

Geraldine Logan

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G.L.:...Twelve years old until I would say 19 years old high school kinds that we were gonna deal with because these kids had really been exposed to drugs you know, they're being kicked out of school, you know. The principals are mostly having trouble with the children you know, a lot of kids have been expelled from school this spring because of marijuana, you even have the strong drugs down here. The parents can't deal with it. They don't know how to deal with it.

S: Maybe we can ask you to begin by talking about your family and how they were involved in civil and the story about your mother.

G.L. OK, my mother was an elementary teacher, she taught in a one school, one of those old school houses. Perhaps a one shack school house as you would say and she taught there for a number of years, as a matter of fact, Berl and I, my youngest brother and I, went to school with her from the first grade through the sixth grade. She taught all the subject areas. My father was a full time farmer, self-employed. And my mother was an outgoing community person and a teacher. She had 8 children; 5 girls and 3 boys, she made sacrifices sending all of her kids to college and educate them at the same time. We were the type of family that had to work in the fields, I mean pick cotton like slavery time, you know. And go to school late. Most of the time we would start in October and we had to do catch up work to catch up with the kids who had been there from September. And we had to pick cotton and most of the time we had a lot of cotton to gather, my father would go out and hire hands to come in to pick the cotton so we would get to school on time. My mother helped him along the way by teaching and taking her money to support us through school at the same time. So my mother had three kids in college at the same time she had 2 at A&M and 1 at Teskegee and plus

she had the rest of us in high school so as each one of us finished high school she would send us on to college and the year '64 I finished high school and went and I was lucky enough to go into college in the summer of '64 so I started June and went on straight through to September of '65.

S: Which was that?

G.L.: Alabama state University which was in Montgomery. And that summer of '65 I met Jonathan when I came home and during that time my mother got fired from the school system cause she was involved in a lot of civil right activities. And she opened her home up to most of the people who came from the north who came down to the south to help people to fight for their rights. And during that summer when I came home I met Jonathan, Ruby and a lota more other civil right leaders. But Jonathan was most interesting of all the Civil Right leaders because he hung around us a lot.

S: What?

G.L. What I meant about hanging around us, we talked about a lot of events, educational events, childhood days, some of the things he did, some of the things he wanted to do. How he became a seminary student and so forth, what his interests were, his parent. And we would laugh about some things of his childhood compared to my childhood we shared a lot of common interests.

S: You told us a story about chocolate cake.

G.L.: My mom would make chocolate cake, plain cake and he loved cake.

S: How would you describe your relationship to him?

G.L.: My relationship to Jonathan? Well, it was like a brother sister relationship, we were great friends. We talked about events and college and where our interest were, how we planned to accomplish those things. When he was in seminary school, what he was going back to do and how he was going to share some of his experience...

S: Could you go into that a little more? We were wondering what his plans were when he left Alabama.

G.L.:OK, during the summer he wanted to be involved with a lot of voting registration and what even had to be done in the county he was willing to do that. and then after that he would leave and go back in the fall to his studying and share some of his experience and next summer he had planned to come back.

S: He did plan to come back. And what would he do then?

G.L.: The same thing. Because he was very much interested in people like at told you at the beginning he was a warm hearted, caring person.

S:We found out in a like of ways, like living with Mrs. Weston, that he really kind of found family. Did you talk about his family at all with you?

G.L.: Yeah, he talked about his family. But he was a strange person, like I said, he loved to meet people and people were sincere and dedicated. He had that sensation, to pick up from people who were caring just like he was.

S: And how did you get involved with the movement?

G.L.: OK, with the movement, by Jonathan spending a lot of time with Mom and Dad around eating and so forth and cracking jokes and his interest. They told me that they had a problem going down on in (?), Alabama. People getting fired from the big bear stores, and one of the ladies getting slapped, something pertaining to that. And they was going down to protest at areas so the condition would get better. And he asked me, would I like to come along and join them. I thought about it I said, well OK, I just come along, and I thought to myself, here's a young man from New Hampshire, come way down here, get involved with people having problems. Why can't I assist them and do the same things while I was out during the summer. And that's what I did.

S: where there other white working in (?) county during this time?

G.L.: Yeah, there were most of the employees were white in the big bear store and most of the other people were just

common laborers. Clean up, and cut the meat and so forth. But they were being mistreated and wasn't paid the same thing as the white were.

S: How about white SNCC workers? Was Jonathan alone white or was...

G.L.: Reverend Mars was along with Daniel.

S: Were there other white in the area?

G.L.: I can't remember any other whites in the area. Just those two.

S: We learned that Morris Rowe and Daniels met each other just a day or two before they came here. He had to come down from Chicago. They met at a convention and Jonathan sort of brought him along. Why is it that Daniels, out of all the whites involved in the civil rights movement, I wonder why he found himself working with SNCC in the area. Our understanding is that there was a big debate other whether civil rights workers should even come into this area.

G.L. I can't remember anything about that, it's just that I think that so many SNCC workers in this area and his involvement really was in Selma area, but he accidentally got involved in this area because he met some real sincere people.

S: One would be Stokely Charmichal.

G.L.: Stokely Charmichal, Bob Mans, and Mayor Jackson, young people, and his interest level kind of centered around that people his same age. That has a lot to do with it also.

S: What about those people would have drawn him to them to the point he wanted to help out.

G.L.: Because of their involvement and there dedication during that time. Because those people, those SNCC workers, they were really dedicated young peopl peopl people for the cause. And see black peopl people were mistreated by white people here a great deal and those young people came in here and they got the people to stand up for their rights and start fighting for their rights, they really were organized. They stayed up all night talking about issues, how they

would deal with issues, what channels they would take to eliminate the issues.

S: You say there was something about that generation that was different?

G.L.: Yeah, perhaps since you mention it, it could have been a generation of interest there that captured his attention. All of us had something in common, we had a different outlook on life. We were college minded students, in college, and we had something to do during the summertime. We was educational oriented type of group.

S: You liked to rap about what was going on. How do you remember Daniel's relationship with Carmichael? Do you remember that at all?

G.L.: I can't remember, because Stokely was something like a organizer, he never stayed very long in s particular place, he would come here and get organized then he moved along. So he was something like seeing about the groups.

S: OK, so lets go back. So you went to demonstrate against the unfair treatment white were giving blacks.

G.L.: Right

S: In the stores, so it wasn't a vote registration drive. And the big bear was one of those.

G.L.: It was one of those situation that, it was very severe because many people, many blacks had been mistreated by the customers there even the managers went to purchase the food were mistreated.

S: Was there a debate whether you should go into (?) because it was such a terrible place.

G.L.: It wasn't a debate among us it was just that we had to be organized and how many were going to protest and how many were going to be there that morning. And that's what most of the meeting were centered around and about how we gonna do it.

S: And you met here?

G.L. We met here, cause mostly the elder people in the county were afraid of the situation, but we young people, we was ready to take them on.

S: And what was (?) like?

G.L. Oh, everybody was afraid of (?) because it was a white folks town and no one wanted to be bother, they usually beat up black people and hang them on top of skull hill, was kind of a frighten place for black peopl people to even enter. So with us getting organized and going down there like that, people was just afraid for us, and that's why my father had those great fears, you know that I was telling you about earlier.

S: Is it right that this was the first demonstration in (??)?

G.L. Yeah, that was the first turning point, (?)

S: And so what happened when you got down there?

G.L. When we got down there we picked up our signs, we divided ourselves into two groups said that we was gonna be something like a cluster and we march around one time and I remember looking across the street seeing a lot of white people with bats. And we said don't get frightened let's start singing, holding hands and singing, We Shall Overcome, you know. And during that time the white people was coming after us and they thought that we was gonna run and we didn't and they backed off. And that's when they had us arrested.

S: And then you were booked. Then what happened.

G.L. We were arrested , I don't remember any booking, nothing like that. We was halled away in a great big trailer truck to the old jailhouse across the railroad tracks. I was a one shack house with bars on it. Everybody was put into one room. And I think we stayed there for a couple of hours. And they transfered us to the (?) jail. And during that time they seperated the men and the women apart. The men upstairs and the women downstairs.

S: What women do you remember being there.

G.L. Ruby...

S: Ruby Sales.

G.L. Bailey...

S: George Bailey

G.L. Patricia, myself, that's the only one I remember, just three of us. I cant' remember how many mens.

S: Roughly how many all together?

G.L. I would say 6 or seven of us together.

S: Were there other demonstrators at (?) that hadn't been arrested?

G.L. We were the only group that ever decided to go ahead and take that project on because everybody else was afraid.

S: So there were only about seven of you when you went to picket?

G.L.: I would say roughly about seven, it could haave been more, like a said 25 years a long time.

S:OK , and then you got into the Hainville jail, what's your memory of the jail?

G.L.:My memory of the jail was kind of shabby looking place bars all around us, first time I even been in jail, first time I ever shared that experience. We slept overnight, but we could here a lot of cars and noise outside, I don't know wether it was white people trying to harrass us or what. But them men upstairs was worried about us, the women. So Jonathan would right us a note, especially me, ask is how we were getting along and I wrote him back and told him we were OK and during that time they fed us, pancakes and syrup, and I said, this is the type of meal we get in jail, and we laughed about it. And during that same day my mother decided to cook us a delicious meal and send everybody a meal and we were just happy cause she knew we wasn't gonna be fed anything aand so everyone wrote her a nice note and thanked her and apreciated her thoughtfulness that time when we was in jail. I spent one night in jail, that was that Saturday night with them , and I think that Sunday, my father, who didn;t sleep at all, that's when he got in touch with judge Hannens. And he went to his house and talked with him, him and Judge Hammen was good friends and they made bond for me to get out. And that's when I got out and went to Montgomery to live with my cousin.

S: Ruby Sales remembers that one night, that was a white, it was either Colmen or one of the Deputy Sheriffs, came to the cell window and threatened Ruby. She says one of them came and says, WE're gonna bail you out and your ass is going to be mine, something like that.

G.L. I can't remember the night I spent there, like I said...

S: Could have been one of the other nights that happened after I got out because I think they stayed over in the jail like 5 days after I got out the first night I spent there.

S: And you immediately moved to montgomery.

G.L. Yeah, my father sent me to montgomery to live with one of my reletives there because he really was afraid like I told you my father was a passive type of person though, hard worker but very passive, my mother were more outgoing than my father were, so I had a mixture of the two.

S: Cheyenne hold us that when she went on the marches her father really didn't want her to participate.

G.L. That's the same thing that hapened to me. My father, he just didn't want me to participate at all. And I guess he was so upset that he just paced that floor all nighht and I really didn't want to get out of jail because I wanted to stay in there with the rest of them to give them support, but he command me to get out, you know, and I just didn't want to give him a heart attack, you know.

S: So you were in montgomery when you got the news. Tell us what you remember abou that.

G.L. I received the new on television, or radio, I can't remember exactly. That a young man had gotten shot I day that he got out of jail this white guy was waiting for him and by the time he entered the store, they shot him and wounded the other guy and they were arrested but he was out on bond. And it was a very sad occasion during that time. And my mother kept me informed about what was going on and so forth, I never did come back down here until perhaps the year after that.

S: Do you remember what your Mom and yourself felt at that point?

G.L. Sadness, like we had lost a member of the family.

S: Do you remember the trial at all?

G.L. Do I remember trial! I had to come back for the trial, it was one of the nastiest trial I ever seen because I never seen a man like Mr. Coleman, I wont call him Mr. Coleman, I call him , gloat, he seemed elated over the incident that had happened.

S: How would you interpret his feeling for shooting Daniels?

G.L.: There was no sadness at all on hi face, he was sitting up there being a proud white man who has shot someone. He knew that wasn't anything gonna be done about the situation. And he described Jonathan as being a nigger-lover, and during that whole trial they made nasty comments about the civil right workers and our purpose of being down here and some sex advancement that were made, the black and the white all mingle together, slept together and so forth, they just made a whole nasty scene out of the whole thing. Instead of getting to the rout of the problem, and it was just sickening.

S: Did you testify at the trial?

G.L. No, they didn't call me to testify during that time. But the trial went on for some time, I think seven or 8, could have been more days. But he was acquitted. Which was very sad.

S: Do you remember the composition of the jury?

G.L.: I can't exactly remember that, but the whole thing just made me sick, because to see this white man gloating over the event that occured. No sadness on his face what so ever, something to be proud of.

S: Were you there when the decision was announced?

G.L.: No, I wasn't there, but I rad about it in the paper and so forth.

S: What are you doing now?

G.L. I working with foster kins, teaching them how to live independently.

S: Do you think things have changed in Miles County?

G.L. I'm still upset about a lot of things going on in this county. Black have made a lot of struggles in history only repeating itself, its just that they have a white man, not a black man now calling the shots, like some of our official leaders who are in the position to make things better in this county are not because they are being bought off by the white person. The white man is using him to control blacks. We're still fighting for the rights of black people and white people together. People talk about a change, we've changed slightly or little, not a drastic change, some of the people will make up from their grave and see what Miles County is like today they would be surprised.

S: Is there a social ease in the county between the races?

G.L. That is kind of hard to describe, black people and wie white are working together, but its something like a controled system. That they are using the black leaders to capitalize on the weak minded people, like this electing that just passed, on June the 6th. There are so many of our black people don't know who to vote for we still have a lot of illiteracy to exist in this county, and there are a lot of peopl who are trusting our black leaders to direct them and guide them in the same way. And this election had taken a toll on me by saying that a lot of white have put out a lot of money on this election in order to put the same black people back in there, these same black people have taken this money and spread it out and given it to certain people to bring to peopl in to vote, to vote these same people back in office, who aren't doing anything. There not focusing on the problem. And if they think things have changed here, there telling a lie, things haven't changed. The white man is not calling te shots, but the blacks are doing it.

S: I wanted to get on tape, too, what happened to you mother, in terms of after she got fired, you were telling us that, happier ending story.

G.L. OK, My mother, like I said, during '65, my mother was fired from the school system. They closed her school as you say, the consolidated her school and moved her up to a new Jr. High. Everybody got hired and the superintendent told my mother that they closed her school down, and she would not be hired, she would be laid off, or she was fired or something. Anyway, my mother didn't work, but they hired everybody except my mother, and my mother knew that that was the reason why they didn't hire her because she was involved in a lot of civil rights activities, because she had been going to the meeting to see Rev. King, to head him speak, she had been involved with a lot of the workers who came down here to fight for their rights. And she felt that there was a lot of animosity about that. So she asked the superintendent, why you wouldn't hire me, well Sara I can't fire you because you're fighting us.

S: This is Coleman's sister?

G.L.: This is Coleman, say you fighting the school system, you can't be hired or something pertaining to that. So my mother went and she talked to a lawyer doing the local association, I think it was the NEA or something, and they hired her, I think it was Fred Gray, a civil right attorney during that time, and it took something like four or five years for her case to come through, during that time that she was waiting for her case to come through, they hired her through a tutoring program through Tuskegee Institute, that involved her in the community and she worked down here in Mosses, the community that you came through, to tutor kids in the afternoon from Tuskegee and that's how she earned her money till her suit came up.

S: And then she won the suit?

G.L.: She won the suit, they had to rehire her, but she didn't get any back pay and she felt as though the lawyer sold her out. They had to rehire her. Her case brought the tenure law back into the state, and I think her case is one of the landmark cases also.

S: I'm happy to hear the N.E.A. was involved.

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GL: Yeah, they supported her a great deal, even though it was a long task.

--On Camera--

S: I thought maybe I could ask you if you could try to tell how Jonathan effect your decision to join the movement. You were talking about...

GL: OK,

S: somebody coming down from the north and doing it and...

GL: persuasive...

S: How he got you involved. And the second question, the note in the prison that he sent down. that would be nice.

GL: OK, how jonathan persuaded me to get involved and the movement is just that we were the some age, we had a lot of common interest together, like I told you, he shared a lot of college events and he shared a lot of his seminar areas that he spent in and the reason he came down to the south in the summer because he was interested in knowing about what we were doing and we talked about our families we talked about issues. You know, during that generation. Jonathan would come around and just hang around my mother and father all the time because they were caring people, and like I said my father was a farmer and my mother was a educator and she shared a lot of things with Jonathan during that time I came home I met him, we talked and I said to myself how can a person come away from New Hampshire and get involved with what was going on in Lawrence county here I live here and i'm not even interested in it. So by talking to Jonathan who's very persuasive there was a problem that was going on in (?) during that time that we was that they decided to go ahead and straighten it out. And he persuaded me to go with him that day, I said that I would, and that's how I got involved.

S: Thank you., you tell a nice story.

GL: Thank you, like I said 25 years is a long time.