ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Chattanooga - Hamilton County Public Library

Chattanooga, Tennessee

An Interview With

HENRY SAMUEL CATHEY

By

Grey Gundaker

November 28, 1989

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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Two indexes have been prepared for locating specific information from either the transcript or the tape. The page index to the transcript is located at the end of this volume. A meter count number has been given in the left margin of the text for locating a section on the tape. It should be noted that this number will vary depending on the equipment used.

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Date November 28, 1989

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

   Henry Samuel Cathey

2. Current address and phone number:

   Rossville Convalescent Home
   1425 McFarland Avenue
   Rossville, Georgia

3. Date and Place of Birth:

   December 9, 1907 Chattanooga, Tennessee

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

   Victoria Benge Cathey

5. Father's name: Place of Birth:

   Forrest Myrtle Cathey

6. Spouse's name:

   Jesse Broome Cathey

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

   Henry S. Cathey, Jr.
   Lancaster, Virginia

(OHP FORM F)

Gundaker: You were beginning to tell me where you went to school and about the schools' having been closed.
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Cathey: I went to grammar school for eight years at Cedar Hill Grammar School. It is now torn down and just a vacant lot; there's nothing there now. I remember when basketball first came in. We brought picks and shovels and dug a basketball court on the yard, and had one big tree for one of the posts.

Gundaker: That was probably the first one in town.

Cathey: Yes, it was. We didn't know the rules or anything, so it was kind of rough to start with. We had national spelling bees at that time, but I wasn't a good speller. We had a basketball team for athletics. We had some of the best teachers, I believe, of anywhere around. I went to high school at Central High School up in Ridgedale, and it is now torn down. We made our mark on the city as a school, both scholastic[ly] and athletic[ly]. But time changes all things. The time came [when] they tore it down and built a new high school in the north part of the city, I believe [it] was Ooltewah or near there.
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I think what made the teachers special is that they could control the class. There isn't too much discipline of classes this day and time in some places. But [in] that day and time we dared not to move or to speak out of turn. They made [an] impression on our life because they taught us how to live and many important things that makes a good citizen.
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We had good athletic teams. Our athletic teams went to the National. We won the state championship one time. We went to the state championship several times and finished second. One time we went to the National Championship in Chicago. We didn't do too well there, but at least we were represented.
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Gundaker: I was wondering if any of the students worked after school in those days. In high school did you have jobs after school?

Cathey: No. Some of the students had jobs after school. There was one job in the hosiery mill where boys could come in in the afternoon and turn the socks. They had to be turned before they could be finished. And some of the girls worked as ticket selling agents in picture shows and in carnivals. Several of the boys had newspaper routes, carried the newspaper.
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Gundaker: What did you do after school? Were there "hangouts" in those days or ice cream parlors?

Cathey: No. My people worked in the mills, and I had to go home [after school] and clean up the house and cook the supper. I was a cook in those days, and I had to have supper ready when they
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(Cathey): came home. They'd get out of work at five o'clock and came home at five-thirty, and I'd better have the house warm and the supper cooked, or we would be out of something to eat.

Gundaker: Did you have a wood stove or a coal stove?

Cathey: We had a wood and coal stove and it had a jacket in it where we could heat water for a bath in the stove. We used a lot of wood and used a lot of coal in those days. I remember we

066 finally put in what is called a "water toilet" in the house, and we finally put in electricity. We bucked it to start with because it would cost money, and we didn't have too much money. But after we got it, we wouldn't do without it.

Gundaker: Did you have to clean the clinkers out?

Cathey: Oh, yes, I had to take out the clinkers. I had to have kindling in to start a fire for the next day. I had to have coal

071 in. That was my job. So, I had a lot of housework to do. I didn't have an outside job, but I did have work inside the home.

Gundaker: How did people get around? Were there streetcars when you were in high school?

Cathey: Yes, there were streetcars. There were three lines. One line ran from Rossville to Lytle during World War I; another streetcar ran from Rossville to Chattanooga - what is called a short line; another streetcar line ran through East Lake which was the

079 longer run. We didn't have too many automobiles. I remember when the Dodge came out in 1925 with a touring car. That was really something.

Gundaker: Did you live at that time near to Central High School? Which neighborhood did you live in?

Cathey: We always walked to school. We lived within about five or six blocks. When I was nine years old we lived where now is R. B. Howard Furniture Store. Our house faced [Rossville Blvd.]

086 which was not paved at that time. Across the street was Walter A. Wood's Feed Store [4517 Rossville Blvd.], and on the corner was B. C. Allison's Grocery Store [4906 Rossville Blvd.]. On the other corner was Earl Henderson's Hardware [Rossville Hardware Co., 5000 Rossville Blvd.]. When Walter Wood's moved to the location where he is now, which is about four or five blocks, everyone said he was moving out into the country.

Gundaker: How long did it take to get from Rossville to Chattanooga, then?

Cathey: On the short line streetcar, Rossville to Chattanooga, [it]

095 took thirty minutes. On the East Lake line, Rossville to Chattanooga, it took forty-five minutes. That was the main transportation we had.

Gundaker: Do you remember what the fare was?

Cathey: We had a county fair each year over at Warner Park. I looked forward to going to that every year. Some years they had
100 harness racing over there. They always had the booths with an exhibition of fruit and handiwork, needlework, and things like that.

Gundaker: Did anybody in your family ever enter anything?

Cathey: All the schools entered into it. I won a prize one time, first prize for writing a story. All the mills and churches around
105 had booths. They entered in their baking, canning, and needlework. It was a quite exciting time for us once a year.

Gundaker: Did they let you out of school?

Cathey: No. During World War I, we could go to a picture show one day a week after school. We didn't have money. We just put some
110 potatoes in a basket, and they let us in free.

Gundaker: That's exactly the kind of thing people want to know about [and] are interested in. Could you tell me a little more about the mills? Were they pretty much like they are now or did they make different things?

Cathey: Rossville and Chattanooga [were] known as "hosiery town[s]."
116 A hosiery town was first in Philadelphia and came to Chattanooga and Rossville. The hosiery mills during World War II saved Rossville because all the women worked. The men didn't have any work. Some men hadn't worked in two to three years. I remember
121 that I got a job down at Peerless Woolen Mill. In order to get to work I had to walk. I was walking down the sidewalk and I had to walk way past the middle of the street to get by a bunch of men listening to the radio, which was just coming out. They
125 had a ballgame on. Also it was the start of 3.2 beer. I had to walk way out in the street to get around them. There was three hundred or four hundred men that didn't have a job. They hadn't had a job for years. There would be a big gang around the gate at Peerless Woolen Mill, and they'd slip me in the gate because I ran the dyehouse at night.

Gundaker: So what year is this?

Cathey: That's about 1932, about 1931.
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Gundaker: So the Depression hit this area really hard.

Cathey: The women worked during the Depression. That's what saved Chattanooga. The men didn't have jobs. In later years, Chattanooga lost the hosiery business, or a great part of it at least.

Gundaker: Why do you think that happened? Was it something local?

Cathey: Well, I don't know. I think what caused it was the change in the manufacture of hosiery. The first full-fashion hosiery came from Germany. The Germans came over here and put it up. Then full-fashion went out. Another style of hosiery came in which caused a movement of the industry.
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Gundaker: How many mills were there in this area? A whole lot or was it --

Cathey: The Richmond Hosiery Mill was the most prominent mill. It has been torn down now, and there's a tank manufacturing company there. There was a full-fashion mill; it has gone now because of change in style. There was a Bryan Hosiery Mill; it was full-fashion, but it has gone now.
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Gundaker: What did the term "full-fashion" mean?

Cathey: The full-fashion means that it's not circular knit. Regular hose known as sinker [?] plating is circular knit on HH [?] and RI [?] machines, and the full-fashion hosiery is knit flat on a machine.
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Gundaker: In the mills how was the labor divided up? Did people have individual machines?

Cathey: People had individual machines. They learned to run them. That was their machine when they'd come to work. They worked in shifts, eight-hour shifts.

Gundaker: All this about the mills is really fascinating. I just don't know enough about it to know what questions. Did people pass their work along, or did one machine produce the whole?

Cathey: One machine didn't produce the whole thing. When it begins, one machine knits the top, leg, and the instep; but that has to be transferred to a machine known as the "looper" to close the toe. They also made men's socks. They were put on a machine and transferred to the machine that knit the sock, and then it had to be closed. The toe had to be closed on a looper.
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Gundaker: I see. Then did they have packers there at that mill?

Cathey: Oh, yes. The hosiery had to be finished, and it had to be dyed and it had to be dried. They put on a leg form and it would dry and it would press it. Then it had to be boxed. Richmond Hosiery Mill hit upon the idea of making their own boxes; so, they started Andrews Box Factory [O. B. Andrews Co.] up near Chattanooga. They made their own boxes, which was quite
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(Cathey): an item. They'd pack the hosiery in the box and then ready [it] for shipment.

Gundaker: 178 This is very useful. Students don't know any of this today. Were they all woolen mills or was there some cotton and synthetic?

Cathey: At that time, back in the twenties and thirties, they had Peerless Woolen Mill over in Georgia. They made boys' wear, clothes. They got the raw stock and they made it into yarn, and then took the yarn and wove it into boys' clothes. They controlled the boys' clothes market of the whole United States. 185 They were able to do that because they were really a genius at manufacturing. Now the Richmond Hosiery Mill made hosiery and shipped it all over the world. The Richmond Hosiery Mill also had mills in Scotland, and they also had a mill in East Chattanooga known as "Wonder Hose." They also had a full-fashion mill in Rossville.

Gundaker: 193 Was Buster Brown part of this, too?

Cathey: No, Buster Brown made clothes. Buster Brown is still active. They've been active for years, and they make children's clothes, 197 and they do quite well with it.

Gundaker: What about the labor situation? I know there's been a lot of agitation in recent years about working conditions in the mills. Would you say they were safe for the employees?

Cathey: Well, I don't know. The labor situation has been an evolution, of course. [When the mills] started, at first they didn't have any unions. Then, when the unions came in, they had a lot of 203 trouble, had a lot of strikes. But finally the unions were here to stay. The employees had a little better working conditions and a little better wages.

Gundaker: Have the unions been a force, would you say, in Chattanooga and Rossville politics?

Cathey: Oh yes. It's kind of hard to keep labor out of politics. They have been a force in Chattanooga. I think, all in all, it might have been for the better.

Gundaker: Do you remember some names of some of the leaders who were involved at various times?

Cathey: 212 No, I can't tell the names of the leaders who were involved, and so forth, because I was away from Chattanooga thirty-five years. I traveled the country as a textile engineer after being graduated from Georgia Tech in 1931. So I don't know

(Cathey): all of the labor strife and success that they had in Chattanooga.

Gundaker: In your own career you started out here in the mills and then you went to school and then you --

Cathey: 221 I worked in the woolen mill. The Atlanta Woolen Mill wanted a dyer so the school recommended me. I was in Chattanooga, so I left Chattanooga and went to Atlanta as a piece dyer. From Atlanta I went to Chatham Manufacturing Company in Elkin, North Carolina.

Gundaker: What was involved in the dying process? Did they use synthetic dyes or any natural?

Cathey: 229 At first, we didn't make dyes in this country. They were made in Germany. And World War I -- see, every country has to limit manufacturing and shipping because they have to put their formula out. We had some German formulas and we started making dyes in this country. We had to because that's the only way we could get it. Peerless was raw stock dying. Once in a while they had piece dying, but it was mostly raw stock.

234 Richmond Hosiery Mill imported three-thread -- imported silk from Japan, and they made it into three-thread, and they knit lady hose with three-thread silk.

Gundaker: Silk just came in a raw stage.

Cathey: Yes, from Japan.

Gundaker: And they would process it. What do you have to do to silk to make it ready?

Cathey: In Japan the little cocoon is made by the little silk worm. They live on the mulberry tree leaves and the silk people over 243 there unwind that little cocoon. He winds himself into a little cocoon about the size of a peanut and they wind it out; it's very delicate. Then they three-ply it and it's brought into 246 this country as a three-ply yarn.

Gundaker: I know it supposedly takes colors very well.

Cathey: Yes, well, they dye it, you know, do whatever color they want to with it.

Gundaker: When did you move back here, then, to this area?

Cathey: I moved back to Chattanooga about 17 years ago. I was superintendent of a woolen mill in Alabama known as Attalla Woolen 252 Mill. Attalla is four miles from Gadsden. I moved back here,

(Cathey): and I got a job with West Point-Pepperell Springdale Plant in Dalton, Georgia. I was yarn procurement manager there. I had to pass on all the yarn that they bought and see that it was all right and operated right and take care of any difficulties with it.

Gundaker: That store boomed in operation down there.

Cathey: Yes.

Gundaker: 262 It seems as if the mills have shifted into Georgia. What were the big changes that you noticed moving back to Chattanooga from when you were young? Were there any things that struck you?

Cathey: I moved back in Chattanooga after being away thirty-five years. They had paved roads. At one time they had just dirt roads, and 267 then they put in an asphalt road, and then they put in concrete roads. The military parks were gone, they were disbanded. During World War I it was Fort Greenleaf near Lytle, and [in] World War II it was a WAC -- that is, a ladies' [camp for those who] were joining the army.

Housing was a little bit better, and sewage was better; the 275 streets were better. At that time they were beginning to open up large stores. When they told people they were going to buy their groceries once a week instead of every day, why they didn't believe it. They also didn't believe that they could make loaf bread -- they called it "wasp nest" and people wouldn't buy it to start with. Then they put in dairies, they had dairies; 281 they didn't have them before. And, of course, radio and TV came along. TV changed things quite a bit. People quit going out. They stayed home and listened to TV. I guess it might have been a pretty good thing.

Gundaker: What year did you all get your first TV? Do you remember?

Cathey: 288 We got our first TV when we were living and working for Bigelow-Sanford in Amsterdam, New York. I don't remember the date, I'd have to look that up. But that was our first TV and we paid about $300 for it.

Gundaker: That was a lot in those days. When you moved back, did you move back to Rossville or to Chattanooga?

Cathey: 294 When we moved back to Chattanooga, my brother-in-law was in the real estate business and he had a good buy in a house where we wanted to live. So we bought a house and moved back to 308 Woodlawn Drive there in Rossville, Georgia. He helped me to get a place.

Gundaker: Both cities had gotten a lot bigger. Had they grown together
299 as much as they have now?

Cathey: Yes. Also, the biggest change in Rossville was Rossville being annexed to Chattanooga. The law was that you could not have a poolroom within a certain number of miles of the center of the city. So they did away with the poolroom which was a sore spot during World War I because there was no law in [Rossville], not even a deputy. If a man was killed and fell across the line,
307 they didn't know whether to arrest the culprit in Georgia or in Tennessee. There was a long, long time that Rossville had no law, no deputy, no nothing. So finally they "incorporated" and did away with the poolrooms and put regular beats for policemen out in Rossville.

Gundaker: Would you say Rossville was a little wilder than Chattanooga?

Cathey: Oh yes, it was terrible. I've seen them killed, laying on the road, and they'd lay there all day with nobody to look after
315 them. Finally they'd get somebody.

Gundaker: Was this caused partly because people were unemployed for such a long time or, I mean, was it just that there was no law?

Cathey: It was wartimes, that was the trouble. It was wartimes. The
320 soldiers coming in World War I, coming to Rossville, would ride in automobiles and cabs. They'd have to pay to come in. They'd land in the poolroom and then the trouble would start. [interruption[

Gundaker: I had a note here about town characters. Sometimes there are just people that stand out in your mind, whether they are neighbors or teachers or politicians.

Cathey: I don't know that we ever had a national character in Rossville,
332 [one] that was more than just locally known.

Gundaker: How about of local interest, or just people that you remember for some reason yourself.

Cathey: One of the persons that I remember was Doc Johnston; he was a member of a world champion baseball team. He played with the
340 Cleveland Indians. They won the World's Championship. I remember he was a great singer, and he used to come to our grammar school and sing. He was the ideal of a lot of the boys. In the World Series his brother, Jimmie, played shortstop for the Brooklyn Dodgers. It was a series where one brother was on
347 one side and one on another.

Gundaker: Well, that was pretty exciting. Did you go to see the Lookouts? Were they around in those days?

Cathey: 350 — They first built Joe Engle Stadium and Joe Engle was the manager of it. Chattanooga won the championship of the Southern League one time that I remember. They won it by one decimal point. He was a great showman. I remember the regular baseball players coming here to play exhibition games before the season started.

Gundaker: They didn't have football then?

Cathey: No.

Gundaker: And the basketball, did they just have it in high school?

Cathey: 359 — We did have basketball in grammar school and high school. One of the highlights of the year was the visit of the World Champion Celtics to play or exhibit here. [It was] the first time we saw any basketball players that were of that caliber, of that nature. They came every year. The World Champion Celtics.

Gundaker: Who did they play against?

Cathey: 368 — They played against Bill Redd who was the captain and manager of the Railway and Light Company. He later became a coach and coached other basketball teams in the professional rank.

Gundaker: If you were at Central, what were the other high schools?

Cathey: 375 — The other high school here was City High. It was over on Riverside Drive in Chattanooga. We were a county high school, in Ridgedale.

Gundaker: When did the "Purple Pounders" get started at Central?

Cathey: 381 — I don't know. Central's "Pounders" football team got started a few years ago; I don't remember the exact date, and I'm not familiar with their activities.

Gundaker: How about holidays and celebrations and things? What was Christmas like in those days?

Cathey: Christmas in those days was a holiday that we all looked forward to. We didn't get too many presents because they 390 didn't make them like they do now. They didn't have factories. We got an orange at the end of a stocking and some candy, but candy wasn't around too much like it is now.

Gundaker: Did people make things for each other in those days?

Cathey: Yes, they made things for each other, but I can't remember too much about it.

Gundaker: How about Thanksgiving? Was that a big deal?

Cathey: Yes, Thanksgiving was a big deal, too, and we always managed to get turkey. They had turkey in those days, and we always
400 had turkey for Thanksgiving.

Gundaker: What would a real sharp dresser wear in those days -- if you were going to go out on the town or out on a date or something?

Cathey: I guess there has been some change in clothes and in shoes and
410 things. I went barefooted until I was eighteen years old. (laughter) During the summer we just didn't have shoes. All shoes were buttoned. When we'd get up in the morning, we'd have to pass the button hook around so each one could put on
417 their shoes. We wore long black stockings in those days when I was a kid. The way we could tell to change them, we took them off and they stood up in the corner. (laughter) Then it was time to change.

Gundaker: Now were they made out of wool?

Cathey: They were made out of cotton, there wasn't any wool in those days. We were poor and as far as I know none of our ancestors were raised in log cabins. But as soon as they could afford one, they moved in.

When we put on long pants in those days, it was an occa-
430 sion. A boy didn't put on long pants until he was old enough and big enough to wear them. I remember when they first started making suits. They made the pants and the coat out of the same material. That was very noticeable to your friends and neighbors because they would say, "Why, this coat and this pair of pants is made out of the same material."

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Gundaker: Did they think that was kind of strange?

Cathey: Yes, they thought that was rather strange. We just didn't make suits and things in those days. I remember when they did change, and now they put them on when they are five years old.

Gundaker: I guess some of these questions I have -- I always think of women's stuff, not men's stuff. Did they boil the laundry in those days?

Cathey: They might have had laundries in those days, but I don't remember. What we did on Monday morning -- we boiled the
448 clothes, with a soap that we made, in a big iron pot out in the backyard. After we boiled them and got them clean, hung them on the line, and you were very lucky if that line didn't break down before they got dry. Then they would iron them,

(Cathey): and that was the better part of the rest of the week. It was quite a chore. When the first washing machines came out it was really a blessing for those who had to wash clothes.
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Gundaker: Was it very sooty in those days?

Cathey: Yes, we used a lot of coal in those days, and a lot of soot would get on the clothes. If it came up a rain, we had to run out and gather them up and bring them in. When the shower passed we'd go and hang them out again. [interruption]
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Gundaker: What about churches in those days? Were they the same ones as now?
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Cathey: Yes, the church in those days was the same as now. Of course, what they did is they had a wooden church, but later on they moved into brick churches. The Baptists, of course, they're misunderstood. They're just like cats when they get to fighting, they multiply. (laughter)
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Gundaker: They divide, is that what they do, into new churches?

Cathey: Like cats, you know, when they get to fighting, they multiply.

Gundaker: They've always been one of the main denominations in this area. That was true then?

Cathey: Methodists and Baptists have been the two main -- Presbyterian churches are not too prominent in Rossville; they are in Chattanooga, but they're not in Rossville.
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Gundaker: And were you a Presbyterian?

Cathey: No, a Methodist, I belong to the Methodist church.

Gundaker: Did they have those kinds of picnics and things?

Cathey: Yes, they used to have dinner on the ground. They'd bring and spread it around. Some of them had tables back of the church, [in] the church yard. Now, when they have entertainment, they bring in a covered dish and have it in the basement of the church because most of the churches have a large auditorium which they call a "recreation area" for the church and for the church members and visitors.
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Gundaker: What hours did they go to church?
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Cathey: The hours of the church were the same as they are now, Sunday School 9:45 and church at 11 o'clock.

Gundaker: Is there anything that you can think of about the mills or any of that industry here, or any of those things that you think people should know about?
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Cathey: Well, I don't know, they come and they go; they don't last.

Gundaker: How about medical care in those days?

Cathey: In those days, the doctor came to the house. You called the doctor and he would come to the bedside and usually brought medicine with him. If he wrote a prescription, why, that could be bought at the drug store, of course; but, we just didn't have too much medicine like they do now.
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Gundaker: It was probably cheaper, too.

Cathey: It was cheaper, yes, about two and three dollars for a call, and sometimes they didn't even charge that if they knew you couldn't afford it.
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Gundaker: Were there doctors or other citizens that you remember from those days?

Cathey: Oh, I remember all the doctors from those days.

Gundaker: Who were they?

Cathey: One doctor was Dr. George Gurney [i.e., probably Charles H. Gurney]. Another doctor was Dr. [George P.] Willbanks; we called him "Dr. Pillbanks." And there was a Dr. [James S.] Alsobrook. His son later became a doctor, a very good doctor during World War II. He worked out of Boston, Massachusetts, most of the time. Then there was Dr. [Vosgan A.] Avakian, who was very successful with doctoring of influenza, which in 1917, was quite an ordeal for the people because a great many people died.
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Gundaker: Can you remember that epidemic when you were a child? What was that like?

Cathey: That epidemic was like nothing you have ever seen. As far as the army fort was concerned, which was just like the rest of the surrounding area, they would die and they would stack them up on the porch. They didn't have coffins for them. People died by the hundreds. They just couldn't get coffins and couldn't get them in the ground fast enough, because that influenza epidemic was really something. My family was very fortunate. My sister and I and my mother and her sister didn't even have a bad cold, let alone the flu. So we were very, very fortunate.
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Gundaker: That is amazing. Was that something that the soldiers brought back into the country?

Cathey: Oh yes. The way of treating a flu -- the soldiers thought it was a good thing to put them out on a screen porch and
572 give them a lot of air. Well, just as soon as they did that, the next day they were dead.

Gundaker: Did they have any medicine for it at all?

Cathey: No, they didn't have any medicine for it or any treatment,
576 other than just [like] a cold. Later on they vaccinated for it. Of course, they do now, even take shots for it now. That influenza epidemic was a little bit like the "Black Death" of England.

Gundaker: That was in 1917.

Cathey: Yes.

Gundaker: Did it come back again?

Cathey: No, it didn't come back. Other forms of it came in, like the Hong Kong flu [that] came in from China, and there's
589 flu from other parts of the country. They vaccinated for it and rather wiped it out to -- say, 90% anyway.

Gundaker: I know something I wanted to ask you about from earlier. You were telling me that the women in the Depression could get more work than the men. Why was that?

Cathey: The reason the women could get more work than the men during
597 World War II was the fact that the hosiery center was in Chattanooga, and most of the hosiery is carried on by women. The only thing the men do in making hosiery is a board, that is, put the socks on a form so it will press it, take all the wrinkles out of it and so forth; they also ran a dye house. But the women did the preparing. The men also did
608 the knitting. But the women had work, and being a hosiery
611 town, why, I think it saved Chattanooga during World War II.

Gundaker: Now, were these all white or were the mills integrated?

Cathey: All white, most of this was all white, no Negroes at all. They might have had Negro sweepers and Negroes on the yard,
617 something like that, but no Negroes worked in the mills.

Gundaker: They're all gone now, though?

Cathey: Just about it. The woolen mill is still there, but it's
625 been greatly reduced.

Gundaker: In Rossville are there any?

Cathey: Yes. [When] Peerless Woolen Mill in Rossville, Georgia, ran out of a market, World War I saved them because they made The blankets for the army and the navy. World War II came along and saved them again because they made navy blankets and army blankets. When they ran out of the boys' wear trade, they sold the plant to Burlington Mills. Burlington Mills kept it a while because they couldn't get anybody to run it. They put in young boys and they put in their own

643 management which didn't go with Peerless at all. Peerless bought it back from Burlington Mills, and Peerless now runs it. One of the heirs, one of the sons -- [tape runs out].

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

Cathey: [The tape begins mid-sentence] . . . the top, the sheep's back, is known as three-eighths wool, and then they have what is called the "belly wool," the curly wool on the belly of the sheep. Then they have a finer wool on top of the wool, a finer grade of sheep which is known as "half-blood." So all that has to be sorted before they scour it, so they can put it into men's wear, women's wear, suiting and blankets or whatever they want to use it for.

Gundaker: How does the wool actually come in off the sheep? In one big piece?

Cathey: The farmers who have it, they shear the sheep and they roll
009 it into a burlap sack or a pillow case or something and they bring it in all into one co-op. It's piled up in a great big pile. Then the buyer goes there and they bid on it. You can't just say, "I'll buy this." You have to bid on it. That highest bidder, the one that pays the most for it per pound, is the person who gets the wool.

Gundaker: How much would a farmer, maybe, make off of one sheep's wool? Not much?

Cathey: I don't know just how much a farmer would make. Not a great
017 deal, because the sheep only produces a few pounds, and it's according to how many sheep he has. But usually, back when we were buying wool, by World War II in the mill, we were
021 paying about fifty cents a pound for it, in the grease.

Gundaker: And when you say "in the grease" that means with the lanolin?

Cathey: Yes.

Gundaker: It would make it weigh more. So what other things did they

(Gundaker): have to do? They have to card it and they have to --

Cathey: 025 Oh yes, they have to dry it and blend it. They have to take the burrs out of the wool. The burrs are several different kinds, some are cuckleburrs and some are spiral burrs. The cuckleburrs they can take out by a burr machine, but the spiral burrs go through, and they have to be taken out by peralta roll; that is, they mash them flat, and when they go 029 through the carding machine they just crumble out under the machine.

Gundaker: These three or more grades of wool you were telling me about -- what are some of the different products that are made out of different grades of wool? The belly wool versus the back?

Cathey: There are several different kinds of wool on a sheep: there's quarter-blood, that's real coarse; half-blood's real fine; three-eighths is a good wool in between. They have to mix this in proportion. They can make carpet wool out of quarter-blood; three-eighths would go into blankets, and half-blood would go into suitings.

Gundaker: That's interesting. I think most people don't know that. Do they ever blend wool from different types of sheep? 040 Do different types of sheep give different types of wool?

Cathey: Yes. There are different types of wool. Now in Australia is the very finest of wool that's grown. Art Linkletter, the television-radio personality, has a big farm up there that raises sheep, and it's all fine wool, all half-blood, 044 and finer. When they auction it off every year, the Japanese are in there. They buy all they can get of it, and they pay two or three cents a pound more than anybody else to get it. Now, the wool in Marion County that we spoke of, is just regular, more or less three-eighths wool. It is used mostly 048 for men's wear and women's wear suiting.

Gundaker: I don't know if this [is the] kind of question you can answer or not, but suppose you had a 9' x 12' piece of wool carpet, how many sheep would it take to produce that, more or less?

Cathey: Well, to produce a 9' x 12' carpet would take at least twelve sheep; that is, all the wool from twelve sheep.

Gundaker: That's fascinating. So is wool still made down in Dalton?

Cathey: 056 Dalton is now the carpet capital of the world. There's one company down there known as Shaw Industries [that makes] 12% of the carpet in the whole world. Just one company. Of course, there are over a hundred mills in Dalton that make carpet, over a hundred.

Gundaker: You'd think Dalton would be bigger than Chattanooga, with all the --

Cathey: 062 Well, it's coming along all right. They're building roads down there and building bridges, and mills are coming in all the time. There's well over a hundred mills in Dalton making carpet.

Gundaker: Is there any relationship now industrially or economically between Dalton and Chattanooga?

Cathey: 066 Well, as far as the relationship with Dalton and Chattanooga, I don't think there is much of any. Dalton's a carpet capital and Chattanooga is, more or less, [an] electronic capital; or, at least, more electronics and more synthetics [are] made in Chattanooga. There is no connection between Dalton and Chattanooga.

Gundaker: It seems like there is a real difference between even Georgia and Tennessee that you can notice.

Cathey: 072 Chattanooga is more of a Coca-Cola town. That's where they made their money -- on Coca-Cola. Of course, Atlanta's the capital of Coca-Cola, but Chattanooga is very prominent in Coca-Cola. That's where they made their money, the Pattens 074 and the other people.

End of Tape 1, Side 2
END OF INTERVIEW

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