called to Jackson.

HILLIARD: And you were about three years old at this time, weren't you?

BOGEN: About three years old or thereabouts. And they had had an election and I guess it was 1922 or 21, I've forgotten, and [W. F. Bond] was elected the State Superintendent of Education. And so the lady in charge of what they called Supervisor of Home Economics in the State Department of Education was a lady named [Guyton Teague] who was from Tennessee. And she was a close friend of Esther's, but, apparently, she didn't like the change in political climate, so she resigned and going back to Tennessee, and Esther was made Supervisor of Home Economics or Superintendent of what ever it was. I forgot. State Supervisor of Home Economics or something like that. And so she moved to Jackson, and, of course, Alice and I came with her. Alice was still, you know, 21, 22 years old, 23 years old. I was three years old. And I look back on that and here's two women with a kid three years old and nobody asked any questions. Maybe they did and I didn't know it, but it seems strange to me, because, in those days, two single women with a three year old kid raises eyebrows, you know. And social morals in those days were quite different than they are today.

HILLIARD: Your Aunt Esther, I believe I read in your autobiography, that she had her...her office was in the...

BOGEN: Old Capitol Building, and I spent many an hour in the Old Capitol Building and, I remember very well, on the ground floor on the north side...let me get this straight...no, on the south side was the Department of Health and that was it. In those days, you won't believe this. All of the state offices in the state of Mississippi were either in the Old Capitol Building or in the New Capitol Building. There were no other buildings like this magnificent place here or rented space anywhere. That was it. Well, Jackson was a population of 22 or 23,000 and, in fact, when we came to Jackson to begin with, Meridian was larger than Jackson. So, I remember the health department was on the north wing and they had a little framed shack out in the back there where they apparently had laboratories of some sort, and they used to keep a sheep out there. I remember the sheep. Apparently, they were testing medications on the sheep, I don't know. But I vividly remember the sheep.

HILLIARD: Did you ever meet or see Dr. Felix Underwood?

BOGEN: No, I never met the gentleman. Then on the south side was the Department of Agriculture on the ground floor. And one of the secretaries down there lived next door to us on Manship Street which was the house that Esther bought when she moved to Jackson was 726 Manship Street.

HILLIARD: Is that house still standing?

BOGEN: No, it's...it's long gone. There's a history there, too. But, it was razed...I don't know when it was there, because I was in Indonesia at the time. And it was used as a parking lot for Baldwin Funeral Home for some time, and then Baldwin Funeral Home passed on. Today, there's nothing but vacant lots up there where the funeral home was, where our house was...all the houses, except for the corner down there at Manship and State, it was all vacant lots.

HILLIARD: Were y'all...were y'all...was that house located east of State Street or west of State Street?

BOGEN: It was east of State Street.

HILLIARD: East of State Street.

BOGEN: East of...right across from the Baptist Hospital. The Baptist Hospital was not the magnificent thing it is today. It was a red brick building that sat on the southeast corner of Manship and State Street. And the emergency room of that hospital...the entrance, ambulance entrance was right across the street from our house. And every time an ambulance all us kids were out there [inaudible] what was going on. And...

HILLIARD: Now, when your Aunt Esther came to work each day, did she walk to work or did she...

BOGEN: No, she had a car, because she traveled. She had to travel all over the state. And she would leave home and be gone for a week at the time. And Alice was...kept house, took care of me, and all. And then, finally, I think Alice got fed up with that and she got a job with the County Demonstration Agent or something like that. Is that it? Called Home Demonstration Agent?

HILLIARD: Home Demonstration Agent.

BOGEN: And, then, she later quit that and went to work for Mississippi Power and Light Company.

- HILLIARD: Who took care of you then when your Aunt Alice went to work?
- BOGEN: Well, Alice...Esther...the State Department of Rehabilitation...I didn't finish telling you how the rest of the offices were in the Capitol, but on the south wing in the second floor was the Department of Education. And in the Department of Education in the same room. There was just a big bull pit with one secretary. You had the State Rehabilitation Department.
- HILLIARD: Now that would have been...that would have been the Senate...what had been the Senate chamber. You said the south...
- BOGEN: The south wing of the building.
- HILLIARD: South wing. Second floor?
- BOGEN: Second floor.
- HILLIARD: That would have been the...at the very south end that would have been the Senate chambers.
- BOGEN: Well, the whole south wing was taken up by the Department of Education and W. F. Bond's office was on the southeastern corner of the building.
- HILLIARD: They had come in around 1916-17, in that era, and had renovated the Capitol to convert it into an office building. That's what happened. They floored in the Senate chamber, floored in the House chamber, petitioned everything off.
- BOGEN: So that's where the office was. One...one secretary, Mrs. Sample. I remember her name.
- HILLIARD: Sample?
- BOGEN: Sample. S-A-M-P-L-E. She was a real nice lady, and she used to let me shave the Dictaphone cylinders. You know, they dictate on these wax cylinders what they wanted typed and then to use them over again, they had a little machine there that had a razor blade on it and it would go down that thing there and shave off the wax and you'd have a clean cylinder. And [inaudible] lady would used to let me do that which I thought was great. And, so...
- HILLIARD: Now, she was the secretary for which department?
- BOGEN: Well, she was the secretary for Esther, Mr. Woods who was the head of the State Rehabilitation, and, then, the...what do you call...Vocational Education. All of those groups were in this one bullpen.

- HILLIARD: Now, we don't have...we don't have time today, but Mr. Woods was quite a colorful gentlemen as well. I recall that Mr. Woods, did he...did he not end up in Europe?
- BOGEN: Well, Mr. Woods was...became ambassador to Czechoslovakia as I have been told. But he was a very, very fine gentleman, very refined, and I have a picture of he and me and Est...Alice in a Model T Ford parked up here on...on North Street...Jefferson Street.
- HILLIARD: I would encourage you, when you finish what you're working on, to do an article on Mr. Woods, because he had an interesting life as well.
- BOGEN: Well, apparently he did. I only knew him for a fleeting moment as a kid less than five years old, you know and that's all. All I know about him thereafter is here-say, and what you're suggesting would be a research project. I wouldn't...I wouldn't know, but, apparently, he was a fine gentleman. It's been my pleasure and my privilege in my lifetime to know some outstanding good people, and some of them received recognition and some of them didn't. But I remember vividly the teachers I had in Central High School. I'll never forget them.
- HILLIARD: Before we get to them, now going back to what we talked about when your Aunt Alice went to work then. Now, you were still relatively young. Who...who looked after you?
- BOGEN: Well, through Mr. Woods, Esther located a colored girl down here out from Crystal Springs way out in the boondocks.
- HILLIARD: Now, was this Lovey?
- BOGEN: This was Lovey Brown. And I'll never forget going down there to get her. She was about 17 years old or no more than that, and she had an artificial limb, and that's the way Woods knew her, because they had outfitted her with an artificial limb. And I believe it was her right leg she had been shot off by her brother with a shotgun...accidentally discharged a shotgun and she lost her right leg. And she never did learn to use that false artificial leg to where you couldn't tell. She loped. She would pull that leg up behind her. She never would...But she was a character. Oh, she was a character. So, with Alice working, I was left with Lovey.
- HILLIARD: How old were you then?
- BOGEN: I was about four.
- HILLIARD: So Lovey was very special to you then?

BOGEN: Well, Lovey taught me a lot of things, and Lovey shaped my character more than anyone realizes. She was a very honest person. She had high moral standards. She had no close relationship with black people that I was aware of. She never married.

HILLIARD: Did she live...did she live in the home with you all or...

BOGEN: She lived in a house. The house was built on the side of a...if you know Manship Street at that location, it slopes off precipitously as you face north. And the house was built...the front of the house was at street level, and then it sloped off in the back. And they built a little room under the back of the house there for...for Lovey to live. That was her room. The rest of the back end of the house was wide open, but they closed in an area there, and that's where Lovey stayed. And I learned a lot about negroes in those days. She came...first came there, she had her hair plaited like a lot of those black people do. She had matches stuck all in it, you know. Alice asked her, "What in the world do you put those matches in your hair for?" "Oh, that keeps the haints away." And old Alice jumped on her and said, "You take those matches out of your hair before you burn the place down." Lovey was a very smart, very sharp, very perceptive individual.

HILLIARD: Could Lovey...

BOGEN: She learned to cook my...I had two...two... [inaudible]. Alice was an outstanding good cook. Esther could hardly boil water without scorching it, but she was telling people at home economics departments how to cook. But that's another story. But Alice was an outstanding good cook.

HILLIARD: Could Lovey...had Lovey gone to school? Could she read and write?

BOGEN: Well, after she came up here, Esther decided it was time for her to have a little culture. And so, she sent her out here to a place called Campbell College, which, I believe, is a forerunner of Jackson State, to learn how to play the piano. Lovey never learned how to play the piano or anything else. That wasn't her bag. And so, they finally gave up on spending that money. But Lovey taught me. I was a very shy and kind of withdrawn, to an extent, individual. You wouldn't believe that today. But she put a poker in my spine. There was a family that lived down the street, the Fowler family. He was a dentist, and he had a house full of kids. The best I remember five or six. And the oldest one's name was Billy Fowler, and he was the bull of the woods. He was the bully of the neighborhood. And, every now and then, he'd stop by the house and beat me up just to stay in practice. And I'd just lay there and take it. And old Lovey would take me in the house squalling and crying and carrying on. And she would lecture me and just...just give me holy heck. And gradually, she built up my self confidence and my

unwillingness to be abused. And one day, old Billy came up there looking for trouble, and he got it. She rolled out on the front porch and started hollering at me, “Get [inaudible], get him. I’m not going to stand here and [inaudible]!” Just cheering me on. I jumped on that boy and knocked him down and got him down on the sidewalk, and I had him by the ears bumping his head on the concrete. And his mama heard him a block away and come up there and pulled me off of him. I believe I’d a-killed him if she hadn’t pulled me off of him. And old Lovey just “Aaay, give it to him! Give it to him!” So she taught me not to take anything off of any...don’t go looking for a fight, but don’t run from one. And it was a very, very important lesson. The fair’s here now, and I have vivid memories of her taking...

END OF PART 1

AU 090 – PART 2

BOGEN: Alright, I’ll start so you can splice this. She would give us a dollar or so and send us off to the fair. And...

HILLIARD: Did y’all walk from Manship Street to the fair?

BOGEN: Oh, [no]. Boy, I’ll tell you, that...and she’d come home with a dollar and a half. How did that happen, you know? Well, Lovey was the biggest con artist you ever saw. She’d go down there and she’d say, “Mister, this little boy [inaudible], he wants to see inside that show and he’s just giving me holy hell here, and, if I took up tickets while he’s in there, would you let him in free?” “Oh, come on in.” He’d go up to...there was a show down there of freaks, and they had the Wild Man from Borneo. I don’t know if y’all are old enough to remember those days. You are. But the Wild Man from Borneo had a stage out there...a little stage...and he had on a grass skirt and his hair was all messed up and whatnot. And he would stand up there and grunt and growl and carry on and “Ooh, arggg”. And he come up to the edge of the platform, you know, and he was standing there, and old Lovey was standing there. She doubled up her fist and [inaudible] like that [inaudible]. And he started hollering and jumping and carrying on and cussing like a sailor.

HILLIARD: Cursing in words you could understand.

BOGEN: I’ll never forget that. And come home with cupid dolls and all that stuff. Throw the ball...she could throw a baseball. She could shoot a gun. I mean, if you go down there, and I don’t know how we come up with more money

than we left with, but we always did and saw and did everything there was to do down there. In those days, the fair only lasted a week. And it was dirt...that was Pearl River swamps down there and, every Spring, it flooded all the way up to the railroad tracks down here. The railroad's gone, but there was a railroad, G, M & O railroad track down there. And there was a baseball stadium down there on the other side of the railroad track. And people would go to the fair. It was a free fair. They didn't charge you to go in. And people would stream through the Old Capitol, and there was a stairs going down the hill there. And you just walk in to the fair.

HILLIARD: So you went in the front door of the Old Capitol, out the back door of the Old Capitol and down the stairs to the fair?

BOGEN: Exactly. Exactly. And I hate to say this, but they had a restroom in the Old Capitol Building...I don't know whether it's still there or not...you had the circular place in there, and you had an elevator over here, and on the opposite side over there was a toilet, and, boy, during the...you couldn't get within a...you just couldn't go in there. It was so bad. And every Tom, Dick and Harry was using it, you know. And they scattered sawdust on the bare ground down there...that...to cut down on the mud and the dust. I'm not sure it helped the dust part of it, but it was solid sawdust, the whole...the whole nine yards. And hamburgers never smelled so good as they did down there, but I didn't have the two bits to buy one. And so, the exhibits were a sight to behold. They were real serious exhibits. These women would send in their needlework and canning, preserves and stuff like that in glass jars and the farmers would send in corn and product. They had a livestock down...and they were passing out ribbons for pickled peaches, watermelon rind preserves or whatever. And they were on display with the ribbons around there. And the favorite spot was some enterprising miller had set up a place of baking biscuits and giving them away, and, boy, he did a land office business.

HILLIARD: Evidently, Jim Buck Ross picked up on that tradition and carried that tradition forward, didn't he?

BOGEN: Oh, it was great. And they had a place called The Grandstand down there at the end of the...I just keep trying to say fairway...midway on the north side. And it was like a baseball...I think it was a race track the best I remember where they raced automobiles, but it was an open bleachers with a roof over it so, if it rained, it didn't rain on you. But it faced north, and they set up a stage in front of it and that was called...was...where they'd give their vaudeville type entertainment. Well, as always, you...the...about the time of the middle of the fair, the cold front would come sailing in and the temperature would drop 30 degrees and the wind out of the North it, you know, in the 30's. And people sit there and just shiver and shake and watch the grandstand show. And the other, in those days, great show in Jackson

besides the fair was the Chautauqua. I bet you all never heard of the...you probably have...but you never heard of the Chautauqua. It was a traveling tent...I don't know whether show was the right word for it. It used to set up in Poindexter Park out here on West Capitol Street, and the idea was to elevate the intellectual level of the proletariat. You had people reading Shakespeare, all these high cultural things. You elevate the culture of the country. And we used to go out there, and of course it was like a hog looking at a wristwatch as far as I was concerned. But...

- HILLIARD: Luther...Luther Manship participated as a Chautauqua speaker.
- BOGEN: You remember that?
- HILLIARD: Did you ever hear him speak, Luther Manship?
- BOGEN: No.
- HILLIARD: He would have been....he would have been Lieutenant Governor. He was...
- BOGEN: But it was supposed to be a very uplifting movement, and it was all over the country. It wasn't just here.
- HILLIARD: Down at Crystal Springs they have the Chautauqua Park down there as well.
- BOGEN: Yeah.
- HILLIARD: Well, let me go back to your relationship with young Billy Fowler. Did...did you all become friends after you stood up to him or what happened there?
- BOGEN: Well, Billy...
- HILLIARD: Is this the same...
- BOGEN: He never gave up. Down here on North State Street up here along about Belhaven...I think the tree is still there...on the east side of the sidewalk. I walked to school every day. And there was a mock orange tree growing up out of the middle of the sidewalk that you go around. And, in those days in Power School, if you were a good student that day, the teacher had a just this rough brown paper. She had a rubber stamp says, "Good". She'd stamp it [inaudible] if you were a good student, she'd give you a good card. And you collect so many of those good cards and you could get a print of one of the classic paintings, you know. "The Reapers" was the one I remember very well. "The Gleaners", or is it "The Gleaners" I guess is the name of it. I've forgotten who the artist was. And Billy never got a good card legitimately in his life. But he would hide behind that tree, and you'd come

traipsing along and he'd jump out and grab you and "Give me that good card." He'd hijack your good card. So after he and I had the final battle, he never bothered me after that. He left me alone. We...I don't know what happened to him [inaudible]. When I moved away from there...well, even before then...I really don't remember what happened to Billy. He later, was in the Navy. I know that. He died at a relatively young age and is buried out here in this cemetery on Highway 51 the north side of Ridgeland. That's...that's all I know.

HILLIARD: I was just wondering if he was related to the Fowler Buick family.

BOGEN: No. There was no relationship. His father was a dentist. He had a brother, younger brother, named Bubba. I don't...I just lost track of the family.

HILLIARD: Well, back to the fair. Do you remember any...any entertainers whom you recall listening...any names of any of the entertainers that came?

BOGEN: Entertainers?

HILLIARD: At the fair. At the state fair. At these shows that...

BOGEN: No. My interest as a kid four or five years old was rides and throwing baseballs and the shooting gallery and whatnot. The Grandstand, I think I was taken there once or twice by my aunts, but it was way over my head.

HILLIARD: Well, you started...you started school and you went to...you first went to Power Elementary? Is that right?

BOGEN: I went to Power School out here on North State Street across from the Jewish cemetery there.

HILLIARD: Now, that school building's no longer standing.

BOGEN: No, it's a parking lot for the First Presbyterian Church now. It was a red brick building. It was, as I recall, two stories high, and I have visions of the halls in that thing being ridiculously wide. Why, I don't know. But I close my eyes and I see a mental picture of it. For some reason or another, corridors in that building were unusually wide. In the stuff, I've given Mike there is a photograph of me in the first grade. In those days, these itinerant photographers would come around and take pictures, class pictures. And all the kids would sit on the front steps, you know, and get their pictures made. And so here we are. There was four or five rows of them, a bunch of kids. And all the little girls in their pinafores and all the little boys with ties on and dressed up. The front row, the far right...well, as you look at the picture, the far left...here's this kid with short pants, barefooted. His hair's not combed. That's me. [Laughs]

HILLIARD: Now, the other young boys had ties on?

BOGEN: Huh?

HILLIARD: The other young boys had...

BOGEN: Oh, yeah. Some of them even had suits on, you know.

HILLIARD: Did they just do that for that special day or...?

BOGEN: Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, mama sent them to school, you know, all purtied up. You were going to get your picture made, and you know how mamas are. Boy, they were all decked out. And, of course, Lovey didn't care what I looked like, you know, and there I was. It was in early...late Spring and barefooted with shorts on. You know, just looked like I'd come out of the playground, you know. And we used to play tops up there and marbles, you know. That's something that's a lost art, playing tops.

HILLIARD: I never...I never was very good at spinning the tops, though. Were you good at that?

BOGEN: I was pretty good. We got...you know...did you ever learn how to split a top?

HILLIARD: No.

BOGEN: We used to take a top, go down here to Kress's, and buy...

HILLIARD: Let's see. Do the young people...do you all know what we're talking about?

BOGEN: A top. And you hollow out the top of it and pour lead in there. And then, you take the steel pin on which it spun and sharpen it razor thin and...Wham!...down there and you hit somebody's top and pop it right in half. And marbles. You've played marbles I know. I don't know. These guys here, they've never heard of playing marbles, but I played marbles. And the pride and joy was to have an agate. If you had an agate, you had the number one marble. And that was always the one you shoot with.

HILLIARD: Tell us what an agate is, now.

BOGEN: Huh?

HILLIARD: Tell us what an agate was. If you had the agate, what was that? Tell us what that was.

- BOGEN: An agate was, the best I know in looking in retrospect, was made out of marble. The rest of them were glass. But it was rare to find a marble that was made out of marble.
- HILLIARD: Now, my mother always told me, “Don’t play for keeps.” Did you play for keeps?
- BOGEN: I never was much of a gambler. Mr. Hilliard, I...I knew it all my life. I’ve had an aversion to gambling for one reason. When I was young, every penny that I got my hands on was very hard to get. And I didn’t have much to speak of. When I was in high school, I had one pair of shoes with...couldn’t even buy half soles on them. I had a hole in my shoe and cardboard in there to keep my toes off of....
- HILLIARD: Was this at Central High School?
- BOGEN: Yeah. And...
- HILLIARD: Now Lovey had...Lovey had taught you how to be frugal as well.
- BOGEN: Well, Lovey...Lovey left and went up north. When Alice married...and she married, as I recall, in 1927...she married Lamar Fuller who was a sheet metal contractor here in Jackson, and he and his father had a shop down there on South Lamar Street, no, South West Street, South West, right next to the Nehi Bottling Plant. And, when Alice left, they were just...she left me with Esther. And Esther and I never did gee-haw worth a hoot. Esther was very [prudish]. She had no idea about a boy’s thoughts and particularly as he grew older, how his outlook and his physical being changed and how to cope with it and whatnot. And so, as the years went by, she and I...I never...she never was a favorite of mine, but, as I grew older, we grew further and further apart. There was a place to sleep and something to eat and that was about it.
- HILLIARD: That kind of affected your schoolwork, too.
- BOGEN: Well, I...I...as a youngster, I guess I was...I failed the sixth grade at Power School because I wasn’t studying. And Lovey was gone, and I was just left by myself. And Esther had started a tea shop up there called The Tray Tea Shop. And she had a young girl that was just graduated from college to be the manager, and she wasn’t capable of handling her kid. By that time, I was eleven or twelve years old. She...they couldn’t handle me. I was getting too much for them. And so, Lovey was long gone by that time, and I began to get into things that I shouldn’t have been into.
- HILLIARD: What saved you from becoming a juvenile delinquent?

- BOGEN: Well, I was shoplifting. I don't mind telling you. I'd go down here to McCrory's and Kress's and anyplace I go. I got pretty good at shoplifting, and I never did get caught. But by the time I was twelve years old, Esther had sense enough to realize that she couldn't handle the situation.
- HILLIARD: Let me interrupt you there and ask you. Had you gone to church? Had you gone to...
- BOGEN: My religious education was woefully inadequate. And here I sit, a man 96 years old, and...
- HILLIARD: Are you 96 now or 86?
- BOGEN: 86, I'm sorry. And I have great difficulty with organized religion. And let me add, I have been deeply involved with churches and have made substantial financial contributions to them, not to mention my time and my efforts. And as days go by, years go by, I have become, shall I say, disillusioned. So, to come back to your question...
- HILLIARD: Your disillusionment...
- BOGEN: We went to the First Baptist Church. Esther and Alice both belonged to the First Baptist Church. And, as long as Alice was there, she would...
- HILLIARD: Now, let me interrupt you there. The church, at that time, was it located where it is now or was it [inaudible].
- BOGEN: No, sir, the church was at the corner of Capitol and President Street.
- HILLIARD: Capitol and President.
- BOGEN: Uh, duh, duh, duh, duh, south, no, the northwest corner of Capitol Street.
- HILLIARD: Where the old Krystal hamburger place was.
- BOGEN: That's right. Exactly where it was, and, later, the Jackson infirmary was behind it. That's where it was, and it was an imposing red, dark red brick building with spires on it and whatnot, a real late 18th early 19th century type of structure.
- HILLIARD: 1800's...late 1800's early 1900's, right?
- BOGEN: Yeah, in that [inaudible]. I was taken, and I remember Sunday School. I remember being taken to Sunday School there, and the thing that I always had trouble with, and I never could quite reach around the basic tenets of Christianity, was that Christ died for our sins. And what have I done? And,

you know, this concept that man is inherently sinful, I just never could see it. And I viewed the crucifixion as being one of the most inhuman acts I had ever heard of. And I read the Old Testament stories with pleasure. They used to give me these books at Christmas, and I would read all of the stories and look at the pictures. But the Old Testament book, I have no part of. Because I had an aversion...I did not understand the message first. Secondly, it was offensive to me. So...

HILLIARD: Well, what saved you from becoming a juvenile delinquent?

BOGEN: Well, Esther finally had sense enough to haul me off down here to The Boy Scouts of America. And she enrolled me in the...and I was not happy about that at all. I thought the Boy Scouts were a bunch of sissies. And Henry Graves Post of the American Legion sponsored this troupe number seven. And they met in the old City Auditorium which was on Pearl Street. The corner of Congress and Pearl was the...northwest corner of Congress and Pearl...

HILLIARD: That's where Capitol Towers is located.

BOGEN: That's where Capitol Towers is now. And it was an interesting building. I won't go into the details of the layout there, but on Friday nights they used to have wrestling matches down there. Yaki Joe, I remember Yaki Joe. And all us scouts, because it was the..the American Legion sponsored we'd go down there and usher and we'd get in free. And so, that was one of the big entertainments. Anyway, to get to the point, I was took to the Boy Scouts like a duck to water. And I progressed rapidly in through the various levels of scouting and eventually became a junior assistant scoutmaster and stayed active in scouting up until I was in college.

HILLIARD: Did you become an eagle scout?

BOGEN: An eagle scout. Yes, I made eagle scout...oh, I don't remember now. I'd have to go look and see, but it was less than two years as I recall from the time I started. And I still have my eagle scout badge, and I was as proud as punch of that. Well, I didn't realize it at the time. I look back on my life, and I realize now that all I needed was a challenge, a challenge that challenged my intellect and my abilities and then when I would shine. And that's what the scouts gave me. And, in addition, they taught me moral...a code of moral ethics and behavior. They took me through the age of puberty when all of us change physically from being children to adults. And I think that this is a very essential part of raising a child and certainly an old maid aunt is not the person to do that. And with no man in the house and so I give the boy scouts credit for turning my life around. But there's only one other element that they did not give me that was given to me was Gulf Coast

Military Academy. They taught me discipline. They taught me self-discipline.

HILLIARD: Now, were you...were you a boy scout when you enrolled in Gulf Coast Military Academy?

BOGEN: Well, I'll have to check my book, but I think that I went to GCMA after or while I was a scout or I don't remember whether I went to GCMA first or whether I...after I came back. I went to GCMA in the early thirties.

HILLIARD: How did they teach you discipline?

BOGEN: Just like the Army teaches you. The place was run by Army officers, either retired or reserve Army officers. They wore Army uniforms, and it was just like boot camp.

HILLIARD: How old were you when you went down there?

BOGEN: I was in the junior school. When I failed the sixth grade that means I was about 11 years old. Esther, through her position with the State Education Department, got me in down there. And...

HILLIARD: Did you take a bus down there? Did you ride a bus or a train?

BOGEN: No, Esther, as I recall, Esther drove me down there in her Jordan automobile, her coupe. I was coming back...I lost my train of thought...you asked me a question, and I started to answer it and I didn't finish.

HILLIARD: How did they instill discipline?

BOGEN: Oh, yes. It was....it wouldn't pass muster today. They would have lawyers on them like white on rice, you know. Physical punishment was very much in order. The first level of punishment was [tours call]. They had a big circular drive coming into the place, and a tour...they had a scale here what [infraction] how much tours, and they were in 15 minute increments. And except for going to class and eating and sleeping and whatnot, every spare moment you had was out there walking around that...that circle, and that was a tour. And all the kids off playing or going to Gulfport to the movies, and you were out there giving in that. And there was one way out of that, and that was to get a beat off. And they had a orderly room there, and the corporal was the guard. You go in there. "I want my tours beat off. I want to go to the movie today." "OK. Assume the position. Bend over. Grab your ankles." And they had a split baseball bat there, and there was one lick for 15 minutes. And brother they didn't spare the horses. And I've seen guys come out of there with their underwear bloody. And I know about how much that dog would hunt today. But they got your attention. They got your

attention real quick, and there wasn't no shenanigans. But study, they told my aunt, they said, "You send him down here, and we'll guarantee you he'll pass. We'll take him into seventh grade." "We'll put him in the seventh grade." I failed the fifth grade. "Put him in the sixth grade, and guarantee you he'll pass." I went down there two years. I came back to Jackson in the eighth grade at Central High at the head of my class. I mean, they made a believer out of me down there. And I would talk back and sass and whatnot. And none of that stuff that gets by in schools today. No way, Jose. It was another world. So, I came back from that, and I went to...well, do you have anymore questions about GCMA?

HILLIARD: No. You came back and then went to Central High School here in Jackson?

BOGEN: I went to Central High School in the eighth grade. And that was where Central High building now the state legislature's got it now.

HILLIARD: The State Department of Education has it today.

BOGEN: Well, whoever's got it. It's...that was the building. And the eighth grade was in the basement. The lowest level classrooms on the southwest end of the building. All the junior high was on that side of the building. And...

HILLIARD: I read in your autobiography that one of your teachers was John K. Bettersworth.

BOGEN: He was a very good instructor. A fine gentleman. In fact, in your photographs, you have a candid photograph of him sitting there pensively at his desk in the classroom.

HILLIARD: He served for many years on the Board of Trustees of the Department of Archives and History and was...

BOGEN: Well, Bettersworth taught me ancient and medieval history. I don't think students today could even spell, let alone know what it is. And Spanish, second year Spanish. And I used to handle Spanish with a fair amount of facility. Nellie [Khayat] taught me first year Spanish. She was the sister of the [Khayat] down here on the Coast. She was a young girl...not a girl...young lady, and she was an excellent instructor. I owe my high school teachers a debt that I will never repay. They challenged me, and they made me do the best that I could possibly do. And the first one to do that was an algebra teacher by the name of Mae Jopes. Mrs. Jopes...

HILLIARD: How do you spell her last name?

BOGEN: J-O-P-E-S. She failed me the first year of algebra, and I was some upset

when I found out that some guy, another classmate, had gotten a pass. And I thought, well, hell, I know more about that than he does. So I went crying to her about this, and she sat me down, and she says, “Now, Alfred, you told me repeatedly that you wanted to be an engineer, and, if you don’t know anything about algebra, there’s no way you’re ever going to be an engineer. And I’m doing this for you. It doesn’t mean any difference to me.” And so I took the course over, and I was at the head of the class. It wasn’t that I couldn’t absorb it. I just wasn’t motivated. I took second year algebra and did the same thing. I went to Mississippi State, and they had freshman algebra in those days, and I never cracked a book and made straight A’s. I made Phi Eta Sigma my freshman year up there. I don’t know whether you know what Phi Eta Sigma is. A freshman, honorary, scholastic fraternity.

HILLIARD: I think I also read that Nash Burger was one of your...

BOGEN: Nash Burger. He later became the...I guess his title was critic for The New York Times.

HILLIARD: Book review editor for The New York Times.

BOGEN: Yeah, book review editor for The New York Times. And Nash Burger was a product, I believe if I recall, of Millsaps. And he, again, challenged us. You know, when I came out of high school, I had studied English literature, American literature, Chaucer. We had a journalism class which was voluntarily. We wrote a weekly paper which was published in the Jackson Daily News called “The Tiger Talks”. And it was one sheet in the newspaper every...it came out every Saturday as I recall. And everything in there, the copy, the whole nine yards...Burger only advised us and supervised us...and the students did the rest. And they would turn in the proof sheets to the paper and the paper would print them. And if you look through your archives to the Daily News back in the 30’s, you’ll find “The Tiger Talks” in there. And...

HILLIARD: Did you ever...did you ever meet Eudora Welty or Charlotte Capers?

BOGEN: No. Those people never...the only person...and I’m sure nobody remembers...was Sarah B. McClain. You know what her claim to fame was? She was a fine person, a real nice lady. She played the piano at the Majestic Theater. In those days of silent movies, the piano...they had a piano player in there that attuned the music they were playing to the action on the screen. And she was a piano player.

HILLIARD: Where was the Majestic Theater located?

BOGEN: Well, the Majestic...I’m trying to think today. If I walk down Capitol Street

beginning at Lamar Street, there was [Humers], well, there was Parisian Ladies Wear. Next to it was Stein's OPO. OPO meaning one price only. 15 dollars for a suit of clothes. Two dollars more you get a second pair of pants. And that was a coat, a vest, and a pair of pants, 15 dollars. You wander on down the street and there was Monkey Wards. Montgomery Wards down there. And then there was McCrory's.

HILLIARD: This is on the north side of Capitol Street.

BOGEN: On the north side of Capitol Street. And let's see if I can remember some more stores before you...then there was Woolworth's, if you know where Woolworth's was. And, then, the Majestic was immediately toward the depot on that side.

HILLIARD: Did you have any, when you were growing up...

BOGEN: And, speaking of movie houses, there was one that don't many people remember was the movie house that was up here on the first block of Capitol Street called the....I knew it and suddenly...

HILLIARD: I can't pull it up either.

BOGEN: The second run movies occasionally had a vaudeville show.

HILLIARD: Century? Was it the Century?

BOGEN: Century. Century. Century. The Century Theater. They occasionally had a vaudeville show there. It was mostly second run movies. And, then, periodically, they'd have these special movies. You had to be 16 years old to get in, and, of course, being less than 16, you had all sorts of visions of what...what was going on in there, you know. And I'll never forget one movie I saw there that I'll never, never forget was "All Quiet on the Western Front". That was...that struck me...

HILLIARD: That World War I movie.

BOGEN: Yeah. That struck me very deeply. Another one...well, then, you had the Istrione Theater which was diagonally across the street a little bit further west from the Majestic. And Istrione was where the two-reeler westerns were shown. And they continued, you know. Come back next week. And it would always end with his horse running away, and the girl in the saddle about to fall off and then you come back next week to see what happened.

HILLIARD: We called them serials.

BOGEN: Yeah, serials.

HILLIARD: Serials. When you...when you were going up, did you have any contact with black folks other than Lovey?

BOGEN: Well, yes. Of course, Lovey has a special place in my heart. I was taught to respect Negroes and treat them as my equals like anybody else. And I always had good relations with colored people. Mrs. Spurlock had a farm up here out from Columbus on the Pickensville Road. And Curby Spurlock, she was a daughter of a state senator. They had a about a thousand...five hundred or a thousand...acre farm up there. It was all in pecan trees in the Tombigbee swamp land down there, and I used to...I first met her was in the Old Capitol building down here and I was...and Esther had taken me down there to keep an eye on me because she would look out her window and see what I was up to. Left me out there to play around that Confederate Monument down there. And I got in a patch of sandburs, if you know what sandburs are. But they...they stick in your feet, and I was barefooted. And I was out there just tip-toeing around. Couldn't hardly make it. And she came along and says, "My name's Ann Spurlock, and come over here and sit down and let me help you." So, she picked the things out of ...And she says, "I'm down here to see Mrs. Rogers." "Oh, oh, that's my aunt." Well, a long story short, she insisted that she take me home with her that time and spend the rest of the summer up there. And I spent a number of summers up there. And of course in those days you had a large number of black families living on the place. I played with the black boys, and we went fishing together and whatnot. And she was very strict about you had to respect these people and treat them as you want to be treated yourself, so I never had any trouble with Blacks. As a matter of fact, I went to Indonesia and lived for three years during the time that Mississippi was in turmoil with...in the 1950's, early 50's...on the racial question. Well, I lived in Indonesia, and a white face was a rare thing out there. And the people would [inaudible] were the people of color. Not necessarily Negroes, but brown or whatnot. Chinaman or whatnot. And I learned that you take people as individuals. You do not judge them by their color or [inaudible]. And I came back from Indonesia. I was embarrassed to tears to see what was going on in Mississippi. The land that I loved and that I felt I owed so much to...that's not the way I was raised. And so I have a black man that works for me. Has been with me for over 25 years. I get out of line, and he'd say, "Now, wait a minute. You're just getting out of line", you know. And I'll sit there and let him straighten me out. No recrimination.

HILLIARD: Alright, when you finished Central High School, you went to Mississippi State or Mississippi A & M then?

BOGEN: No, it was Mississippi State.

HILLIARD: Mississippi State.

BOGEN: It was called State College in those days.

HILLIARD: State College.

BOGEN: And it was called Mississippi State College. It was not the pretentious of the university.

HILLIARD: And you majored in engineering?

BOGEN: Chemical engineering. I started in a class of 136 men and six of us graduated. Chemical engineering, in those days, was regular engineering, civil, mechanical, electrical, had to have 140 hours to graduate. A chemical engineer had to have 152. I never took less than 18 hours a semester, and one semester I took 21. Now, you try that on for size by the standards that existed in those days. I'm not talking about today. You try it on for size and see how demanding that is. And so I...I want to mention one other thing about race and how you view other people. Jewish people I always had a good relationship. I roomed with a Jewish boy in Gulf Coast Military Academy. We got along famously. In high school, there was a jewelry store here called "The Diamond Jewelry Store" just below where the Trustmark Bank building is now. Real good friends. We used to run together. So, I never had any feeling of bias toward people. I never was raised that way. I never...you take the question of homosexuality. There were two...two homosexuals in this town in those days. Charlie Pierce...Charlie Wells and Earskine Pierce. I don't know whether you remember them or not. One of them worked at Kennington's, and one of them worked at Emporium in the men's department. And they wore rouge and lipstick, and they lived right down here on Amite Street. And there is a law office down there, used to be a filling station right there at the corner of President and Amite. And everybody know they were queer as a three-dollar bill, but, you know, so what? There was no big issue made of it. That's the environment in which I grew up. There was Wiley Allison here. Wiley was retarded.

END OF RECORDING