

**Interview with
Margaret Hill
by Crystal Lundsford,
June 21, 1997**

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Released Form signed by Patricia Rosebough
June 21, 1997, at Camp Washington Carver, West Virginia

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These have been indicated by [blank space] in the following text.

Margaret Hill Interview

Crystal Lundsford: This is Crystal Lunsford, and it's June 21 st, 1997, and I'm interviewing Margaret Hill at Camp Washington Carver. Okay. If we can just start out with some basic information, such as your birthday?

Margaret Hill: Uh, November the 18th, 1919.

CL: And what town were you born in?

MH: Sullivan, West Virginia. (**CL:** Sullivan?) Mmm-hmm.... (**CL:** Where's that?) Sullivan, West Virginia, in Raleigh County.

CL: Oh, Raleigh County, okay. Let see ... and where ... where do you live at now?

MH: 305 Mulbury Street, Beckley, West Virginia, Raleigh County.

CL: Mmm-hmm. Okay, let's see ... and are you married or...?

MH: I am a widow, and I'm retired.

CL: What are you retired from?

MH: From the West Virginia Commission on Aging.

CL: Ahhhh. How long did you work there?

MH: Oh, I worked there about five or seven years. I don't quite remember now. About seven years. I retired in 1970-, was it, '71 I believe. Or 70-, I'm a little confused. I don't remember

CL: It during the early'70s? (**MH:** Uh-huh, yeah) Okay. Did you have any children, or did you....

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MH: Yes, I have three daughters. Patricia, Georgiana, and Renee. (**CL:** Grandchildren?) Yes, I have six. (**CL:** Six?) Yes, uh-huh. Walter Elabee the III, Patrick, Cory, Elabee, William Keith Carter, Jr., Lekeisha Renee Carter, LaShonda Yvette Carter, and Tiffany Jewell, that's the six.

CL: [chuckling] Let' see, did you grow up in a big family? Did you have a bunch of brothers and sisters?

MH: Well, there was five of us. I had two brothers and two sisters, and of course, me, I made five. I was the youngest.

CL: Oh, and your ... did you live with your mom and dad? (**MH:** Yes) And you all lived in uh....?

MH: In Wiley, West Virginia, or Sullivan, West Virginia.

CL: That's where you grew up there?

MH: Yes, in Raleigh County.

CL: And do you remember about your education? Where did you go to school at?

MH: Well, I attended elementary school in Sullivan, West Virginia. And I uhm, graduated from Stratton High School in Beckley, West Virginia. And I attended Bluefield State College.

CL: Did you graduate from...?

MH: Not from the college, no. And I did some did some work from uh, extension work, from West Virginia University. And uh.... not...not Marshall, but (**CL:** West Virginia...) the other school. (**CL:** West Virginia State?) No, no, no. Morris Harvey ...(**CL:** Oh, in Charleston, right?) In Charleston. I attended some classes in Morris Harvey in Charleston, yes.

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CL: Isn't that called the University of Charleston now?

MH: I don't know, it might be.

CL: Yeah, I think that they (**MH:** It might be) Because I know that it used to be....

MH: Because I don't hear that word any more, so it's possible.

CL: Yeah, I think it used to be Morris Harvey and they changed it. Okay. Do you remember how old you were when you attended the camp? Or what year it was?

MH: That I attended the camp here? (**CL:** Uh-huh) Oh, in uh, I attended the camp here in approximately 19 uh, 1948. (**CL:** 1948?) Yeah. Because my children were small. And I just came up as a homemaker. But I didn't get to come-, attend too often because of my small children.

CL: What did you do when you uh, when you came to the camp?

MH: Well, I attended the different camp meetings for the homemakers camp. And uh, I would attend meetings. Now, before '63, 1963, I attended uh, the uh, the camp because I was their financial secretary of the farm and homemakers camp. And that was in uh, '51 through '53, when I attended the camp.

CL: What did the, what did the home ... I'm not really sure what the Homemaker's Club did. I've heard of the Homemaker's.

MH: Well, they did a number of things. They held work-, workshops. And of course, they worked with the 4-Hr's. Well, we did so many things locally. Like canning, sewing and etc. We did gardening.

CL: So was it a community-based (**MH:** Yeah, yeah). Okay. So within the community you did...

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I mean, I've heard....

MH: I know what you mean. We did a number, a number of things.

CL: So when you came to the camp, you were like on a homemaker's committee? for the camp?

MH: Yeah, worked with the-, when they would have canceled, that was usually a day, you know. Sometimes longer. But I didn't get to stay too long overnight. Like I said, because I had young children long about that time. I had young babies.

CL: So you weren't-, you didn't come to the camp when you were little?

MH: No, no. Now, all my children did. (**CL:** Oh, your children?) Mmmm-hmm.

CL: Did they come-, they came to the camp when they were little?

MH: Uh, yeah, when they were just about ... they started in elementary school, you know. And ... END OF SIDE1 - TAPE 1...they came up until there wasn't any camp. They came, they came every year. They loved it.

CL: Do you remember what year they started coming?

MH: No, I don't remember when they really started coming. But uh, I know Patricia attended the camp until she started to college. And she started college in 1960. (**CL:** Oh, really?) Yeah. And then the other girls started ... they came until they, you know, told them it was closed. Yeah, they all came. They loved it, they really did. And then they started going to Jackson's Mill. But they didn't go there too long before time to go to college.

CL: So after the camps were integrated (**MH:** Were integrated) after the camps were integrated, they started going to Jackson's Mill. How did they uh...do you remember how they

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like got involved? Oh, you were involved with the camp's homemakers, with the homemakers. Is that how you found out about the camp?

MH: Yeah, and then they belonged to 4-H clubs. (**CL:** Oh, they were in the 4-H clubs 4 too, oh, okay) 4-H clubs. That's why there were in Jackson's Mill. Through the 4-H. (**CL:** Oh, okay, okay) And of course, I went to, I attended Jackson's Mill, too, through the Homemaker's. I was on the uh, board, board of directors at Jackson's Mill.

CL: How long were you on the ... do you remember how long you were on the board of director's?

MH: Yeah, I was on several years. Yes, uh-huh. Approximately three or four years.

CL: Do you uh, do you stay in touch with the women who were in the homemaker's club? Do you still ... I mean, are you still friends with them?

MH: Oh, yeah, those I can still get in touch with. So many of them are deceased now. Now, the lady like Tanner Livsey... you heard her name called.

CL: How do you spell her name?

MH: T-a-n-n-e-r (**CL:** T-a-n-n-e-r?) Mmm-hmm. L-....L-i-v-s-e-y, I think. Yeah, L-I-v (**CL:** L-i-v-s-e-y?) Yeah, uh-huh, it was right here. Tanner Livsey. And she's legally blind now. And she couldn't attend the meeting today. But she was the cause of me being here today. (**CL:** Oh, really?) She was the cause of me getting that information.

CL: Do you remember other people?

MH: Oh, yeah. Yeah, so ... and you mean ... agencies, this book has all the agents in it.

CL: So what does it mean if you're an agent? Because I know they were talking ...

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MH: An In-Home Demonstration Agent. Now, you take that uh...that Anderson, that's what she runs. I think she was an agent ... yeah. And she, she was Is Amanda Anderson here today?

(CL: Uh-huh, uh-huh) But I don'tI...don't know if any other agents are here today or not, who was there, coming here when I was coming here. I haven't seen any of them. So many of them are deceased.

CL: What did an agent do?

MH: Well, see, an agent uh, is the one who conducted the Homemaker's Club in their particular county. **(CL:** Oh, okay) And they went from, you know, town to town. And uh, attended Homemaker's and organized Homemaker's groups, see. That was and they did that. And it was, well, it was just nice. There is, there's Tanner's name. **(CL:** Oh, okay, okay)

CL: Thank you. Do you remember what other kind of like, adult activities were held at the camp during that time? Because some people mentioned about how like there were coal camps here and there were, like there were 4-H camps, and how you all came, the Homemaker's. Do you remember of any other ones that....?

MH: I know what you mean. All I know about is the State Farm and Homemaker's Council, and the 4-H camp. That's all that was involved. Yeah, I was involved with all that, State Farm and Homemaker's camp [blank space] And uh, I was telling you about the agents? **(CL:** Mmm-hmm) Yeah, they just had, see, we had a very Now, that was a result of the workshop, upholstery, the ladies, see, they held a workshop for upholstery they had had workshops. at the house right now. And uh...they were busy, busy learning and teaching the upholstery.

CL: So you all just helped, helped people and, in the area.

MH: And trained people, the Homemaker's. Then they had flower workshops, teach them how to arrange flowers. [blank space] All of these offices, all of the Homemaker's... .these are the Extension Home Demonstration Agent. Now, these are the agents, starting here and going all over. Different counties, they have counties indicated.

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CL: And it was segregated. The Homemaker's. Was there a white Homemaker's organization?

(MH: Yeah, mmm-hmm, yeah)

MH: The white Homemaker's went to uh, Jackson's Mill, see, they went to Jackson's Mill. And uh, the black groups came up here.

CL: How often did you, did you ... during 4-H? Or did you meet up here during the year or just during?

MH: Well, mostly in warmer weather, because of no heat, you know, in the cabin in there. And when it got cool, they'd build a fire in the, in the fireplace in there, that you see in there. And there wasn't any heat in the building. So they arranged the meetings at uh, the convenience of weather. See.... And this was a good time for camp and all. My children looked forward to it when school was out, see. Then they came, came up here. Oh, they enjoyed it. I talked with all three of my daughters before this week, in fact, last night ... yesterday. And told them I was coming up here. And they were excited over it, you know. They started reminiscing about the things that would happen up here. [chuckles] They enjoyed it. So, now I have to give them a report of all the activities here. [speaking to someone out of the room] 'Bye, okay, take care.

CL: So how, how long were you a member of the Homemaker's Club? Were you in it for...?

MH: I'm a 50-year member.

CL: Oh, you're still in it. Oh, okay, okay.

MH: I'm a mailbox member now.

CL: Oh, okay. So then after the, everything, like after Integration, you all started meeting at Jackson's Mill? **(MH:** Mmm-hmm, yeah) And not at Camp Washington Carver.

MH: Our headquarters then was at Jackson's Mill, instead of coming up here to

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uh...Washington Carver.

CL: When they integrated the, the Homemaker's Club, was it different? (**MH:** Yes) Was it different for you, for the black women? (**MH:** Huh?) Was it different for the black women?

MH: Yeah, so many of them lost interest. They really wasn't, they just did not face the change. And uh, a lot of them quit attending the meetings. (**CL:** Really?) Yeah. Now, we still have, in Raleigh County now--I don't know how it is in other counties--but in Raleigh County, we have some integrated Homemaker's meetings. But not very many. But we have one full-time black Homemaker's group to my knowledge. And that's the Homemaker's, that's the modernistic homemaker. I don't think there are any white members in that group. I haven't attended. They said they were going to invite me. I'll have to go and report to them what has happened up here ... today. Yeah.

CL: Why do you think that, why do you think that some of the women stopped going to the meetings?

MH: Well, they felt like there was so much taken from them, you know. Because at Jackson's Mill they retained the same white officials.

CL: Oh, so, like the director's didn't change. Ohhh.

MH: Just like in the schools. You know what happened in the schools. They, they took the black principals away, they took the black coaches away, integration brought it on.

CL: Even though they let you, they were allowing it to happen. They still weren't changing it any. You were just allowed to go.

MH: Mmm-hmm, that's right. And in a lot of instance, assistance, they'd move you down, maybe they'd give you an office as assistant, you know, in some instances. Assistant principal, in some instances. And in some instance, they wouldn't That was just one of those things.

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That's just what happened. And they're still happening. Now, that's just like Bluefield State College. They had a black, there was a black uh, president. But they moved him out just as soon as possible, as president, and put in a white, ever since. (CL: Really?) And that was a full black college. Bluefield State was all black. And uh, West Virginia State. Now, of course now, they did have, retain a black president of West Virginia State. But Bluefield State, they (CL: They changed it?) they changed it. And it has remained changed, yeah.

CL: I know, because I just found out recently that it was a black college. (MH: A black college, yeah yeah, it was all black when I was there). Uh-huh. Do you remember what year you started going to school?

MH: Yeah, in 1945, I believe, or '46, yeah. (CL: '45 or '46) Mmm-hmm.

CL: So do you feel so that changed the yeah, okay. Do you uh, do you remember any ... do you remember any, anything about the activities at the camp, or....? Or even like the Homemaker's did while you were at the camp?

MH: Oh, yeah, we, they would have different workshops scheduled. Yeah, they'd have different uh, workshops scheduled. (CL: For the members, or for the kids at the camp?) No, for the members, you know, when the Homemaker's would meet. You're talking about when the Homemaker's met. (CL: Uh-huh) Yeah, because when the 4-Hrs met, it was different. They really had things... you know, they just had things at the camp, really nice workshops and-all for the children and all. Of course, the pool was going full full blast then. (CL: The swimming pool?) Yes. They went on hikes and all.

CL: That was the only ... was that the only swimming pools for black children? For blacks?

MH: Mmm-hmm, just as far as I know. You mean, only when? (CL: When uh) that was just for here. That pool was just for here, for 4-H camp.

CL: Oh, oh, okay, okay.

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MH: Yeah. Have you seen Miss Livsey? (**CL:** Un-huh) This is, this is an older picture. They had some younger pictures, but that's an older picture. Mmm-hmm.

CL: And she's the one who-, she told you about the meeting?

MH: Yes. And she wanted to come so bad. But at her age now, it just wouldn't work. And then her being legally blind, she needed someone to be with her. See, the bathroom facilities being upstairs and all like that, she couldn't make it. Her son wanted to bring her, but I think the girls thought it would be too much.

CL: Has the camp changed a lot since you....?

MH: Yes, yes, it has. Yes, it's changed some.

CL: Because... .wasn't this the only building? Was this the only building on the camp?

MH: At the beginning when the 4-Hrs started. But of course, they built the cabin-, those cabins down there, you know, building down there where they stand now. Of course, that, they were built and all when I was coming here. (**CL:** Oh, so, okay) Yeah, yeah. And there's been an improvement around, you know, all of that water that's been improved, you know. And I think some of those buildings down there. I know the, the uh, the building on this side, I think where the caretaker lived, that's been there all the time, when I was coming. And uh, where they have the picnic shelters and things like that, uh-huh, that, that's been added. Now, when they have programs ... do you come up here in the summer time? (**CL:** No, I've never been up here) That's what you said, you haven't never been up here. Now, what they do, the last time I was up here, they uh...they had built a, they had put up an improvised stand for public programs and all. And last time I was up here, the group of singers, the concert out there.... And the people... .just so many people come up here for those concerts and what have you. Oooh, you can't hardly get in up here.

CL: Really? Mrs. Seay was telling me about before her husband had gotten sick, they came up

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and they, it was just you couldn't see the buildings there was so many people.

MH: No, no. There's thousands come up here. Uh-huh, yeah. And my daughter and I, my daughters and I were over there. And you have to bring your chair now. Shame on you if you don't bring your chair. [laughing]

CL: You just don't have a seat, do you?

MH: And uh, you're lucky to get to one of the camp tables. It's nice if you have your personal picnic, if you can get here in time. But you'd better come early, early, early.

CL: Do you know when it stopped being a 4-H camp? When it....? (**MH:** When it was integrated? Mmmh?) Do you know-, because this do you know when it stopped being a 4-H camp? Because....

MH: I guess, I don't know. They still have it up here. They still have a 4-H camp. (**CL:** Oh, do they?) As far as I know, I think they still have one.

CL: I don't know, because no one's told me

MH: I don't know either, because see, I don't come up here. I haven't been up here for several years now. See, I don't know. You'd have to ask some of those in there.

CL: Yeah, they'd probably, they'd probably know. (**MH:** Yeah) Is there anything you'd like to say? Is there anything else you want to talk about, about the camp or...?

MH: Well, I'll be pleased to know when they're gonna have a swimming pool. When they may build, make a new swimming pool.

CL: Ohhh, there was someone told me that there hasn't been-, that it's been-, that that pool hasn't been open for like 18 years now.

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MH: Yeah, but they're going to try to get funds to uh, make-, build a new swimming pool. And they're going to build it over in that area somewhere.

CL: Oh, they're going to change it.

MH: They're gonna change it around. Over in that area. And I'll be glad when that happens. And uh, they're going to uh, the director was telling me that they're going to arrange bathroom facilities in some of the cabins, try to build some new cabins.

CL: They need them downstairs, if they only have them upstairs. (**MH:** Yes) Because, you know....

MH: Yes. So I'll be glad to see that done.

CL: Are you going to come back for the reunion next year?

MH: If I'm able. I'm looking forward to it, yes. Yes....

CL: Did a lot of people attend the camp? Were there a lot of people who came here? Were there a lot of members of the Homemaker's Club?

MH: Oh, yes, yeah, yeah. (**CL:** There was a lot?) Yeah, because you take those different [blank space] You see, all of these agents you saw in here, would bring their group from their county. See, all of the agents (**CL:** Oh, oh, of the whole state?) that was in the county.

CL: Of the whole state? (**MH:** Yeah) Like the whole state, Homemaker's would meet here?

MH: Yeah, right. And they would represent, and they would bring their people, encourage their people to attend. Yeah, it would be a lot, mmm-hmm. All of these people here that you saw, would bring and encourage their people to attend, see.

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CL: So, they just wanted everybody to come that could. Okay.

MH: Yeah, certainly did.

CL: I just want to read the title of your book here so we know that what you.... 'Reaching out with Heart and Hands.' Was this written by

MH: Yeah. And then I have a hardback, but Lorraine has it. I have a hardback that she wrote, too. She sent me both of them. That was my first one. And she wrote the hardback. .

CL: So she's got the history of the uh, (**MH:** Yeah) of the Homemaker's.

MH: Yeah, and the 4-h's.

CL: And the 4-H's. Was she involved with it?

MH: Yeah, yeah, she was over all of it.

CL: Oh, she was over it.

MH: Smart lady. Yes, smart lady.

CL: Okay, well, thank you a lot.

MH: Well, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW