ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Chattanooga - Hamilton County Public Library

Chattanooga, Tennessee

An Interview With

JAMES R. MAPP

By

Booker T. Scruggs, II

March 16, 1983

PREFACE

This manuscript is a transcript of an interview conducted for the Oral History Project of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Public Library. The purpose of the project is to capture the first-hand accounts of the social history of the Chattanooga area in the twentieth century.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that the transcript reflects the patterns of the spoken, rather than the written, word. The information is presented as it was recalled by the interviewee at the occasion of the interview and has been edited only for clarity.

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Funding for this project was provided by local foundations and organizations, including the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, the Chattanooga Area Historical Association, and the National Society of Colonial Dames, Chattanooga Committee. The project was sponsored and administered by the library.

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Date March 16, 1983

1. Full name (include maiden name and married name, where applies):

   James Rogers Mapp

2. Current address and phone number:

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   Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411   698-5777

3. Date and Place of Birth:

   August 16, 1927   Mayfield, Handcock County, Georgia

4. Mother's maiden name: Place of Birth:

   Mrs. Mattie Lou Hargrove   Mayfield, Handcock County, Georgia

5. Father's name: Place of Birth:

   James Albert Mapp   Handcock County, Georgia

6. Spouse's name:

   Mrs. Viola Martin Mapp

7. Children's names and addresses (if possible). Indicate daughters married names:

   Mrs. Brenda Mapp Hackett, 6503 Manderville Rd., Louisville, KY 40228
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   James Johnathan Mapp, 825 Copley Lane, Joliet, IL 60436
   Mrs. Angela Mapp Fritts, 2217 Aspen Ave., Murfreesboro, TN 37130
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(OHP FORM F)

INTRODUCTION

Mr. James R. Mapp, a realtor in Chattanooga, attended school at Orchard Knob and many years later, as a father of seven children, filed suit for the desegregation of the Chattanooga public schools in 1961.

Because of an early awareness and reaction to segregation, Mr. Mapp wrote letters to the editor of the _Chattanooga Times_ as a student and later became active in NAACP, serving as president of the local, state and regional organizations. A candidate for political office, Mr. Mapp was also chosen as a monitor of the state-wide affirmative action programs and director of the Model Cities Program in Chattanooga.

Conducting his realty business on East 9th Street, Mr. Mapp has seen the changes in the black business community in the sixties and seventies and has observed that the impact of integration has not always been favorable.

Mrs. Mapp is a native of Kentucky and came to Chattanooga after marrying Mr. Mapp as a student at Tennessee State University. Her role in civic and church organizations in the community is also discussed in the interview.

The interview was conducted by Booker T. Scruggs, II on March 16, 1983, for the Oral History Project of the Chattanooga - Hamilton County Public Library.

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, let's start off from the beginning with a little bit about your early family background. Tell us where you're from, and just start us off from the beginning.

Mapp: 010 I was born in Mayfield, Georgia, [in 1927]. My father died when I was three. I had one sister who died in 1949. My mother still lives. My first school was Reynold Groves in Mayfield, Georgia, which was a log cabin church that sat on pillars, high on pillars. The pulpit was used as the junior high section.

I did complete my elementary education at Orchard Knob [in Chattanooga], and then my junior high education at Orchard Knob, then Howard High. I attended Tennessee State University for one year, where I majored in business administration. I have done other studies. I had several years' study toward my CLU [Certified Life Underwriter program], that designation which I have not gotten. I am an LUTC [Life Underwriter Training Course] graduate in the insurance field. I've attended many seminars.

Now, I started in the NAACP at an early age. I think it was around 1941 when the unit was re-chartered here under Dr. [Perry A.] Stephens, and I've served ever since.

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, before we get into the NAACP, let's go back to your early family background. You said you were born in Mayfield, Georgia?

Mapp: Mayfield, Georgia, yes.

Scruggs: How far is that from Chattanooga?

Mapp: That's about a hundred and ninety miles from Chattanooga.

Scruggs: Now what circumstances led your family to come to Chattanooga? And at what age did you come to Chattanooga?

Mapp: Well, many of my uncles had migrated here because things were pretty rough in Georgia. Following my father's death, my mother came here in 1930. Of course, I came and spent a little while, but then we moved back to Georgia where I entered school.

[Then] I had a very unique experience at the age of ten, just prior to moving to Chattanooga, when I saw my grandfather
034 have to give up his farm. He was coming to retire[ment]; he thought his farm was clear and paid for. However, at that time the son of the big man in Mayfield that we called Mr. Lilarthur came and said, "Henry, well, you're going to live with your children." I'm going to recount it as a ten-year-old: He said,

(Mapp): 040 "Well, we'll take the farm and call it even." But Grandpa said, "Mr. Lilarthur, I don't owe you anything." And finally he looked around and saw Ludella, a twenty-six year-old horse, and said, "Henry, we'll just take old Ludella too and call it even." Grandpa said, "Mr. Lilarthur, I don't owe you anything."

[At] this time there was no court he could turn to, no lawyer, there [was] nowhere he could turn. So, in other words, he had to give it up. This is what I saw as a ten-year-old, before I came to Chattanooga in 1937.

Scruggs: So when you say things were rough in Georgia, you mean racially speaking?

Mapp: Yes, yes. To give an example -- we were not allowed across the Ogeechee River into Warrenton, which was just across the river, after dark. If we were caught there after dark, we were subject to lose our lives.

Scruggs: Now, when your mother came to Chattanooga, did she find things that much more different in Chattanooga than she found in Georgia?

Mapp: 048 Well, maybe she had been shielded somewhat because she was accustomed to the system of segregation. And not going out into the work area at that time, she perhaps was shielded from a lot of it. She was here with her brothers, with her brothers here.

Scruggs: Here in Chattanooga, your local education you said was done at Orchard Knob.

Mapp: Right.

Scruggs: Elementary school?

Mapp: Elementary and junior high.

Scruggs: What were the conditions of schools back then? Of course, they were segregated, but could you just give us a little bit of the physical conditions of the school. Were they in good shape then? Or did you have books that were passed down from other schools? Or just generally, what were the conditions?

Mapp: Well, we looked at them as being good, but by comparison, we know there was a great difference. This was reinforced, particularly, when I was in high school. As a high school student during World War II, we were studying an airplane engine. The school right up here on Ninth Street, Park Place, their sixth grade students were studying the same airplane. And certainly books, our editions, were much later than those in 063 the white schools.

(Mapp): Going to high school, I had to pass City High [East Third Street] on my way to Howard High downtown [1001 Carter], which meant that I could have walked and saved money. But I had to ride taxis primarily every day to and from school, which was a couple of miles further and made it more inconvenient.

Scruggs: 067 Did you have any interactions at all with white students in the elementary, or maybe on the high school level? Were there any kinds of activities or any events at all that were integrated?

Mapp: There were no integrated events. The only time that we could possibly come close would be when some were practicing on the football field; maybe a few blacks would wander over, and there'd be a little interchange there. But other than that, the only other interchange we had was as we went through the white neighborhoods in Avondale and East Chattanooga; they would rock us. So this is about the extent of it. (laughs)

Scruggs: Were there any so-called riots because of these kinds of situations: going through white neighborhoods and so forth and so on? Were there any kinds of what we would call riots today, then?

Mapp: Not at that time. Now there had been riots because the jitney system* here in Chattanooga grew out of such a disturbance in transportation, where they decided, "Well, we have set our own system of transportation rather than be segregated and misused."

Scruggs: You mentioned about your mother's experience in Georgia. Can you remember maybe the first negative experience that you had, racially? Can you remember when you first became aware of the fact that society placed a difference upon black and upon the whites? If so, what were your reactions?

Mapp: 084 I think it was when I was age ten, because that is vividly in my mind. When I moved to Chattanooga, having to move back on the bus, and knowing that I was limited; I couldn't eat a sandwich at the lunch counter. It caused me in the early -- about 1944 when I entered high school, I started writing letters to the editor condemning racial segregation of that time.

Scruggs: These were letters to the Chattanooga Times?

* A private transportation system consisting of cars which picked up individuals along the streets, especially on Third Street. They transport as many people at a time as the vehicle will accommodate.

Mapp: Yes, yes.

Scruggs: Did you get any results from those letters?

Mapp: 091 I guess my best results came from my principal and teachers. They were all very encouraging; nobody ever discouraged me. The only thing they would say, "Be sure that your English is correct." (laughter)

Scruggs: This brings us up to some lawsuits against the whole idea of segregated schools here in the Chattanooga public schools in 1961.

Mapp: Maybe there's another incident that I should relate. This was: working in the summers I would go to U.S. Pipe [and Foundry] and work. In 1946, during the summer, I was making fifty cents an hour, and I think my white counterpart was making seventy-five cents an hour. The AF of L union representative came around and said, "Well, boys, we're giving you boys three cent on the hour and the white men ten." About the same time in Pittsburgh or Chicago, for U.S. Pipe the men were making about a dollar and a quarter an hour.

Scruggs: I see. Since you mentioned employment here, what were the employment situations for blacks? Could black teenagers at that particular time get jobs or -- I'm pretty sure they couldn't get what we would call the "higher-up jobs." But were jobs available for black teenagers there in those days in reference to, maybe, the white teenagers?

Mapp: 105 Yes, you could always find a job at that time if you wanted one. I worked in the stores in the winter and went to the foundries in the summer. We weren't paid as much, so this meant the market was much more open to us. And then there were certain jobs that were relegated to blacks, and we were free to do this. The foundries were dirty and -- of course, you were subject to tuberculosis, or what have you, because of exposure. So we had all of these kinds of jobs. We didn't have the push-button machinery; you had to use your muscles, and so this meant we had plenty of jobs. We could always find jobs, especially [during] World War II and immediately thereafter.

Scruggs: You're again speaking of World War II. Did you serve any time in the service?

Mapp: 115 No, I was class 1-A and never called, and by the time the Korean War came I had married and had two or three children, so they wouldn't accept me.

Scruggs: Let's talk a little bit about the lawsuit against the Chattanooga

(Scruggs): public schools. This started in 1961. What gave you the encouragement to actually go through with this particular situation? Maybe, you'd better give us a little background of it.

Mapp: 120 Well, actually the actions that I participated in began before 1960 when we filed the suit. They actually began in 1957 when a group of us known as the CGI [Citizens for General Improvement] got together and went before the board of education and asked them to desegregate the system. Naturally, they refused. We sought help from the NAACP branch at that time, and we could not get the help that we wanted. So in 1960, or 1959 rather, I went to a meeting in Nashville at Pleasant Green Baptist Church on Jefferson [Street]. It was a two-day meeting, and to show you my financial condition, I didn't have two dollars to stay in a furnished room. So I slept behind the church in my station wagon; I got pretty cold that night, but I learned how a school suit could be filed.

Immediately upon coming back, we tried to get the branch or the executive committee of the branch to institute a suit. We could not. From that, three of us who were officers of the committee decided that we'd go together because at this time our kids were being bused out of the neighborhood for a half-day session, when we had vacant classrooms in schools like Glenwood. We felt that this was unfair and unjust. For years 137 we'd been pushing; since about 1956 we were pushing to get some relief from the bad conditions, poor conditions, at Orchard Knob School, but to no avail.

Finally, we reached the point where we said one day -- particularly after I learned how the school suit could be filed -- the three of us said, "We'll go in and pick up our children, and we're going to present them at Glenwood School." The first time we went, we went by attorney [Robert H.] Craig's office. At that time he talked with us, and somehow we ended up not going that day. He talked us out of it, I guess.

So two weeks later we decided we'd do the same thing. We bypassed our attorney that time. We thought we'd have "prayer-driven current"; we invited some of the ministerial leadership to come out and pray with us. None of them showed up. But nevertheless, we went to Fifth Street and to Clara Carpenter [schools] and picked up our students, and went out to Glenwood.

We entered the building to find the office vacant and 151 everybody looking out the windows at us. We finally found the principal who informed us that she could not receive our children, that we'd have to present our case to the central office. We immediately left there and went to the central office whereupon

(Mapp): we talked with the superintendent, and we gave him an ultimatum that we thought was very generous. We gave him forty-eight
155 hours to desegregate the system. Our lawyer has been laughing at us about that ever since. He said, "No, the board had not acted."

We sent a telegram -- after we'd visited, we sent a telegram to him and we sent copies to New York, letting them know what we'd done. Immediately thereafter Mrs. [Constance Baker] Motley came in on our case and filed it in federal court.

Scruggs: So, as I guess we all know now, the schools aren't what we would call completely desegregated as such, but before we get to that particular point; what were the real hurdles that you ran into? What were the reasons that were given you? Was it simply just a federal law or a local law? What reasons were given to you why the schools were not desegregated?

Mapp: Well, it was against the state law. We had Jim Crow laws at this time, and it was against the state law for blacks and whites to sit in a classroom together. And certainly state and local officials upheld this law.

Scruggs: What made you think at that particular time that the law would
167 reverse itself because of some of the actions that you were doing with your children? Were you optimistic about the fact that maybe one day, not necessarily in the forty-eight hours that you thought, but one day soon that schools would be desegregated?

Mapp: We felt that in forty-eight hours our children should have been in school.

Scruggs: Even though that was against the law?

Mapp: Right. We were naive because we knew of the 1954 Supreme Court decision and that this superseded all local laws. We did not go to break the system down, we merely went for relief for our children. See, they are the ones who forced us into the court and into a broad-base suit, a class action suit; this was not our idea. We just wanted our children to be in a full-day session for a full day of education.

Scruggs: So what happened as a result of that? Were your children admitted to the schools or what?

Mapp: No, we found that Judge [Frank Wiley] Wilson, Judge [Leslie
179 Rogers] Darr rather, soon passed off the scene. [Retired in 1961] I give Judge Darr a lot of credit because he included many items in our case which perhaps would not have been included by Judge Wilson. Judge Darr knew the community; Judge

(Mapp): Darr was an honorable man; and he was concerned about the wrongness of racial segregation. So he broadened our suit; he let us broaden our suit to include the teachers and all staff, and this was not the order of the day at that time.

187 Judge Darr retired; Judge Wilson came on the bench. By 1962 he did start a gradual process of desegregation, which did not affect the children who were involved in the suit. They did not get the relief that was sought, but my first-grader at that time did get relief. It was a prolonged suit over a period of time wherein of the complete resegregating -- the complete segregating of housing patterns [evolved]. Because, mind you now, that in the fifties, prior to 1954, it wasn't uncommon to find a white and a black living in a duplex. The south side, west side, all over, a black could buy a home anywhere he wanted to in Chattanooga, on the ridge or mountain, anywhere -- if he had the money.

There were no problems in living at this time, but the court, Judge Wilson, allowed a long period of elucidation, and that's thus, and then, this type of thing. Then he started
202 the gradual process. I might point this out, to show you how gradual the process was: the dual racial zones were not eliminated until the suit was eleven years old, in 1971. So you can see these are some of the problems that we had to face.

Scruggs: You mentioned attorney Craig, he was a black attorney, is that correct?

Mapp: That's correct.

Scruggs: Was it that he was just ineffective in terms of trying to initiate a suit like this because he was black, or what happened that he did not follow up on this particular case?

Mapp: Oh, he did; he was our attorney; he was our local attorney working. Oh yes, see we worked through him; all the papers were filed through him in the early stages. Yes, he was our local attorney and worked with us.

Scruggs: Did any other white attorneys, other than those you mentioned, cooperate and sort of go along with the idea that schools should be integrated and were somewhat in sympathy with your cause?

Mapp:
214 Well, we couldn't find them. No, we didn't find any. As a matter of fact, the school board, present school board attorney, Raymond [B.] Witt, was on the board at that time. He felt so strongly about it that he came off the board and offered his services as attorney for the school board. At first

(Mapp): I think he was being paid by the community, but pretty soon it got to be a hundred-thousand-dollar item in the city's
220 budget.

Scruggs: How do you see the schools presently in terms of your desegregation suit which started, well, over twenty years ago?

Mapp: Twenty-three.

Scruggs: Twenty-three years ago, right. Let me ask you this question: if you were to look at 1983, back in 1980, would you want to be where you are now in terms of the school desegregation situation?

Mapp: I would certainly like to see a completely integrated system. We've gone through the process by law of desegregating the system, but we've not moved to affirmatively integrate the system. Riverside and Howard [High Schools] are two cases in point.

And another thing we've done, the school suit has brought about a division of the people of Chattanooga. In other words, you can pinpoint your white areas and your black areas. As I mentioned before, twenty-five years ago we were scattered a little of everywhere. Of course, we had our compact areas of concentration, but the housing programs, all of this served to
235 divide us in our living patterns, which caused us to have the segregated system that we have now.

I have to say that Judge Wilson stayed within the least letter of the law in carrying out this order. In other words, he brought a lot of harm to a lot of white children and black children. However, if I had to go it again, I'd file the suit because I think the end results, the pride and dignity that the students have now, even though they are physically separated, perhaps too much -- there's a pride and dignity there, and a feeling of equality that did not exist twenty years ago.

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, during the initial stages of this desegregation process, were you or any of your family members intimidated at all by some of the other children in the school, by some of the teachers, or just anybody at all in the communities?

Mapp: Well, my kids took it in stride. I guess my wife took the
250 brunt of it, over the telephone. You know we were fortunate in that many people, many whom we did not know, would come and stand guard around our house at night. You know this is a strange paradox. Where my church members primarily were not concerned, these strangers came in; they'd get off the eleven o'clock shift and stay till daybreak. Some of them would get

(Mapp): off at three o'clock shift, would come after dark and stay until eleven. So this is something I feel very good about, the way they looked out for us. Certainly, I had sugar poured in my cars; I had many threats. So many times I felt like having

260 my number not listed, but we retained our listed number and took everything that they threw at us.

Scruggs: We also understand or remember that your home was bombed back in 1970. Is that correct?

Mapp: That's correct.

Scruggs: I don't guess this would be a direct result of your involvement with the desegregation process as it started some ten years before that, but in addition to that, I guess you were involved with the NAACP and various other kinds of situations. What was the extent of damage that was done to your home? And did the officials ever find out who actually did it?

Mapp: Well, they weren't, I don't think, anxious to find out who did it. A great deal of damage was done, a great deal of damage.

Now, this was a result of the integration activities. We had blocked an apartment building that was to be built near Joseph E. Smith [Public School, 701 East Tenth Street] because we wanted to not increase segregation in housing. And it was the blocking of this housing project that got my house bombed, I'm fairly certain, because this was at a point when NAACP was vigorously opposing this particular project that they bombed

277 our house.

Scruggs: So it was never determined whether or not it was members of the Ku Klux Klan or just somebody who just wanted to intimidate you. This was never really officially brought out, I don't guess, was it?

Mapp: Well, no, but we find at this same time, out of some of the unions, there was a lot of bombings -- Amos and Andy Buick, and there was a whole lot of bombings going on all around this area at that time. So it's hard to pinpoint the Klan, and particularly since we stopped the construction project. It could have just as easily been some of the unions.

Scruggs: Was this the only property damage that you had during this particular time?

Mapp: Yes, it was.

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, now let's talk about your involvement with the local branch of the NAACP. At what time did you become actively

(Scruggs): involved in the NAACP here in Chattanooga?

Mapp: 289 Well, all through my high school days I was very actively involved; I headed the council of units within the city of Chattanooga. That was from 1944 until 1947. And then I went into the adult branch in 1953 as secretary of the branch, and I served as secretary of the branch until 1959, at which time I became president and served for eight years. I stepped down for two years and was re-elected for another eight years, at which time I stepped down again.

Scruggs: Did you see the direction of the NAACP change any at all during the course of time that you were actively involved in it, and if so, were these changes in a positive vein or a negative vein?

Mapp: Well, there really hasn't been that much change except of strategy, because you see our problems have remained; so our goals have been there very constantly before us. But in achieving our objectives, we just had to come up with some new strategies. And this is the only thing, even today, because the racial hatred still abounds -- it has a Northern flavor 308 now. They don't call you "boy"; they'll say "mister," but the same time they cut you out of jobs. See, it might be better to be called "boy" and be able to eat, than called "mister" with no job when you're hungry.

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, in those particular times we're talking about, the sixties and the seventies, I guess they [the NAACP] could have been called maybe one of the more conservative black organizations -- when you look at the NAACP in reference to the Black Panther organization or the Student Non-violent Coordinating Council [sic Committee] and some of the other organizations which were much more vocal and, in many respects, violent than the NAACP. So did the NAACP receive any flack because of this, by people saying that they should get more involved in the causes of the black; [that] they should be more directly involved in the civil rights movement? And, if the organization received these kinds of accusations, what was done to keep the NAACP in the forefront of the black movement?

Mapp: 323 Well, you see, wherein some groups have said that we were not militant, the white communities always thought we were too militant. You see, many don't know that NAACP and CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] started the sit-ins, and they didn't come with Dr. [Martin Luther, Jr.,] King and Southern Christian Leadership [Conference]. Back in the forties NAACP and CORE were having sit-ins, but the difference has been that some organizations have gotten the publicity and they got the money. Now, in 1953 and every few years, we found ourselves unable to

(Mapp): pay our staff, while if we look at Southern Christian Leadership in the early sixties, they had just about as much money taken out of their savings as we had income for a year.

I want you to see a comparison. I think there's some reason for that. While we were not listed as "militant," we were the ones who were digging up the roots of segregation.
338 A lot of people don't realize it, but our decision against lynching in 1953 made it so that Dr. King could walk in Alabama; otherwise, they would have killed him before he started. See, our 1954 decision opened the way, really, of breaking down segregation in this whole society.

Even though we have taken the legal route, we have not forsaken demonstrating, but we've been very cautious now. We have been peaceful in what we've done, not non-violent, but peaceful; there is quite a difference in the terms, "peaceful" and "non-violent." We'll react when we are acted upon, but we don't aggressively -- in other words, we don't sit back complacently and take, which means we differ in philosophy somewhat from Southern Christian Leadership and Dr. King.

Scruggs: During your term of office as president of the local branch, would you give us some of the accomplishments that the organization, the NAACP, made here locally, in terms of desegregating of various facilities, or in terms of anything at all to help black and minority people.

Mapp:
359 Yes, I can go to almost any walk of life and you'll see the NAACP at work. We can start with TVA, Combustion Engineering, City of Chattanooga, county governments, water company, power board, gas company, Miller Brothers, Lovemans, all the major chain stores -- we've been there -- the chicken house [Tennessee Egg Company, later bought by Central Soya], foundries, the hospitals, you see, we've been there. We were in the process of breaking down a little of everything.

Now, a great deal is not said about what we do because we don't name people. We didn't name people to positions; when a position, say, is open at the bank, we don't demand that such-and-such a person be hired, but we demand our affirmative action plans and goals. We've had many of the vice-presidents of the banks in our office with their affirmative action plan.

Of course, this is not generally known. We've met with the heads of our big department stores, and much of our indus-
380 try, and got many things straightened out. We've sought and gotten a great deal of advancement -- DuPont is an example: one day we had some thirty employees from DuPont who were complaining because they couldn't get promoted; two days later we

(Mapp): found out there were some promotions. So, it's this type of
385 effectiveness that NAACP has had.

Scruggs: Was there much resistance from the Chattanooga community to get many of these things that you talked about initiated in the system? I mean did you have any real [resistance], for instance, from the banks and from the power companies, and from other agencies here in Chattanooga, companies, industries? Was there much resistance to your thrust to get more blacks involved in their particular companies and industries?

Mapp: Yes, yes, there was a great deal of resistance. However, Chattanooga has been one of those kinds of towns where they will do enough to placate groups. This is all they want to do, do just enough, stay within the letter of the law, as it were. I'll use this term again. And this is the way they've always reacted; in other words, let's just give a little so that some will be saying, "Well, we're giving," while others say they're not. See, this is the way Chattanooga still operates.

Scruggs: Well, you ought to be commended for the role that you and the
400 NAACP played during these real turbulent times in getting many of the opportunities available for many persons here in the Chattanooga area. Let's talk about another phase of your life, and that has to do with politics. As you know, politics sort of permeates all phases of our lives, but you ran for a public office, I guess, a few times, didn't you?

Mapp: Several times.

Scruggs: Yes, several times. Tell us a little bit about that, and what gave you the impetus to run for those offices.

Mapp: Well, in the early sixties we did have a try for the state legislature. And I believe it was back in the fifties when we had a try, and we should have won two seats on the city commission. Our candidates came in fifth and sixth. We didn't recognize the importance at that time of trying to elect two candidates. We pitted one against the other, and instead of coming in within the top four, they came in fifth and sixth with just a few hundred votes, and both could have won.

So we had a lull until the sixties, and we tried to get Mrs. [Phoebe] Callier in the legislature. Then in the later sixties -- I don't believe we had anybody to run for justice of the peace until I ran for the county council in 1966. This was a move -- See, I've always run in county races because
425 this had a special significance for me. In other words, we'd let the county know that you can't sit over here and not expect any problems. And then I ran in 1968 for county trustee

(Mapp): against Bill [William Roy] Nobles, and there's some interesting sidelines to that. Then I ran in 1974 against Mrs. [Dorothy] Brammer for county register.

Now in all of these, my idea -- see, I knew I had a chance

435 to win, yet it was improbable. Mathematically, I could have won, perhaps not against Mrs. Brammer, but mathematically I could have won, you know with a solid black vote, particularly the county council. Then I ran for the new county council when we set up districts. This is where we had got out there and had blocked a move that would have eliminated blacks from this council. And, course, here they came with a new strategy, and Reverend [Paul A.] McDaniel ran against me and won.

Scruggs: When you ran against, for instance, Mrs. Brammer, and some of the others, did you see your defeat as because of a lack of voter turnout by blacks, assuming that many blacks would have voted for you in those particular elections?

Mapp: Well, you gotta look at it like this: defeat and victory are different for a white and a black. A solid black vote is victory, and it has its impact in the white community. Now, if I'd done this, if I'd gotten the maximum black vote, I would have felt good. Now I felt good about the race with Mrs. Bram-

461 mer, because I beat her as a strong candidate in the district that Mr. [Clarence B.] Robinson ran in and won.

In other words, after I had beaten her, and he could see the statistics of my beating a very strong female candidate in his district, [then] he decided to run. So in my way, this was victory. In other words, the office itself does not mean total victory to me, yet I would like to have had it.

Scruggs: We've been hearing the term over the last few years about "affirmative action." We understand that you were in on some of the monitoring of the affirmative action programs of the governor of the state of Tennessee. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

Mapp: Well, I did this as president of the state NAACP. I monitored many of the programs of state government; however, most of my monitoring has been at the local level. What I did at the state level -- I was able to get information on what was happening, not only in state government, but in federal government. So I was able to monitor both federal and state. At

482 that time I knew how many jobs were available in the state of Tennessee for the federal government and from the state government. I knew how many areas that employed no blacks and how many blacks were on boards. I had all this information.

(Mapp): 487 And it was this that we would use when we'd go in each year to sit down and talk with the governor about our program for the year. We'd use this type of information. We'd also use it again with our senators and representatives in terms of trying to get positions on, say, the housing board or the federal bank board of Tennessee, the home loan bank board, and this type of thing. See, all of this I was able to do because I had the information.

Strangely enough, I couldn't get it from our senior senator, Senator [Howard] Baker, I couldn't get all this information. But it was our little junior senator, Senator [Jim] Sasser -- Senator Baker was going to have to go through a set-up that was going to cost -- I forget how many thousands of dollars to make a study and do this, that, and the other. And Senator Sasser just ordered the printed report and sent me a copy of it. (laughs)

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, of course, there were various controversies surrounding affirmative action with the [Allan] Bakke case [1978] and various other cases, and many people alleged that affirmative action was simply "reverse discrimination." Now, what kind of comeback or reaction would you give persons who would say to you that why are you fighting for affirmative action when it is, indeed, reverse discrimination? What would be your comeback on that?

Mapp: 515 Well, my comeback would be about like this: in driving a car, before you can go from forward to reverse, you have to come to a stopping point, don't you? In other words, you have to disengage the forward gear to get into reverse. Affirmative action simply means that we have never disengaged the forward gear, and affirmative action is a measure of disengaging that forward gear to pick up, to go back and pick up what's in the back.

In other words, you can't just keep going down the road and close the gap. If I drop a package off a truck as I drive along, it's important that I go back and pick up that package. In other words, affirmative action says this, "Let's go back and pick up these people that you've left." And when we bring up enough in sufficient number that we can quantify them, then at this point we can say that we've broken the racial barriers. From this point on, you're saying you could conceivably have reverse discrimination, but you cannot have reverse discrimination until you first bring the gears back, and it's never been done.

541

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, many persons in the Chattanooga community have looked upon you as being almost exclusively NAACP. They didn't realize

(Scruggs): that you had a job where you made money, (laughs) or hopefully made money -- that being in the real estate industry on East Ninth Street which is now, of course, Martin Luther King Boulevard. You have seen businesses come and go here in the Chattanooga area, not only on East Ninth Street, but in the black

550 community in general. But let's talk specifically about Martin Luther King Boulevard. What effect, if any, has desegregation or integration had on black businesses; maybe here on M. L. King Boulevard or just in the black community in general?

Mapp: It has almost effectively killed all black businesses. Most black businesses suffer because of integration -- or desegregation, we'd better say, because we're not fully integrated yet. It has cost us so much money. See, we had a captive market at one time, a partial captive market; we no longer have that. As a matter of fact, we now are struggling for survival. And perhaps to our detriment we are doing this, because the one thing that we must recognize is that the white man respects a small business.

I have an insurance agency. I haven't had standard companies over the years, but because even in the substandard market there was a potential for me to blossom into a big company -- I received respect from the white community to the ex-

575 tent -- I say my people received it -- to the extent that standard coverages are provided many who would otherwise be in a substandard market. I just use that as an example to show you just how valuable black businesses are, and why we must have black businesses of all types.

When we get to the point where we don't have black businesses, we'll be like the old general store and the people who lived on the farm, where everybody -- they didn't give them money but they gave them script; they had to come to that store, and they could charge what they wanted and treat them like they wanted. So this was the posture that black businesses occupy; they eliminate this script type of dealing by the white community.

Scruggs: Let's talk about a related subject which has to do with racial pride. We've come through the whole black power era of "black is beautiful" and so forth. How do you see racial pride now presently among blacks? Is it one -- well, let me ask you this, has desegregation lessened racial pride, do you think? Even desegregation in our schools or desegregation in the business world or whatever? How has it affected the overall racial pride of blacks?

Mapp: It has caused us to lose our racial pride, unfortunately. And
604 I think it is going to be to the detriment of our children,

(Mapp): because we are failing to tell the story of our struggle to our children. They don't know where they came from; hence, it's hard for them to figure where they're going in a society such as ours. This is one of the things I've been constantly talking about is that we must tell the story.

611 And I think there's something else that parallels it; it means that we've forgotten really who our Deliverer was, and I talk about this a lot now. We look at Dr. King and Roy Wilkins, but these were merely instruments in that delivery. See, we look at the children of Israel, we see God as the liberator, but in our struggle we only see our heroes as the liberators. And you see this is a great problem for us, and it's one that we're going to have to recognize.

I think our religious leaders are going to have to come to grips with the fact that the greatest deliverance was not that of the children of Israel where they were taken <u>out</u> of their bondage and <u>away</u> from their masters, but where you're brought <u>up</u> but then you're delivered <u>within</u> the confines of your master's house. You see, this is a great delivery where you can be identified. Everything is going against you, and yet you find a way of being delivered. So this, I look at, as being one of the greatnesses of God's delivery. I had to, felt that I needed to bring that in.

Scruggs: 639 Mr. Mapp, we certainly appreciate you telling us about your life here in Chattanooga. In just a few moments we want to talk about an individual who has stood by you through thick and thin, and that is Mrs. Mapp.

End Tape 1, Side 1
Begin Tape 1, Side 2

Scruggs: Before we talk about the role of Mrs. Mapp in your life and in the community here in Chattanooga, let's recap some things that we talked about just a few moments ago. Attorney Craig, who was a black attorney here in Chattanooga, was very instrumental in clearing some records, we understand, of some persons who were involved in some civil rights activities. Now tell us just a little bit about that.

Mapp: 006 Mr. Craig represented many of our students, he and his partners, who were involved in the sit-ins and stand-ins. He also represented us throughout our school suit as long as his health would allow him. But now there was a great pride that Mr. Craig had just before his death of cancer. A few months before his death he called me in and said there was something that he wanted to do and that was to see that the record of every child in the city and in the stand-in movement in Chattanooga was

(Mapp): 012 cleared. This Mr. Craig did, maybe a month or so before he died [December 1960].

He called me in and said, "Look, I want you to know one thing, that the record of every one of those children have been cleared." And he said, "There's something else; you don't owe me a dime, the NAACP doesn't owe me anything. This is a gift from me to these young people." And I thought that was a great act because we are one of the few cities in this country where the young people don't have these records against them which will affect them in going to government positions and things of this nature.

Scruggs: In mentioning the sit-ins -- this took place when and where, specifically downtown?

Mapp: Well, you know, there's a beautiful tie-in that I like to mention as being providential. You know I mentioned earlier that on our first visit we were talked out of going to the schools with our children. On the second visit, it just so happened that the day that we went was the same day that the students from Howard decided to sit-in downtown. I have said this is providential, that perhaps God had directed this way because it allowed two groups to make an action where neither could 027 be focused on by a hostile community. And it was very disruptive and disconcerting to the Chattanooga community power structure because they didn't know how to deal with both of them at one time. You know, our kids were hosed down [February 1960], and even the mountain seemed to have reacted to it. It was right after they'd hosed the kids down that Lookout Mountain looked like a ghost after we were iced up here, and was isolated from the city for several days [ice storm of March 1960]. So it does look as though that there was a hand mightier than ours in the plan at that time.

Scruggs: What direct benefits do you see that the Chattanooga community derived from the sit-ins of the 1960s?

Mapp: Well, one thing: there's a dignity, there's a dignity with being able to go in and sit down as any other citizen, to go in and have service on equal basis. You see, this is a great dignity because we were a people that were cowered down, who were afraid, but this brought a new dignity to us as a people. All you have to do is walk downtown today, or into the shopping centers, and note the dignity of our people as they intermingle with others. And I think this is a direct result of what those 042 young people did downtown.

Scruggs: Let's talk about another phase of your life; it could be looked upon as a negative phase, I guess, depending upon how you want

(Scruggs): to look at it. You were fired from your job with the Model Cities Program back in 1973. Would you tell us, first of all, what the Model Cities Program was designed to do? What were you supposed to do in your role with the Model Cities Program? And why were you fired?

Mapp: 046 The Model Cities Program was a new concept in a community and city, a working relationship to build a community. There was supposed to be viable input from the citizens to go along with that of the administrators of the town, and was supposed to come up with new concepts and new ideas of bringing blacks into the mainstream of our city. And, of course, this is what Model Cities was all about.

My particular job was that in planning. I was in the area of housing and relocation which was a very vital area. We were able to get open housing legislation through this particular program. We were able to get some programs that are still in existence now. One is the housing assistance program, and the community's betterment grew out of this.

We were able to get people feeling that they were important to government. They were organized, and they were learning how to use the avenues of government. We had also developed many projects, at least I had in my area with my help of the task force. As a matter of fact, your grandmother chaired my task force. 063 We were able to develop a housing development cooperation which should have been funded, where we envisioned building some thirty million dollars worth of housing. It was our hope that as people were displaced out there, that this vehicle would have been an avenue for relocating them in areas that had been cleared in the community. And it wouldn't be laying barren like it is now. [Orchard Knob Urban Renewal Project Area]

In 1973 President Nixon, at a time when Mayor Robert Kirk Walker had been forced to reach a point of signing the contract to initiate this project, announced a moratorium on housing, which let Mayor Walker out. And he was glad to get out; he wasn't concerned about thirty million dollars worth of housing in this area. But he was just concerned that blacks would not have this kind of power in developing the area out there.

075 Now, it was 1971 that -- this is a related area -- that Judge Wilson announced his full integration order. It was stayed because of the Goss decision in Knoxville* which

* Josephine Goss, et al vs. Knoxville Board of Education, March 1973. The Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld U.S. District Judge Robert L. Taylor's decision relative to this case. He found that massive busing was not necessary to attain racial integration of the Knoxville public school system as the plaintiffs had held.

(Mapp): allowed a stay for two years.

In 1973 this project, this full integration plan, was ordered into effect. And this, I think, had been allowed -- it may have been 1974 that we were cut off, it was 1974, I think.

080 But this started our demise. Now, I was a senior member there, senior planner.

Then there was something else. They didn't know what the community's reaction would be toward getting rid of me individually. It is my belief that Jesse McCants had been pressured to get rid of me, but he didn't do it. Of course, they eventually got rid of him. And the way to get to me was to wipe out the total planning mechanism of Model Cities. And this is what the mayor did. Unfortunately, the community said nothing; they just let them wipe us out. And Monday morning, board members from Model Cities were in my office with their problems, but they never said a word about keeping us on staff and on payroll. So this was the way that it progressed.

Model Cities funds lasted up until about 1980, 1979 or '80. It was that time before all the funds were expended. So it was not the lack of funds, but it was to wipe out a mechanism that had been trouble, that had gotten an open housing ordinance, that pushed the city for economic opportunities for blacks. And not only that, the full integration plan, school integration plan, had gotten underway, and I think these coupled together

098 resulted in the wiping out of the whole staff, whole planning staff.

Scruggs: I guess many people don't realize the fact that those funds were available through 1979 and '80 because the concept of Model Cities, as I remember it, sort of terminated back then when you were talking about. What was the money being used for, let's say in 1978, '79, and '80? What was the money being used for then?

Mapp: Well, they were targeted in some projects in human services. And, of course, they shifted -- and I don't know where -- into so many areas. See, they had a way of shifting funds. We went under a new funding concept; where we'd had categorical grants -- we went under a concept, an "umbrella" type concept under human services, where all these were called "integrated grants." And this integrated grant allowed monies to

106 be hidden and transferred from one project to another without the general public knowing what's going on.

Scruggs: Let's talk about Mrs. [Viola Martin] Mapp now and some of her community and church involvements and so forth. In terms of her background, where was she born and when did she come to Chattanooga?

Mapp: Well, she was born in Greenville, Kentucky, and I brought her to Chattanooga in 1948. We met at Tennessee State, and we both had completed our year at Tennessee State. She has an interesting family background in that her father's grandfather, I believe it was, bought his freedom in 1838. In 1840 he bought a hundred acres of land and his wife's freedom. And so they have been there at that particular site since 1840 or thereabouts.

Scruggs: Now, when you say "bought their freedom," in terms of how much? Or what did they pay for their freedom?

Mapp: 116 There was no record of what was paid, but at that time if you had a good master, he would let you pay so much and buy your freedom. And this is what he did; he was able to buy his freedom.

Scruggs: And he maintained that land?

Mapp: Right. And, of course, his son added a couple of hundred acres to it. And then my wife's father added another eight hundred acres to it. So there remains somewhere near a thousand acres that's been in this family over the years. I thought it was interesting that her history goes back. The family has in its possession coins from the 1850s, like half-dimes and some peculiar pennies and other coins, and it has documents that Dillard University [New Orleans, Louisiana], has been trying to get for their archives. And, of course, the family hasn't given them up yet. This is to give you a little of the family background.

Scruggs: Does the family still maintain land in Kentucky, the same land?

Mapp: They're still on the same site.

Scruggs: Very interesting. Your wife has been very actively involved in the NAACP here locally. What, basically, has been her role over the years?

Mapp: 134 Well, for the first few years she was there as a supporter to me, because with our eight children she was spending most of the time raising the children and giving support to me. Since the middle sixties, later sixties, she has moved into [a] leadership role, particularly that of raising funds and memberships for the NAACP. She has, perhaps, raised more funds for the local branch than anybody in the history of the branch and brought in new programs for the branch.

Scruggs: She's also been very active in the school systems with the PTA and the PTO, as it may be called in some systems, and also in

(Scruggs): the churches. Just tell us about the school and the church in her life.

Mapp: Let me say something right quick. She's never been active in the PTO, always PTA.

Scruggs: Well, what's the difference there?

Mapp: 145 The PTO, apparently, was an outgrowth of the integrated efforts. All schools seem to have been PTA until 1971. At that point, when integration set in, the PTA endorsed integration, and many schools pulled out and formed their own organizations, so that they would not be supporting a national body that encouraged the integration of schools. So, you see, that's what PTO is all about. PTA is this unit that's been in operation about eighty-six years, looking out for the welfare of children. It's an organized group, throughout the country. Where PTO can only serve its local school, and it does not have any national impact anywhere. All the programs come from PTA and not PTO.

Scruggs: I'm glad you clarified that; I never knew the difference. What is her involvement, then, in the PTA?

Mapp: 156 Presently she is the head of the Chattanooga Council of PTA's. She organized and served as the first chairman of the East Tennessee region of PTA's. We've served as co-president of a number of PTA's, and she's served [on] her own as head of some PTA's. She's served on the council of colored PTA's in years gone by, and right now she's in the process of rebuilding the Chattanooga PTA which had dropped because of integration. If you'll notice in most of your affluent communities, you have PTO's, you see. This is an indication of the attitudes of much of Chattanooga.

Scruggs: We've also heard that PTA's aren't really that involved in the work of the school system in terms of the attendance, or that the parents are actually becoming involved and actually supporting what is known as the PTA, or the PTO in some situations. Is that the case here in Chattanooga? Are parents just lackadaisical about the education of their children? If so, why?

Mapp: 171 Well, these are some of the results. There's been a downplay of organizational groups since integration. The PTA has really been the mainstay of support for our schools, of support for our teachers, and administrators and boards. Because much of the money that has come about, has come about as a result of PTA lobbying. So PTA has been a very strong force.

I think you'll find this, at least I noted this, that

(Mapp): 177 Lookout Valley's high school scored the highest on this new state test. And if you'll note that every school out there is PTA, and there's very active parent involvement. Now, the school that scored the lowest, I believe you'll find it has very minimal PTA -- that was Howard. And if you'll look at the feeder schools coming in to Howard; of the eight, I believe, feeder schools -- there are only three PTA schools. This indicates that the parent participation is not there, and that this lack of parent participation reflects itself in the achievement of the students.

Scruggs: Now, Mrs. Mapp's role as it relates to her church [Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist] -- how does she integrate her involvement with the church and the community and the school? What's the importance of the church in her life?

Mapp: Well, she's very much involved. She's head of the Missionary Society; she's presently a Sunday school teacher; she's president of the choir. She has volunteered a great deal of time in the office of the church there. She's set up displays of the national Negro History Week. She's been a force that's been working throughout the church over the years. She has 196 organized a number of groups.

Scruggs: As you know, Mr. Mapp, the church, the black church, has somewhat been a vanguard in the civil rights movement and causes for blacks throughout history. I guess this is one institution that many blacks, especially poor blacks, could turn to for some kind of consolation, whether it be positive or negative. But what do you see as the role of the church presently in the black community? Is it still a leadership force? Do we still look to the church for our, not only spiritual guidance, but guidance in terms of civil rights and other kinds of grievances that we may have? What, basically, is the role of the black church?

Mapp: Unfortunately, the church has stepped out of that role of leadership far too often. The church has become a professional society where you go to it for its services now. It's not one that reaches out in the community and serves the community. Right now NAACP is working hard to try to get the church back into its posture of being one that [is involved] -- because these are moral issues, and moral issues definitely have spir- 211 itual values, and spiritual implications. And the church, naturally, should be providing the leadership in that area, but the church is sadly lacking in providing that leadership.

Scruggs: Mr. Mapp, it's been very good talking to you about you and your family; one of the very important aspects of your family that we failed to mention and what we are going to conclude

(Scruggs): 216 — with today -- a point that you have mentioned here a couple of times -- have been your eight children. Of course, we always like to hear from a father talking about his children. Just briefly tell us about your children and what they're doing now, and anything else you'd like to tell us.

Mapp: Well, we feel very good about our children in the role that they've taken. There have been times when we've wondered if we had, perhaps, neglected [them] because of the role we played in the community, and we'd failed them. But when we look at how they've achieved, it makes us feel much better.

Our older daughter [Brenda] got a degree in nursing from the University of Kentucky. She has served in the hospital; she has taught nursing at a junior college; and now she's in research at a junior college in Louisville.

Our second daughter, Deborah, always wanted to be a teacher. She graduated from the University of Kentucky also. Deborah has her master's now, and she's teaching in the Lexington school system. Our third daughter, Mikey, went off to Sullivan Business College and took her a year of business, and went to work for G.E. [General Electric]. She's been with G.E. about twelve or thirteen years now, and she's gone back to school. She's right now a junior, advanced junior, at the University of Louisville. Of course, now she's married. All three of them are married. The older daughter has two sons; the second daughter, one daughter and four sons; and, of course, Mikey, two children.

239 — Our fourth, Johnny, graduated from UTC. He is now in Joliet, Illinois; he is with the Olin Chemical Company, and he's an assistant personnel director. Angela, our third daughter [sic fourth daughter], finished three years at Middle Tennessee State. She still resides in Murfreesboro, and she's working in a secretarial position for one of the plants over there. She has two daughters.

Our fifth, sixth rather, Tony, is in New York. Tony went to Howard University [Washington, D.C.]. Tony has enough credits to graduate from Howard, but his last semester was so dismal, he said he wants to take it over, not have it in his cum [cumulative] record. He is presently in Brooklyn, New York. He is editing a community newspaper; he's edited several in the New York area. He's writing a book; he has a play that is supposed to be presented this fall. They wanted him to try to get it ready this spring, but he said he didn't have time. And, of course, he's looking to get married in June. (laughter) Now,

258 — Johnny is married; Johnny and his wife have two children.

(Mapp): The seventh one, Alicia, had three years at Memphis State. She went out to Chattanooga State Tech a little. She's presently a teller with the American National Bank. She doesn't have any children; she and her husband don't have children. And the baby, Ivey, is ready to start her fifth year in electrical engineering at UT Knoxville. She's engaged to be married in 1984.

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Scruggs: Is there something else you'd like to mention?

Mapp: There's a few things I didn't mention. I'm an Eagle Scout; I've been a Scout for around forty years. I also serve as chairman of trustee board in the construction of our new church edifice at Orchard Knob, and have served in all kinds of positions except preaching deacon -- Sunday school superintendent, choir president and member, and presently I teach twelve to fourteen year-old boys.

Scruggs: Well, Mr. Mapp, it's been very good talking to you. I've known you for, I guess, all of my years, and I've learned something new every day. This has really been an inspiration to me to hear you talk about your life here in Chattanooga. As you know, we are talking some things now that hopefully, twenty, fifty, and a hundred years from now, people can come to the library, the Bicentennial library, and pull out your tape and hear these words of wisdom that you've already given.

Now, if someone were to hear this tape fifty years from now here in Chattanooga, what words would you like to say to them? What would you like to say?

Mapp: I'd like to say that I hope things have improved to the extent that we are one people in this country, that color is no longer a factor, that a man can make it and must make it by his sheer will and his sheer ability to move ahead and get a job done.

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