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ROD BAIN (Briarcliff High School student)

MAX CLELAND (Georgia legislator, director of Veterans Administration, U. S. Senator; at the time of the recording, Secretary of State of Georgia)

MIKE MEARS (Attorney and Mayor of Decatur)

OCTOBER 23, 1985

ROD BAIN

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PRESENTER: Rod [Bain] has been working on the cemetery—the Hardman Cemetery. He'll tell you all about it. And he's been—he got his Eagle Scout—that was his project for, was doing this cemetery. We're quite proud of him, so Rod, how about you coming on.

ROD BAIN: OK, well, as he said, this was my Eagle project. I [inaudible—proposed?] this in 1983. I was a Life Scout looking for an Eagle project, so I came to the Historical Society, where I'd done some other projects for Scouts. And she [Dorothy Nix] suggested the Hardman Cemetery. She'd suggested this before for a Star project. Star is two ranks below Eagle. [Aside—inaudible; apparently helping to set up slide show.] And so she said, "Well, we have this cemetery that we'd like for you to restore." And, you see, Star is a six-hour project, and this took quite a bit more than six hours. So I said, "Well, let me hold off on that; that sounds like an Eagle project." So she said, "I'm sure it'll be waiting for you when you come back." And it was. And so I got started on it. So I guess we will go ahead and start the slide program.

First of all, I'll tell you that Hardman Cemetery is one of the oldest burial grounds in DeKalb County. It's over 160 years old at this point. It was founded on November 19, 1825. They started this church four months after—excuse me, four years—they started this church four years after a treaty with one of [inaudible—possibly "the six"] chiefs of the Creek Indian nation. This church had a dirt floor and shutters for windows. It was slightly primitive, if you want to call it that.

In 1947, when the Historical Society was founded, this was one of the first things they made their goals to repair, along with the Swanton House and that sort of thing. They wanted to restore Hardman Cemetery. In 1970, the year I was born, Ms.

[Dorothy] Nix wrote an article for the [Atlanta] *Journal*. It wasn't quite the [Atlanta] *Constitution* yet then; now it's the [Atlanta] *Journal-Constitution*. OK, when I was born, she wrote this article. It wasn't when I was born, OK. [audience laughter] Anyway, she wrote this article, and it said that now that the Swanton House has been restored, which it was in 1968, said now that the Swanton House has been restored, the next goal is to restore the Hardman Cemetery. I was thirteen years old when I came up on this, and it was still not restored; so I tackled it. [Aside, pointing to ceiling] Want to get that light?

SLIDE PRESENTATION: [Most slides appear blurred; details are difficult to see.]

SLIDE NO. 1: Grassy area in foreground; thick brush and wooded area in background.

BAIN: All right, this is the entrance—or the area of the entrance—to Hardman Cemetery. I came up here in 1983, after Ms. Nix suggested this to me. I didn't know exactly where the cemetery was. Some people who have been living—see, this is surrounded by the University Apartments over on Clairmont Road next to the VA Hospital—and some people who have been living in those apartments for twenty and thirty years still do not know that this cemetery exists. Now, when I came up here, I had to search for the entrance, and I found it right there. [Points to opening in the overgrowth] And so I went on in, and this is what I found.

SLIDE NO. 2: Dappled bright light, presumably foliage, with a few broken vertical lines, presumably small tree trunks; no visible grave stones; slide undecipherable

BAIN: That's sort of a bleak picture. That's essentially what I found when I went up there, was sort of "wildernessy." It somewhat resembled the Congo. There was myrtle on the ground, there were leaves that had fallen for over thirty years, and the place was generally disrepaired. They'd had a lot of vandals come up. People love to party in cemeteries, I found out during this [inaudible].

SLIDE NO. 3: Somewhat clearer slide, similar to Slide No. 2; darker object on right possibly a small grave stone.

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BAIN: All right, these are two field stones, if you can see them. That one right there [points] is a field stone; that right there [points] is a field stone. This one [on the

right, somewhat more visible than the first] is slightly more rounded off. [Points] That's a tree. It looks sort of like a field stone. Anyway, these are all over the cemetery because at the Hardman Primitive Baptist Church, their slaves came to church just like the founders did, just like the church members--their masters did themselves; and so they just were buried in the same cemetery. And we have a great deal of these, and that will come up later.

SLIDE NO. 4: Blurred; large white blob in a pile of what appear to be leaves.

BAIN: Now, this stone has a history behind it, itself. The point I'm trying to make is that these stones were fallen and vandalized all over the place. They were very dirty. Some of them were almost impossible to read; this was one of them. Finally we were able to read it. What it says—and I'm not going to tell you the whole inscription, but one word on it which gives you a key to understand what's wrong with it is it says "SPIRIT" on it. Now, in 1930, December 1930, Mr. Franklin Garrett went up to the Hardman Cemetery. He went to over 131 cemeteries in a twenty-five-mile radius of Five Points—Little Five Points [inaccurate; actually Five Points in downtown Atlanta]. He was on a bicycle, by the way. This was in the thirties, and he was going around on a bicycle. He came up to this cemetery, which wasn't quite in such disrepair at the time, obviously; and he charted the inscriptions on all the stones and left. So on none of the inscriptions that he took down, none of them had the word "SPIRIT" in it. This one did, and so we came up with a couple of two theories about why this stone was here and was not here when Franklin Garrett came.

We had two theories. One of them was that this stone came after Franklin Garrett came—it was a later stone. But it looks awfully old for that. Or it could come from another cemetery and been dumped here by vandals. Some vandals do this quite a bit. One example, I go to Briarcliff High School, and some students from Druid Hills, our arch-rival, came over. They'd gone to a cemetery and picked up a couple of grave stones. So what they did was they came to our high school and dumped them on the front lawn. And, you know, they said something stupid like, "R.I.P. Briarcliff" or something like that. And, of course, they got in deep trouble for it; and they had to take the stones back. That's one example of how people move stones to other

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cemeteries, so that's one thing that could have happened. But we still haven't figured out who that [stone] belongs to.

SLIDE NO. 5: Splotches of light; unrecognizable as cemetery plot

BAIN: This is the Hardman plot. It's difficult to tell, but here is the fencepost right here [points]. The fence goes out beyond the screen around here. This right here [points] is part of a dogwood tree, which is still there; but these are branches which were hanging way over into the cemetery. Notice all this myrtle. That's a box-- that's a stone where the slab on it. There's a slab on the ground—a concrete slab— then there's a side here, a side here, and two sides. And then this big slab right here is put on top, that has the inscription on it. Altogether the whole thing weighs about three-quarters of a ton. And two of them were knocked down—three of them were knocked down, and one of them was partially knocked down. And so we had to lift them all up. But that's one more example of why it was such a mess. This [pointing] was some vines right here [inaudible],

SLIDE NO. 6: Blurred; appears to be a bed of leaves with a small, white object in the center.

BAIN: All right, this is the stone of Sarah J. Hardman. That's the footstone; we can't find the headstone. This was early on. There's still a lot of compost around it. But, as I say, we still can't find the headstone.

SLIDE NO. 7: Blurred; appears to be a photograph of a small tree at the right, leaves in the background and foreground, and bright light in the center (from the top of the photo to the middle of the pile of leaves).

BAIN: This is [the grave site of] Parthena Roberts. She's sort of chunked away in back of the cemetery, sort of isolated from the rest; and we found her three or four days after looking around, after we'd been working for a few days. Somebody said, "Hey, what's that over there?" And there was a stone back there. We found it and cleaned it and all this sort of thing and put it back with the others.

SLIDE NO. 8: Blurred photograph with small, dark area at top to the right and barely visible objects among the leaves in the lower half of the frame, apparently grave stones; one appears to be cracked (or possibly there's a branch in front of it).

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BAIN: These are the McNeelys [pointing]—mother, father, and son. This is Sarah, R. O., and Thomas Richard McNeely. R. O., the father, who is the husband of the family, is the oldest—is the youngest—stone in the cemetery. He was buried in 1909, and that is the latest date we could find. Though we know that a relative of

Chapman Powell, who we'll talk about later, named Ellie Mae, was cremated and had her ashes sprinkled over her father's plot—the grandfather's plot, excuse me. This was in 1951, so that exceeds R. O. by about forty years. [Voice trails off and becomes inaudible; seems to be conversing with audience member, who has a question.] Oh, yes—the tree up here in the back [points to dark area above grave sites]. That tree— [slide presenter zooms in on dark area, which appears to be part of a fallen tree] it's just in the back in that picture, but that tree at its base was nine or ten feet in diameter, and it's—I would—it's approximately two or three hundred years old. And it fell before I got there, and I'll show you what it did.

SLIDE NO. 9: Near bottom on the left, a small grave stone among the leaves; fallen tree takes up most of upper part of slide; another stone is beneath the tree on the right side of the slide.

BAIN: This is one of the youngsters' stones. [Pointing to tree trunk] That is the tree, and that [points to stone on right] is another one of the youngsters' stones. It got crushed under it. This tree—it's difficult to estimate just how much that tree really weighed, but it pushed it [the stone] down into the ground to the point where you can't read the bottom line. And you know, that, we had to cut that up. We had to have the maintenance crews from the University Apartments come in and fix that, had to cut it up, and we had to take it out.

SLIDE NO. 10: Blurred, unrecognizable images; bright light in center and on right; appears to be a tree on left

BAIN: Nature took her toll on the cemetery—all the myrtle leaves and all that stuff; but man did, too. As I told you, there was a lot of vandalism, and some people liked to use this cemetery as a trash dump. That [points] is a box-spring mattress we found in the back of the cemetery. Now, why somebody would want to put a box-spring mattress there, no one knows. But it was there when we came.

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SLIDE NO. 11: Blurred photograph of box sitting on a bed of dried leaves.

BAIN: Now, contrary to popular belief, that is not a grave stone; that is a sewer plug. We found that out because one of the—one of my assistant scout masters works for the water and sewer department. And he said that's the location of one of their sewer plugs. This is a wet magazine on top of it [points]; we had to peel that off. That

[points] is a trash bag. And that [points] is a another [inaudible—sounds like “bed curtain” or “bed frame”?]. And this is still before we got to cleaning it up.

SLIDE NO. 12: Photograph of two people (one standing, one kneeling) on either side of grave stone in wooded area. People identified as Rod Bain and Dorothy Nix.

BAIN: OK, so I heard—when I came up the first time, we brought Ms. Nix up, [inaudible aside] we brought her up, and she—and we evaluated what we needed to do in order to repair the cemetery. And so we walked around to the different stones and different areas. By this time we had discovered Parthena--this is her stone from the front. And at this point [in the photograph], I'm recording something [inaudible]. Anyway, moving right along.

SLIDE NO. 13: Blurred photograph of two people in wooded area with fence post at the left of the picture.

BAIN: And that's my mother and Ms. Nix. They are, by the way, in the Hardman plot. This [points] is one of the fence posts of the Hardman fence. You can hardly see it for all the brush, and that's the other side where this goes around [points]. She got a haircut, too. [audience laughter]

SLIDE NO. 14: Photograph of two people standing inside short iron fence; people identified as Rod Bain's scout master and the scout master's son.

BAIN: This is the Hardman plot when we started work. We had started work after Ms. Nix came up. We did what we needed to do, so we came up and started working. It was a little bit more cleared out. You see that little spot right there, that's [points], that's where one of those branches was that's hanging over the fence; so we had gotten to that point by then. This was the first weekend of work. That's my scout master, Michael Reeves [sp?] and his son, Michael Reeves, Jr.

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SLIDES NO. 15 and 16: Rod Bain digging with shovel in wooded area

BAIN: That's me. That is a shovel; I am not digging up anything—I'm trying to find—I'm trying to get a stob [sic] out of the ground. All over the cemetery—mostly trails, of course—there are little stobs [sic] from the trees we had to cut down. There were little trees about this big around dotted all the way through the cemetery. You can't see [inaudible; voice trails off]. And so we had to cut those down. A lot of them came out of the stobs [sic].

SLIDE NO. 17: Photograph of Rod Bain raking inside low iron fence, revealing flat slabs of stone

BAIN: And we had to do a lot of raking. Like I say, about thirty years of compost accumulated before I came. This stone [points] we never figured out what it is, because it has no inscriptions on it. This [points to another stone] is one of the end pieces to the box grave [points] that's the main part of Mary Nash. He [should be "she"?] sits right in the middle of the Hardman plot. And that [points] is Martha Hardman's foot stone.

SLIDE NO. 18: Photograph of Rod Bain raking inside low iron fence, revealing flat slabs of stone

BAIN: And we had to rake, as I said, a whole lot. Had to rake so much it was painful. [Inaudible conversation with audience member] This was before we finished. This was before we finished doing the fence—it was still rusty. I'll get to that in a minute.

SLIDES NO. 19, 20, 21: Blurred photographs of man [identified as Mr. Reeves] standing among trees, a tree stump, and cut wood; two-story building in background, possibly back view of University Apartments?

BAIN: Now, here is the big tree. [Points] That is the tree. That was after the crews had come up and sawed it into pieces for us. Now, these pieces, remember, are still nine feet in diameter. We had to cut them up with a maul. That's Mr. Reeves [points].

SLIDE NO. 22: Blurred photograph of portion of iron (?) fence in wooded area

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BAIN: And this is the Powell fence; this is the Powell plot, where Chapman Powell and his wife, Elizabeth Hardman Powell, are buried. This fence, notice, it looks red. [Recording is black-and-white; colors are not distinct.] The reason it looks red is because it was badly rusted after about forty years of neglect. And notice [points] these panels are gone back here. The reason the panels are gone—there are stories bouncing around—the reason those panels are gone is because people came from the apartments, and you know how people love the old American barbecue? Well, they used these panels as barbecue grills. [Inaudible negative comments from Bain and from audience.]

SLIDE NO. 23: Photograph of Powell plot after restoration; blurred image of fence; grave markers barely visible

BAIN: That was after we finished it. This is the Powell plot. You can see the stone [points] is down. Now, this one [points] right here, that's the "SPIRIT" stone, that's the one I told you about earlier. We moved it to the Powell plot so it would be easier to see. Now, notice this black [points to fence]. We had to brush these fences and de-rust them. We had to prime them and use primer paint. And then we had to paint them black. Now, we had to hand-brush. We didn't have a little a little drill attachment. What we had to do, we had a brush about this long and about this wide. And the Hardman fence has two rods about this big around, and we had to go through brushing these fence posts and fence panels in this case. This fence was easier because we just brushed across the panels and get the spots we missed. But anyway.

SLIDE NO. 24: Blurred image; looks like wooded area, with short iron fence barely visible

BAIN: Then came the Hardman fence. See the rods [points]? We had to go on each side of that [inaudible] brushes. Now, we did spray-paint that. Now, this was before much restoration was done, and you notice that you don't see any clearing-out here [points to right of slide]. This was [inaudible] obviously before we had to re-route the trails. The reason we had to re-route the trails was that right there [points to dark line among leaves and in front of tree]. See that little piece right there? That is another slave stone from field stone—slave-grade. And this trail went right over it. You walk in, and you say, "Excuse me." So we had to re-route the trail.

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SLIDE NO. 25: Cleared-out trail area with trees on either side; as presenter zooms in, grave sites become evident in the center of the frame

BAIN: That was after we re-routed the trail. And that was also after we had repaired the fence. Notice [points] Mary Nash is laid out in five pieces very neatly [refers to broken grave stone outside fence], and she is quite white. Earlier, she wasn't white. That was because the Wilson Memorials Company came in and sandblasted the stone on its four sides; however, the stone was so badly broken up that it could not—the four sides could not support the top stone. And so they had to lay it in the sides that would properly go where they—where they could stand it up--the side where they can stand up [points].

SLIDE NO. 26: Blurred image of Rod Bain standing among trees

BAIN: All right, that's me, trying to make the trails. You remember the slave graves earlier, in one of the first few slides. Back on this side [right of screen], out of your view, are those slave graves. Now, we've sort of built the trail [runs pointer along trail on screen]. We're trying to perfect it in this slide.

SLIDE NO. 27: Clearer slide of Rod Bain and Mr. Wilson standing in wooded area; light-colored rectangles of stone on the ground

BAIN: That's Mr. Wilson of Wilson Memorials. He came to evaluate the situation. This was after we had done Mary Nash's box tomb. And we were trying to evaluate what we would do with the other stones. Eventually Mr. Wilson could not do it because the man who does this kind of work retired, so we had to go to Spence Monuments Company in Lilburn, which finished the work.

SLIDE NO. 28: Rod Bain and Mr. Wilson standing on either side of gravestone

BAIN: We're standing up the stone of John Hardman. The reason that we were standing it up was because we discovered that Mr. Hardman's stone was facing out, so in order to see what it says, you have to go around the fence, which is not pleasant. So Spence came in, turned the stone around, and put it back in the ground after cleaning it.

SLIDE NO. 29: Blurred image of gravestone standing among dead leaves; large blur in foreground

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BAIN: This is [the gravestone of] Bluford Hardman and looks very much like Parthena's stone; it's probably cut from the same die. And this is after we had made the trails. By the way, these are landscaping timbers [points to beams bordering trail]. These are four-by-four landscaping timbers; they're also pressure-treated. These [points to two-story brick buildings behind trees in background] are the apartments [University Apartments] back here. Now, those apartments caused a lot of grief.

SLIDE NO. 30: Two rectangular light-colored grave markers, side by side, lying flat among dead leaves.

BAIN: These are the stones of Chapmon [points to stone at right] and Elizabeth [points to stone at left] Powell. Notice, before we raked. But these stones are replacements for a ten-foot-tall obelisk that used to stand in the middle of it.

SLIDE NO. 31: Group of memorial grave stones at Decatur Cemetery; obelisk in foreground at center

BAIN: Now, that is the obelisk right there. This is Decatur Cemetery. You see, the reason it's in Decatur Cemetery is because some relatives of Chapmon Powell came to the [Hardman] cemetery and found the obelisk in four pieces—it was no longer ten feet tall. And so they said, "Hey, this is too much." And they took that stone out of Hardman, got it fixed, put back together, and they put it in Decatur Cemetery. It's still there to this day, all in one piece. Actually, it's a little bit more than ten feet tall because an extra piece has been added on the bottom, which states it's in the Hardman Cemetery.

SLIDE NO. 32: Rectangular stone slabs built into something that resembles a low bench, open in front, among dead leaves

BAIN: OK, this is one of the better contract slides here. These are the Burdetts, Mary and Benjamin. Now, Benjamin owned over six hundred acres of land around this area. [Inaudible aside] Anyway, he owned over six hundred acres of land around here. Now, these are their box tombs—the other two of the three box tombs. Now, notice that Benjamin [points to blur on among the leaves] is down on the ground. That's because he also fell through. [Points to bench-like structure] Mary got badly misaligned. We had to—we had Spence—Wilson Monuments—Memorials Company had to come in and lift the stones, set the pieces back together, sandblast them, and put

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them back together, which is not very easy, because, as I said, they weigh over three-fourths of a ton.

SLIDE NO. 33: Bright, blurred image of tombs surrounded by trees and leaves; trail on left side.

BAIN: That was after they were fixed. Now the trails [points] have already been redone, been raked, and that sort of thing. Notice how different this slide--[aside to projectionist] go back [Slide No. 32 appears.]—and that slide are. When I got this picture back, you could hardly tell the difference. [Shows Slide No. 33 again.]

SLIDE NO. 34: Extremely dark slide with vague image of gravestone on right

BAIN: This is Martha Hardman. She's very difficult to see. This was taken in late afternoon, and the pictures didn't come out very well. This was after Spence Company had come in and redone the stone. And what they did—[inaudible] see,

Martha is at an angle; I'll explain that in a minute—what they did with all these stones was they put pegs into the stones and put German [sp?] cement on the surface and then put them together. Now, in Martha's case we had tried another adhesive; and what happened, you see, is that Martha is at an angle like this [demonstrates off-camera], as you can see. And we put this stuff on, laid Martha very gently down, and she started sliding; and she wouldn't stop. We put her back up where she was supposed to be, and she slid again. We could make it stay for the life of us, and so we had to come up with this fence.

SLIDE 35: Extremely dark slide with two perpendicular lighter shadows.

BAIN: Now, this is even more difficult to see. There are three pieces of stones that I can see, but I'm not sure you can, these three pieces. Now, what they did with these, there were two stones: Mary Hardman and Exer Maxzillary Hardman [spells middle name for audience]. This is his stone [points]. Now, when we found this—in fact, we almost didn't find it, because we could only find three pieces of it. And what the [company name inaudible—Lyman?] Company did was they put the stones in the position they thought it was in originally, and then they poured concrete in to solidify in the stone; they just reformed the stone. They did this with Mary Hardman as well. She wasn't quite as fragmented, though.

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SLIDE 1: "Before" photograph of overgrown entrance to Hardman Cemetery

BAIN: So that is the entrance before, and notice that no one can tell—because, as I told you before, I did not know where this place was when I came up here. I had no idea where the entrance was. And so I came in, and that's the entrance still [points to slight break in foliage], but we decided that we need to mark it.

SLIDE 36: Photograph of Bain standing next to Hardman Cemetery sign

BAIN: So we did. The sign—it's difficult to see the sign in this picture—there's a better picture later on. That's me [inaudible]. That picture got me trouble, but I won't go into that.

SLIDE 1: "Before" photograph of overgrown entrance to Hardman Cemetery

BAIN: So there's the entrance before, and--

SLIDE 37: Shadowy images of people in foreground; better-lighted group of people in center; entrance to cemetery in background

BAIN: --this is what—this came—this was sort of the culmination of everything. This was what we were so ready for. This was what put the cemetery back on the map, if you will. This was the Hardman Cemetery rededication. Some relatives and some Historical Society members came, and we had some speakers, myself and Mr. [James] Mackay and Mr. Moore, and we just had a great time.

SLIDE 38: Photograph of six people standing in front of cemetery entrance; James Mackay in foreground; others identified by Bain during his presentation

BAIN: [Using pointer to identify people in photograph] that's Mr. Mackay. This is Mr. Marion Hardman, his wife, his sister, and her husband. The Marion Hardman family is from Roswell. His sister's family is from McDonough.

SLIDE 39: Clearer photograph of Hardman Cemetery sign

BAIN: And there's a better picture of the sign. At the time I was recovering from hip surgery, so I was still on crutches. And I pulled out my sheaf of papers—and I hope I'm not shocking you with this—I had several pages—but I went through my little speech, and the cemetery, as you can see, was much clearer back there. It's really nice.

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SLIDE 40: Mr. Mackay, Mr. Moore, and a few other people standing by the Hardman Cemetery sign

BAIN: And this is Mr. Mackay and the Reverend Mr. Moore, and he spoke several times during my presentation and injected some history into it. And that [points to object on sign], by the way, is his hat. The sign's not broken, although it looks like it. He lives in Houston Chapel—the former Houston Chapel. You see, there's a story behind that as well. You see, when Amanda Powell Houston died, she—before she died, in fact—she founded a small, nondenominational chapel because she felt that people weren't going to church enough and that people were having to go too far. And as a good example of this, the Hardman Primitive Baptist Church, people were coming from Glenwood Road to come to this little church out here. This is a twelve-mile round trip. This is a whole day on horse and buggy. And that was where they moved the church eventually, was out to Glenwood Road, where [inaudible] pastor lived. He gave them some property, and they moved the church out there. But so the nondenominational chapel was built; and after she [Amanda Powell Houston] died, they

decided that it would be in her—it would be her wish to sell the property to a group who wanted to start a Presbyterian church. [Aside to projectionist]: I need to run the next slide.

SLIDE 41: Another photograph of cemetery sign

BAIN: [Inaudible instructions to projectionist]

SLIDE 42: Another photograph of cemetery sign

BAIN: [Inaudible aside to projectionist] that's the sign—yeah, in this case the sign has a [inaudible phrase] who is recording our speeches.

SLIDE 43: Photograph of a few people standing next to sign

BAIN: This is the slide I wanted. Moving right along, the Presbyterian group decided that this was not enough land for them, so what the group that was executing Mrs. Powell Houston's wishes, they said, "OK, what we're going to do is we're going to sell the property and use the money from the sale, and we're going to give it to this group to start their own church wherever they wish." And so they did. They moved the

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chapel back from the road—this is where the minister—the Reverend Mr. Moore lives now. And the group that did this, the group that took the money and got ready to build their Presbyterian church, built the Emory Presbyterian Church, which now stands right next door to Druid Hills High School. This [points to person in slide] is the Reverend Steve Sloop, who is pastor—minister, pastor, minister, whatever. Now, the thing behind this is that he came [to the dedication] for two reasons: one was this secretary was connected to Emory Presbyterian, and also because the [Boy Scout] troop that I was with, the troop [inaudible] was sponsored by none other than Emory Presbyterian Church.

SLIDE 44: Unclear photograph of three or four people standing to left of Hardman Cemetery sign

BAIN: Beside me is Mr. Mike Powell, beside him is Mr. Tony Powell, and beside him is Ms. Aurelia Austin. I'll tell you a little bit more about the Powells in a minute. I decided [inaudible] slide program.

SLIDE 45: Blurred figure standing to right of Hardman Cemetery sign.

BAIN: That's the sign—so this is finally the end. I was so happy. After sixteen months, eleven hundred hours of work from over sixty different people, we finally got it all finished. And that's the end of the slide presentation, but I do want to tell you something about the Powells. [To projectionist] You can leave the slide on. The Powells—Mr. Chapmon Powell—[inaudible exchange between Bain and projectionist] was born in North Carolina and came here in 1818. And when he came, it was still Henry County, before DeKalb County was born. Anyway, he was a prominent figure in many different ways. He was [inaudible phrase]. He was the main doctor in DeKalb. He was in [inaudible] medicine. And the Indians would come to him, and they would give him—actually, they would not come to him. What they would do was he would send his son John to the Indians. And they would give John roots and things like this that the doctor needed to make his medicine. And so John would go riding back to his father's house, and his father would make his medicine. And the way he did this, he ground up the herbs and roots and added whiskey. [Inaudible off-camera conversation] The still is downstairs [in the DeKalb Historical Society] in the museum, that same still that he used in his [inaudible] medicine work. Now, then, after he'd

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made his medicine, he would send John with the medicine back to the Indians. And bringing the roots was sort of payment—"If you find the roots, I'll give you the medicine that I make from the roots." And he went on—he was one of the founders of DeKalb County, one of the prominent people in the county. And the reason that he's buried in this cemetery is because he married a Hardman.

FROM THE AUDIENCE, off-camera: Elizabeth Hardman

BAIN: And they had quite a large family. As I mentioned before, Ellie Mae was second [sic] generation. She was a granddaughter and had decided that she wanted her ashes sprinkled over her father's plot—grandfather's plot. And that's all. If you have any questions, [inaudible phrase] the lights, so I can see hands raised.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER, facing away from camera: Who was Hardman?

BAIN: Hardman? Hardman was one of the founders—I believe I neglected to mention the charter members. They were John Johnson, Jacob Williams, William Towers, Nancy Lunsford, [inaudible—sounds like "Richard" or "Patricia"] Parker, [inaudible] Williams, Sarah [spelling?] Towers, Mary Williams, and [inaudible—could be

"Joy C." or "Joyce E.?"] Hardman, and I believe that's where the name comes from. There are many Hardmans buried up there—that's what the plot is for—and Bluford Hardman is also buried there. [Brief, inaudible exchange with off-camera audience member]

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Were you able to inspire these monument companies to donate their services?

BAIN: A lot of it was—see, in one case, Mr. Wilson—no, we were not able to get any donations at all. The way that we paid for it was the man who is the—the man who runs, essentially, the foundation [Francis Wood Wilson Foundation] which administers these apartments that surround the cemetery. He gave to the [DeKalb Historical] Society the money that was needed for repair to the cemetery fence and that sort of thing. He paid us back essentially. And he, of course, couldn't pay it to me; he had to pay it to the [DeKalb Historical] Society. And we used that money.

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UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Those apartments are a foundation, you say?

BAIN: The Francis Wood Wilson Foundation.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Did you use something on the cemetery to bring out the letters on the tombs?

BAIN: Well, one thing, the sandblasting was used by the monument company. We used a solution which will clean the stones and make it slightly easier to read. But if you ever need to—if you're ever in a very old cemetery and need to read a stone, like if it's your great-great-grandfather's stone or something like that—one way to read it is to take a sort of a sponge and dip it in flour, I believe it is, and pat it on the stone [demonstrates with gestures]. And if you—you don't just rub it on—you can rub it, I suppose, but it'll get into the letters, and that would defeat the purpose—but you pat it on. And, of course, the flour won't get into the letters, and it'll make the letters show up. That's a temporary way.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Rod, who is maintaining the—it's in beautiful condition now. Who is maintaining it?

BAIN: Ah, no one's maintaining it at this point. We're trying to get the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs Department to maintain it forever and ever. And

Mr. Jim [inaudible—could be “Cone” or “Cohen”?] about fifteen years ago made a promise to Mr. Walter McCurdy, who was then president [of the DeKalb Historical Society?]. He [Mr. Cohen/Cone] said, “If you will repair the Hardman Cemetery, then the RBCA”—which I think was then just the Recreation Department, the Parks Department—“then we'll keep it up for you.”

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'd like to ask you about the photography. I'm really impressed with the storytelling quality of it—it's excellent.

BAIN: Thank you very much.

PROJECTIONIST (UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE), turning around in her chair and facing audience behind her: I'm the photographer. Part of the problem—

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good story. Good story.

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PROJECTIONIST (UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE): --part of the problem with the maintenance is that—and Rod didn't mention that he spent a great deal of time trying to, doing research and trying to figure out who owned the property. Because that we didn't know. Clearly it does not belong to the apartments, and they finally told us, you know, that it didn't belong to them, and they didn't know who—

BAIN: On the tax map, which is, you know, the area [inaudible] the apartments. On the tax map, and on every tax map that has been written ever since they started making the tax maps, it always has a little two-acre square, and that's the Hardman Cemetery area and the little surrounding area where the church once was. And we did not know who it belonged to for quite some time, though Mr. Crenshaw, who is the man I was speaking of earlier, the head of the Francis Wood Wilson Foundation, he had to give me access, of course, because I had to cross their property to get in. So that was—and we eventually found out that it [the property] is in the name of the Hardeman Primitive Baptist Church. It's now "Hardeman"; somehow the *e* got in there. And it belongs—in the deed it says that it belongs to the elders—the vestry, I suppose, would be the equivalent—

PROJECTIONIST, off-camera: And their successors.

BAIN: And their successors. Which means that it belongs to the Hardeman Primitive Baptist Church.

PROJECTIONIST: But they had no knowledge of this originally. And what we're in the process of trying to do is to get the deed—

BAIN [off-camera]: Transferred

PROJECTIONIST: --transferred to the [DeKalb] Historical Society. Because county people can't work on it unless it's county property.

BAIN: That would be essentially the same thing as Mr.—as the scandal sort of thing with Mr. Manuel Maloof, is they would be working on time—it'd be on [inaudible; words obscured by coughing in audience] and not on county property. So it has to be in county hands before anything can be done.

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DOROTHY NIX: In regard to the maintenance, Mr. Crenshaw, who gave—what was it? around a thousand dollars?—for restoration, he’s quite proud of it, and he said he would—they would make an attempt to keep an eye on it. And I—before the dedication, they hauled a lot of leaves away and all. So I think that it is under their—

PROJECTIONIST: [Inaudible] away stuff for us during that time.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was wondering who took all the leaves, because I bagged a lot of them.

BAIN: We had over two hundred bags full of leaves and compost and sticks and all that stuff.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: That’s really not too bad, considering how long it’s been there.

PROJECTIONIST: Several pickup truckloads

BAIN: Several pickup truckloads

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is it a permanent easement? Is it a footpath, or-- How wide is the easement to get to it?

BAIN [off-camera]: Let me see here.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because automobiles go in—

BAIN: I would say probably [holds arms apart] about this wide. Maybe a little bit—it varies. It varies. [To another audience member] Excuse me?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: Well, she asked about a path and then asked if automobiles could go there.

BAIN shakes his head “no” to automobile access.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER [off-camera]: You’d have to go up to the little preschool [The Phoenix School formerly operated on the grounds of University Apartments]. [Inaudible off-camera comments from audience]

BAIN: The way you get to the place is—University Apartments--you know where the VA Hospital is, right next door. You go in the gates at University Apartments and

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DeKalb Towers and go up the road, Williams Lane [later changed to Starvine Way] goes straight up until it comes to a dead end. There's a road going off to the side, which goes up to the little Phoenix School, preschool. And go into the parking lot, look up the little hill, and that little clump of trees is what you see—what you saw on the slides. You have to walk up the hill. Or if it hasn't rained recently, you can drive up.

PROJECTIONIST: But you drive across a lawn. There isn't a road there.

BAIN: If it's rained recently, you'll leave track marks, and the apartment people do not like that.

PROJECTIONIST: The actual little clump of trees and everything does not take up the whole two acres.

BAIN: No, it does not. The area—in fact, in fact some of the area that used to be part of the cemetery and church area are now encroached on by the Phoenix School playground. It cuts off about half the playground. If we decided to put a fence around all two acres, it would take about half of the playground now.

DOROTHY NIX: The [DeKalb Historical] Society had hoped that a garden club would adopt it, you know, and do some maintenance.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER [OFF-CAMERA]: Does the garden club know that?

DOROTHY NIX: Well, we have talked about this before Rod came along. We had tried to make an effort to get us some groups interested, but we didn't have any takers until he came along.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: The federation, maybe [inaudible, perhaps a first name]?

DOROTHY NIX: We talked with some of the leaders, you know, quite a few years ago.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, what's planted there? Any old bulbs or shrubs? Or anything—

BAIN: It's in a wooded enough area, and it's hard to grow things there. Plenty grew before I got there. But mostly what grew was like I said, trees about this big

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around [indicates with gesture] between—some of them were twig—almost twig—and one thing that you find loads of all over the place is myrtle—ground cover—periwinkle. [INAUDIBLE COMMENTS AMONG AUDIENCE MEMBERS] And we're leaving that because--not in the trails too much, at least some of the trails, if it doesn't impede your movement. But that's a symbol—it's an evergreen, so it's a symbol of everlasting life, so we leave it [inaudible].

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's called "graveyard myrtle."

BAIN: Right.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Did [inaudible] of the people buried there show up?

BAIN: When?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: When you had your dedication.

BAIN: When we had the rededication—yes, most of them were relatives.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I mean, was it many people that have got their ancestors buried there?

BAIN: How many people are buried there?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, how—

BAIN: Of the people who were buried there?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Uh-huh.

BAIN [to Dorothy Nix]: Ms. Nix, could you approximate how many people were there at the time?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER who originated question: I just wondered—

BAIN: I don't know exactly. I don't know--I would say maybe twenty. [TO MRS. NIX] Would you say twenty?

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[SEVERAL INAUDIBLE COMMENTS, SOME SIMULTANEOUS, FROM VARIOUS AUDIENCE MEMBERS]

BAIN: There were six or seven relatives out of about twenty or thirty people.

PROJECTIONIST: There were fifty-five or sixty people there.

BAIN: Were there?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER who originated question: That's what I meant. [Inaudible] Do you recall?

BAIN: Six or seven people. Maybe a little bit more, some that we might not have known were relatives or not; they might not have come up and said, "Hi, I'm a relative."

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER who originated question: And they're not interested in donating to the keeping-up of the cemetery?

BAIN: I'm sure they'd be quite interested. It's family, something you preserve. I'm sure they would. I believe that we've had some people contribute, [TO MRS. NIX] have we not?

MRS. NIX: Well, Mr. Powell in Macon is very interested. But curiously enough, some people didn't even know—who were related—didn't even know about the cemetery until they read it in the paper.

BAIN: I pointed out to you Mr. Marion Hardman in the slide show. He could not find the place. He said he was looking around for ten or twenty years and had just found it, came up one day while we were working. This project spanned quite some time. I told you it took sixteen months and eleven hundred hours on the part of over sixty people. We started in November—on November 4, I believe it was—1983, and we

did not finish until December 31, 1984. And I was the only person working at the time we were trying to put in the sign, and I was working by the light of a pair of headlights. It was 6:15 in the evening, and this was before Daylight Savings came up again. So—but lucky for me, I was not in the cemetery.

PROJECTIONIST: He was determined not to go [inaudible].

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UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Did you have a time frame for your scout project in which you had to do this project?

BAIN: No. There is no time frame for the Eagle project, only for the Star [inaudible], which are six hours each. For Eagle it's an unlimited period of time. I think it's a limit where you must be—something like thirty hours. You must be at least thirty hours, but above that the sky's the limit. I had 410. And so I pretty well missed that limit [made that minimum].

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: This is the largest scout project I ever saw the Eagle Scouts try and to be commended.

BAIN: I was quite tired. I didn't feel it all that minute, I thought sort of, "Hmmm." It was quite [inaudible]

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think you'll find it useful in the rest of your life.

BAIN: I have already. I've found it quite useful already.

MRS. NIX: The Society also has a chest of drawers from the Powell family, and we have Chapmon Powell's bible. The Powell family has—we've received several donations as a result of Rod's work, and we're extremely proud of Rod and the project.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PRESENTER rises and begins applauding: I think we're all [inaudible as audience joins in applause]. We appreciate you coming, and I think that the people that didn't show up today certainly missed an awful lot. I had no idea that he had gone to all this—I knew he'd been doing it, but I had no idea that it entailed all of this. And downstairs we have the still that Dr. Powell made his medicine in. They said it was real interesting. They—everybody liked his medicine; the base of it was about seventy percent alcohol. And then he ended up building a four- or five-column home on Peachtree Trail, which is now downtown Davison's [later Macy's]. So he was quite a prominent man in his [inaudible].

BAIN: Do we have any more questions? [Points to audience member]

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: In Brad's [Brad Clements] show yesterday, he showed the little medicine house. That's what the Indians called Chapmon Powell's house. That's the little log cabin, which is now part of the

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plantation complex down at Stone Mountain. But it was part of a bigger residence over on Clairmont, where the liquor store and the car wash are across from the old C&S Bank.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PRESENTER: For those of you who haven't seen his daughter's hope chest, which he gave her in 1853, I think, it's downstairs in the museum. And how in the world they put that hope chest in a little log cabin, I don't know.

DOROTHY NIX: It's been moved down to the Swanton House.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PRESENTER: Oh, it has?

DOROTHY NIX: Yes. You'll see it down there.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PRESENTER: Are there any other questions for Rod now?

BAIN: Are there any questions? [Points off-camera] Did you have a question?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE PRESENTER: Our president, Jim Mackay, should've been here, but his wife is very ill. And that's the reason he isn't, and he sends his regrets very much.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: That was very good. [Applause]

MRS. NIX: We are very proud of both Brad Clements, who gave the program yesterday, and Rod. And we just--

END OF BAIN RECORDING

MAX CLELAND

RECORDING BEGINS DURING JAMES MACKAY'S INTRODUCTION OF MAX CLELAND.

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MACKAY [speaking to Mr. Cleland]: We're going to save the rest, and you talk exactly whatever you want to—[RECORDING SKIPS TO MR. CLELAND'S PRESENTATION]

CLELAND: Well, one of the things I guess I remember the most is when I was about four years old. I lived in a little apartment complex on the DeKalb County side of Moreland. And so all of my life I've lived in DeKalb County. It's been my "home of record," as they say, all of my life. So from my earliest recollections till now, I have been a citizen of—a proud citizen of—DeKalb.

I can remember as a youngster about four years old great elation and great sadness. I didn't quite understand it. The great elation was over the end of World War II. The great sadness was over the death of President Roosevelt. I can remember, as a youngster, not fully understanding it; great elation and great sadness. I can also remember a song, "The Sunny Side of the Street." And I always thought the other side of the street was the sunny side of the street. Actually, I didn't know at that time that was Fulton. [laughter] I was living on the sunny side of the street, and I've since come to know it.

So, since World War II was over, my father came home from the navy; and we quickly moved out of the little apartment out to something that took about an hour and fifteen minutes to get to. A little two-lane road called the Covington Highway went out to it—a little place called Lithonia. Lithonia was one of the oldest cities—is one of the oldest cities in DeKalb County, founded in the mid-1850s. Not many people know it, but it comes from a Greek word, *lithos*, meaning "rock"; *oni*, meaning "city"—city of rock. It's an old granite town. And Stone Mountain—the same granite that produces Stone Mountain has produced numerous granite quarries around the Lithonia area. So that attracted a lot of Scotch [sic] people, a lot of Irish people to Lithonia. I grew up in kind of a farming community that was based around a quarry and kind of an interesting mixture of people.

My ancestry is Scotch-Irish. As a matter of fact, the name *Cleland* in Scotland is pronounced "Clelland" [short *e* sound], because there's a little town about fifty miles west of Edinburgh, Scotland, named Cleland [short *e* sound], Scotland. And [it]

specializes in raising tomatoes and little else. So the Clelands [long *e* sound] came to Georgia. We can trace one back as far back as about 1790, where a man named Cleland came to—from Ireland, emigrated from Ireland—to Savannah; came in down at

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the port in Savannah. And we also know that a man named Cleland was one of the original founders of the Irish Hibernian Society around the time of Napoleon, around 1812, 1813—the Irish Hibernian Society founded in Savannah, which is a very exclusive society now. And if you ever go down to the St. Patrick's Day Parade, the hardest ticket to get in town is the ticket to the dinner of the Irish Hibernian Society. And, of course, I didn't know all this. Then I went down to the Hibernian Society once when I was running for public office and found that some fellow named Cleland had founded it. So he was one of the original founders. That made me feel good.

But I think probably I have become more fascinated with history—rather than less—as time has gone on. I started off as a history major really in college about my junior year. History was the only subject I almost failed as a freshman, but things turn about for you if you keep in—stay in college long enough. So I learned to like history; I became a history major and interested in government and political science, but I ended up getting a degree in American history from Emory. And I have become more fascinated with history ever since. And what I am—what I see about history is that, a couple of things. I like C. Vann Woodward's description of history. He says, "Most people think that history happened to someone else." And when you're young, you feel that you're reading about something that happened to somebody else; it has no relevance to you. Interestingly enough, as you accumulate a little bit of your own history, you appreciate history more; and you find that history did help shape you and shape all the institutions that you are a part of. And that the better understanding you have of history, the better understanding you have of yourself. So it becomes a fascinating adventure in self-discovery.

And a little portion of that self-discovery was something that we went through about a year ago with the help of our State Archives. In my own life, I had not really known anything beyond the ancestry—my ancestry—except just going back to my grandfather, Mr. Y. L. [?] Cleland. I didn't really know anything beyond that. We had jokingly—I guess every family jokingly says, in the answer to a question from the youngster, "What about before then?" before Granddaddy, you know, and I asked my uncle, "What about before then?" And Mercer Cleland, who lives down on Rockland Road, and he said, "Well, we checked our ancestry, and we discovered there was a

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horse thief in South Carolina, and we didn't go any further than that." I don't know whether that's true or not; but it was a good joke at the time, and I believed it. So I didn't check any further.

Then along comes an invitation from the DeKalb County chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. And they wanted to present me a military service medal for being in the military and for serving as head of the Veterans Administration. But they wanted me to authenticate that I was the son—a legitimate son--of a Confederate veteran. A legitimate descendant of a Confederate veteran. Well, I didn't know, and I really didn't care. Especially I did not care about filling out the five pages that it took to answer the basic question. I mean, the Bronze Star and the Silver Star from the United States government didn't take that much. And the United Daughters of the Confederacy wanted to run me through a five-page drill just to pin another medal on me; so I wasn't excited about it. But my secretary says, "Well, let's just send this over to the Archives and see if they can do anything with it." Well, I dismissed it; and I said, "OK." Well, six months later the story comes back that my great-great-grandfather, for whom Y. L. Cleland was named—a portion of his name was for him--was a guy named Young Plunkett. And there are plenty of Plunketts around Lithonia; there's actually a Plunkett Road there. Young Plunkett served as a private in the 64th Georgia Volunteers under General Robert E. Lee outside Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy, and was wounded July 30, 1864, and became an amputee, single-arm amputee, and was evacuated to the hospital in Richmond and then discharged and came back to the Lithonia-Conyers area.

And the story picks up after that, that in 1889, two years after Georgia's post-Civil War constitution went into effect, legitimizing Confederate soldiers as people—up till 1887, they weren't people, because they couldn't vote, they literally couldn't own land, and Confederate soldiers were not only part of a vanishing army and a vanishing world gone with the wind, but they were totally disenfranchised and made non-humans. Well, the constitution of—the Georgia Constitution of 1887 authorized veterans' benefits for the first time. And in 1889 we have a little piece of paper in the State Archives, signed by a Notary Public—actually a lawyer, there in Conyers, the county seat—that shows that my great-great-grandfather, Young Plunkett, applied to the State of Georgia for an artificial arm as his veteran benefit.

So I have gone all my life not even knowing that story. And were it not for a little inquiry from the United Daughters of the Confederacy, I probably wouldn't still

know it. But I have come to appreciate our heritage and our history and the keeping of that heritage and history in a personal way just in the last twelve months. And I have asked, as Secretary of State, for—to bring the 64th Volunteer Regiment flag, which is in the Confederate Museum in Richmond, I've asked for that to be put on loan to the State of Georgia, and they have said yes. So I am going to go personally pick up the flag that is torn and shattered that was the flag that was there the day that my great-great-grandfather got wounded in the Battle of the Crater, July 30, 1864; and I'm going to return it to Georgia. [applause]

So that's my little insight into vanishing history and how it not only helps tell a tale of our lives but how we can be enriched by it and also how it can vanish quickly if you don't keep track of it. And the fact that DeKalb County has seen fit, under the great leadership here of putting together something like *Vanishing DeKalb* is something that not only we can appreciate, but subsequent generations can, too. Interestingly the concept of history is that also, as Alvin Toffler tells us, change is happening to us so fast that we really don't realize it. And when you start thinking back just ten, twenty, thirty years ago, it looks like that we've gone through a great deal of change. Certainly DeKalb County's gone through a great deal of change. And it's amazing how quickly things can vanish. So we are in the history business in the Secretary of State's office, with our archives; and as a historian myself and an amateur history buff and one that is getting more and more interested in it every day, I appreciate what you all have done here in our county to make sure not only that we remember but that other generations remember as well.

Thank you for the marvelous book. [Picks up a copy of *Vanishing DeKalb*] And I shall cherish it, and just remember that our archives is the only element of state government that the Georgia General Assembly has seen fit to order to be kept open on Saturdays; and, therefore, it is the most important. [laughter] Thank you very much. [applause] [MACKAY REAPPEARS AS CLELAND IS GUIDED OFF. MACKAY SPEAKS BRIEFLY, INAUDIBLY, TO CLELAND; CLELAND CONTINUES.] I've got to go to Riverdale now for another function—not as exciting as [inaudible].

END OF CLELAND RECORDING

MIKE MEARS

JAMES MACKAY RESUMES SPEAKING AS CLELAND LEAVES: We are honored to have the mayor of the City of Decatur for our next videotape star. [Aside, to MIKE MEARS] Have a seat. [MEARS SITS AND TAKES PLACE ON CAMERA.] And Mike, I'm sure, since you're a candidate for office again, you'd like a flowery introduction. We are bipartisan, nonpolitical, and we also don't want to use up your time; and our plan is to dub in an appropriate introduction later. [TO AUDIENCE] But Mayor Mike Mears of Decatur has made a second trip to West Africa with some of the leaders of the city and the county, and I called him on short notice because of the Secretary of State's [Max Cleland, previously presented at same program] conflict, and asked him [Mears] if he would come over and talk to that camera--[POINTS; MEARS FACES CAMERA; TO MEARS] and this is your studio audience—about anything touching on the first or the second trip. Maybe want to comment on the first trip and why you went over there. But you have a good thirty-five minutes' time, and I yield the floor to you.

MIKE MEARS: I'm a bit intimidated following someone of the prestige and character of Secretary of State [Max] Cleland. But what I would like to do, and I appreciate the opportunity of talking to you about something that the City of Decatur is doing, that I think is very relevant to the purposes of the [DeKalb] Historical Society and anyone involved in the preservation and study of history. What we're trying to do in Decatur is to use the moment—and the moment being a very serious famine in Africa—to use that moment to call our attention to a part of our history in Georgia and in DeKalb County and Decatur that has not been accentuated, in my opinion, quite enough. I'm talking about the history of Decatur as it relates to our black community.

We've all seen in recent months the famine pictures coming out of Ethiopia and Sudan and Chad, and we've seen the attention that the media has played [sic] to that need and rightly so. But I used to teach Black History in the City Schools of Decatur. I came here in 1969 from Mississippi, right out of the service, right out of college, to teach Black History. If that seems an anomaly to you, it probably is—a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Caucasian from Mississippi teaching Black History. It takes a little bit of thinking, but I am very concerned about my history as a white American and the preservation of that history and the building of my life and my children's lives on who I am as an individual. I am assured in my own mind that my history is incomplete as

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long as any member of our society's history is incomplete. We're only as great as the smallest member among us; and the sum total that we are as a community, black and

white, can only depend upon who we are as a group. And my interest in this particular area of black history—of history, black history in particular, is that we don't forget the negative and the positive parts of black history in this country.

Well, we seized upon this moment in our present time in Decatur to try to draw attention to that portion of Africa that we feel has been overlooked to a certain extent by all us. It had been overlooked particularly by the black community as well as the white community. And what occurred to us in Decatur was we wanted to do something as a community that had an altruistic nature about it. We wanted to contribute to solving some of the problems in Africa. Almost everyone in this room, I'm sure, has participated in some way, either through church or civic groups, in helping solve the problems of the people in Africa. Our concern in Decatur was, having had a Black History Program in our community since 1969, was that a lot of attention was going to the wrong part of Africa. A lot of attention was going to East Africa, to Ethiopia and Chad. They need the attention, they need the help, but we found that very little attention was being paid to West Africa. The famine is just as great there. The drought conditions are just as great there. And the suffering is just as great—perhaps magnified--there. You see, there is really no historical linkage between the 33 million American blacks and East Africa. There is a great cultural distinction between the blacks in the United States and the blacks in Ethiopia and the Sudan as there are between whites and blacks. The historical linkage between our community and Africa is in West Africa, in the countries today, Liberia, the Ivory Coast, and a little country called Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso, if you go back and look on your atlases at home, you'll find it listed as Upper Volta, which is the original name of this portion of the old French West African empire. When the French left West Africa, they developed several of the francophone colonies; and Upper Volta was one of those. Just recently the people changed their name from Upper Volta to a more African name. They used two words from the More tribal language, Burkina Faso, which means "land of the upright people." And that attracted me immediately in my studies of West Africa. Because I'm impressed with anyone, first of all, that's got the courage to name themselves "land of the upright people," because when you call yourself that, there's a certain incumbency

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to live that way. And I thought that was the first signal to me. Also, in tracing back where a lot of the American blacks—I'd say probably 95 to 98 percent of the

American blacks would trace their history, if it were available to them--would trace it back to West Africa to the areas of the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and even up into Burkina Faso. And Burkina Faso is a small country about the size of Colorado with about a seven million population. And it is the home of Ashanti and the Mossi tribes, which formed a portion of the great migration of blacks in this country as a result of the slave trade. What would happen, black slave traders, to a certain extent, on the coastal areas, would go inland to find and raid more passive or peaceful tribal groups, take captives, and bring them back down and put these people into the stream of trade. Unfortunately, the Mossi and the Ashanti and, to a certain extent, the Fulani tribes of this part of West Africa found themselves being objects of raids by other tribal groups to put them in the slave trade.

Well, to make a long story a little bit shorter, that attracted us from [sic] the second part of this moment that we were trying to capture—the moment being to try to participate in some relief efforts and participate in an area of Africa that gave us some historical connection to some basic reason beyond just wanting to help out fellow human beings. These were people who are part of our history in Decatur. Decatur's a community of approximately 60 percent white and 40 percent black. We felt that this was one way that we could use history to try to forge some bridges between the black and white community in Decatur that would be easier to do. It's something that we in the white community and the black community could get together on and work on without a great deal of haggling over what the implications were. First of all, the basis of trying to help fellow human beings—that's sort of like Mom and apple pie. You're not going to find many people opposed to those concepts. We're not going to find many people in our society who are opposed to lending a helping hand. So using that to help capture this moment that we're looking for in Decatur, we decided that Burkina Faso offered us an excellent opportunity to use a historical connection and a moment in present time to do something to help our fellow human beings and to start bringing in some history back into our community.

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One of the problems anyone teaching Black History has in our society is having a laboratory. As historians we don't like to talk about laboratories, you know, we like to talk about books and writings and, as Secretary of State Cleland was talking about earlier, the archives as being a source. Well, when you're teaching Black History, you don't have a great list of archives to go to. You don't have a lot of the traditional means of studying history; you have to find other laboratories. What we decided that

perhaps Burkina Faso would offer to us in Decatur a laboratory for our Black History program, because a small country easily accessible to us through the famine relief efforts give us an introduction into it, we could use the country as a laboratory perhaps to forge some linkage between the communities in West Africa and the City of Decatur. And that's exactly what's happened.

We went to the people in Burkina Faso in March of last year. I say "we"; a friend of mine who's an editor of a magazine here in Decatur devoted to hunger issues and I went to West Africa like innocents abroad, I suppose. I went knocking on doors. We really had no real connection with the country other than the fact that the University of Georgia had some students from Burkina Faso in the past and had gone back. We went knocking on doors of the government officers. It's a military government right now; and we went knocking on doors and said, "Hi, we're from Decatur, Georgia, and we'd like to learn more about your country, and we'd like to help out wherever we can." Well, that type of naïveté caught everyone off guard. Our embassy had almost closed down relations with this country because of the military government, and we really were concerned with that and after we told our story about wanting to be friends. And I would tell the story about having a Black History program in Decatur, and we'd like to learn more about Burkina Faso because as we understand it, a lot of the black Americans came from this area of Africa; and we'd like to get to know you better. Well, after two days of going and knocking on doors and giving that rather naïve presentation--it's not very sophisticated in the world of politics, I can assure you, or foreign policy—we found ourselves meeting the second-ranking officer in the Burkina Faso government, who slapped his thigh and said, "You know, it just might work." And we forged the trip that was later to come—come by in October—by meeting people. And what we wanted to do was to hook up our community with one or two similar communities in Burkina Faso. And they said, "We've got just the city for you. It's the worst possible place in our country, a city called Ouahigouya. Say that with your

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tongue in cheek, as they did. They said, "It's up in the desert, it's cut off even from us, they've had a drought there for the last ten years, their average rainfall is seven to ten inches of rain a year, they have an infant mortality rate of 45 percent before age five." They said, "Now, if you can do anything at all, you can do it in Ouahigouya." So here we go, we go traipsing off to Ouahigouya. Incidentally, we rented a car. This was all a private enterprise—no government money used for this. We rented a car and put it on my American Express-- even in Africa they have American Express—and we rented a car

and took off and went into Ouahigouya with a letter from the foreign minister of the country to the gentleman who's second in command. And we told our story there. And we said that we were from Decatur, Georgia, and we want to be your friends, and we'd like to get to know you better and bring back some information from you for our schoolchildren. And lo and behold, the mayor slapped his thigh and said, "It just might work."

And we spent two weeks. And it is a forsaken place. I won't say "God-forsaken"; I don't think God forsakes any place. But man had certainly forsaken this place. We laid the foundation and met the people we need to meet, and I came back and then started selling this program to the people in Decatur. And I was a bit fearful, because I knew my naïveté worked to my advantage in Burkina Faso; I wasn't sure it would work that well among my more sophisticated brothers and sisters here in Decatur. But I found people here in Decatur slapping themselves on their thigh and saying, "You know, it just might work." And what we forged was a return trip—the first of many, I hope—based upon our ability to help, in a small way, our little sister city up in the desert, Ouahigouya, and their ability to provide us with a laboratory for the study of their history, which is in fact a part of our history. I came back and began telling my story. And with the help of people like Mr. Mackay and other people, who gave me a forum and let me talk to people and explain what we were trying to do, we began to put together a group of people that wanted to go back with us—pay their own expense and go back and participate in this little experiment that we had in capturing the moment with history.

What we did, we contacted all the banks in Decatur. And being mayor, you know, you have certain prerogatives; you can call bankers and ask for things for your community. And most of the time bankers are very quick to do so. And I simply asked them to make contributions, not for the individuals going back—not for travel

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expenses, because my commitment to my community was that anyone that wanted to participate had to pay their own way. What I wanted the banks and the other commercial establishments in our community to do was to give us some money to buy medicine to go back and give us some money to buy school supplies, and the response was overwhelming from the business community. We even had one proposal—we were not able to get it going, but we will eventually—the merchants in Decatur, the downtown merchants, offered to have a Burkina Faso Day or Burkina Faso Week. And they would contribute a percentage of all of their net profit for that week to our

activities in Burkina Faso, which I thought was quite an affirmation from the business community. We also asked the churches to participate with us, and they did. And so we had a sizable sum of money to buy medicine and mattresses and school supplies to go back with.

Then I started putting together a group of people that I thought could best represent us in Burkina Faso. And I really had to cull out—I had more people who wanted to go than we could really accommodate. I knew that we could only take so many people on this trip to be effective, and I limited it to ten people in my mind; and I just had to cull out people. And I had three times as many people wanting to go as I could accommodate in our first trip back. What we ended up with was a resident of the city of Decatur, Deborah Willis, who's a pharmacist, whose husband is Ken Willis, who works for Congressman [Patrick] Swindall, whose office is here in Decatur. And let me hasten to say: This is a strictly apolitical group, and our purposes are apolitical, in the strictest sense of the word. But Deborah was a pharmacist; she is not employed at the present time because she's busy raising a small child. Deborah agreed to go back with us and act as our medical consultant for the medicine that we would have to take back and know what we were putting on the shelves. So we had a pharmacist who lives in Decatur—lives over on Ponce de Leon with her husband.

Then I wanted to bring in a community health worker and found one right on the Decatur City Commission. Elizabeth Wilson, who was the first black commissioner elected to the Decatur City Commission, runs the Oakhurst Community Health Center. So Elizabeth agreed to go and act as a consultant and backup person for us on health issues.

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Lo and behold, the president of Agnes Scott College [Ruth Schmidt] saw this as something she wanted Agnes Scott to participate in because Agnes Scott is developing a world-awareness program [Global Awareness Program] within their curriculum. They've even hired a professor to head up this world-awareness program. And she [Schmidt] saw this as a way for Agnes Scott to participate in a community activity. Agnes Scott could also use it as a laboratory. You see how the pieces start coming together. And Dr. Ruth Schmidt agreed to come herself, which I was extremely pleased that someone of her stature and a person with the many things that she has going to take two weeks out of her schedule to come with us. Not only that, she said she was going to bring her world-awareness director, Dr. John [inaudible—sounds like

“Studsta”?], who had spent some time in Zaire, Africa, to come with us and act as an interpreter. He's fluent in French, and my French is not that great; and so we had an interpreter going with us.

We have a resident of the city of Decatur who is part of the international nurses association [not actual name of organization]. I wanted to get some more medical people involved. So we had a person from the international nurses association come with us, Ms. Ellen Wright.

Mr. Whit Smith, who is the clerk of the Superior Court of DeKalb County and a resident of the city of Decatur, took a little convincing—not Whit, but Whit's wife—that Whit needed to go. I needed a representative from the larger county government, someone who could speak, you know, in some authentic and affirmative way about the county's potential role in this endeavor. So Whit Smith took time off from his duties to go with us.

I also called on an old law professor of mine from the University of Georgia, Dr. Gabriel Wilner, who taught me international law, who's from Belgium [actually born in Lebanon] and worked—does some work for the United Nations. I knew we'd need some high-level help in doing some of the things, and he could provide us with that.

So we put together a group of people who all had a specific role, who all had specific contributions to make, and who could each get something back from going to Burkina Faso. So we took off, put together our airplane trip, flew from here to New York, from New York to Dakar in Senegal, from Senegal to the Ivory Coast, from the Ivory Coast we flew into the capital of Ouagadougou. And from that point on it was

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almost like a movie, as someone described it. We were treated with so much love and affection by these people—not because of what we brought but for the fact that we were there. You see, there's an old Mossi saying in the Mossi tribe, and it was related to me the first time that we were there, and it was related many times when we went back. They say men speak in two ways: Some men speak with their mouths, and some men speak with their feet. And they say in the Mossi land, "We only listen to those who speak with their feet." And they said, "You have certainly spoken with your feet because you have come back." And we were met with so much love and feelings of real respect for us as a people in what we were doing that it was almost impossible not to be overwhelmed at every juncture of our trip.

When we returned to the city of Boussé, the smaller of the two sister cities that we formally adopted, we were met on the road outside of Boussé by no less than two thousand people--on donkeys, horseback, bicycles, pushcarts—to give us a one-mile entrance into the city. We got to Boussé—and these are little mud huts, you know, out in the middle of nowhere. They had put a big banner across the road in English and in French. It was obviously something that they had made themselves, but it was a fairly large banner, a canvas banner strung from two old poles that you could tell had been hastily chopped down and standing about fifteen feet high. And across this banner, in the middle of this desert in West Africa were the words, "Welcome to our friends from Decatur, Georgia. Long live friendship." I'm not sure there was a dry eye in our van as we pulled into that little town.

We were met by the additional parties, which totaled probably about ten thousand people. They gave us presents, they gave me a—made me a chief of the village. It was something that was just almost inexpressible then and now as to—and the only thing that they were celebrating was us coming, not anything that we had brought, because they didn't know what we were bringing. We had not dwelt—had not told anyone what we were bringing. The simple fact that some people from Decatur, Georgia, had come to them. I was made a chief, and I was given a bow and arrow and all the trappings of my chiefdom. You should have heard me explain that to the customs agent when we were coming back, explaining how I got this bow and arrow. I was given a white chicken, which is the most honored of gifts that

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you give visitors coming in; and the white chicken was presented to me by the oldest man in the village, and I was just overwhelmed by this.

And on behalf of the group from Decatur I was to be the spokesman, so I had practiced for at least three days a ten-minute speech in French. My basic French from college, you know, was kind of very poor; and I was a Russian language teacher, not a French speaker. But I had practiced--as a matter of fact, on the plane over I had—I would corner everyone in the group to listen to my speech. And I noticed, after about the first fourteen hours of the flight, people started avoiding me on the plane [audience laughter]. But I had the speech, and I did the speech in French; and obviously it was not perfect French, but everyone understood what I said for the ten—approximately ten minutes of the speech. And when I finished, I was given a rousing ovation—the most people I had ever seen in one place where I was talking—and was given a rousing ovation.

And I didn't know it at the time, but they were recording the speech. And I found out, after we had gotten back to the capital, after we'd been in the desert for several days that they had played my speech on the national radio four days in a row [audience laughter]. It had not gone unnoticed by the American embassy because at the conclusion of the speech, I—as you will—as politicians will [sic] wont to do, you get carried away in the moment. And they have a revolutionary slogan in their country, and it's called "Fatherland or Death." And—which is-- to me, it's not much different from "Give me liberty or give me death." It's part of their revolution culture, part of their history that they're developing now. So at the conclusion of my speech—I had not written it down, but I remembered enough French that I had said, in French, "And the people in the city of Decatur stand with you and say with you, '*Patrie ou la Morte.*'" Fatherland or death. And if you could imagine ten thousand people standing and saying, "*Nous vaincrons.*" [spelling?] "We shall overcome" [audience laughter]. And that was part of the speech that they played on the radio; I mean they played the whole ten-minute speech. So the American embassy was quite interested in what this politician from Georgia was doing over there in this country. But it was that little moment of the speech that apparently enabled our State Department and our embassy to get a voice within the government of Burkina Faso that they had not been able to get; there had been some real tension. And aside from what we got out of it, I am now in possession of

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a cable from the embassy to our State Department in Washington, which I shall treasure, stating that the group from Decatur had opened some doors that had been closed for two years; and the embassy was beseeching the State Department to give us all help and assistance on any return trip that the citizens of Decatur might make. So I think that, almost accidentally, we helped a situation between our governments on a federal level. We were not trying to get involved in foreign policy, I can assure you of that. But I think when people realize that there are people dealing with—on a people-to-people level, all kind of good things can happen.

A lot of other things took place. We traveled, we met people. On the last day there I was given an audience by President [Thomas] Sankara, the president of the country. And he sat down, and this is a gentleman who's thirty-eight years old, former paratrooper, came to power in a violent revolution—and I make no judgments on the merits of what took place in the revolution. I do know he has done a lot of things that people like, and he's building his nation. But we sat in the

presence of Thomas Sankara, thirty-eight year-old paratrooper wearing a pearl-handled .45, sitting there in the presidential palace, and he started talking to me about how much Decatur, Georgia, now means to him and what it has meant to his country to know that there are [sic] a group of people in the United States that care about his people—he didn't say "country"; and I think it was a very specific omission—that care about his people. And he said, "I view this relationship"—and this was his word. I hadn't thought of this; I wish I'd been this clever. He said, "I view this as a marriage between your citizens and my citizens." He said, "And it's obviously not a marriage of convenience, because you've made two trips to my country. I view it as a marriage of love." And a gentleman sitting there with a .45 on his hip, with camouflage fatigues, telling me—talking to me about a marriage between our communities—and then he said, "And you know, I think our marriage will produce many children. And our children will solve whatever our problems are." He said, "You go back and tell the people of Decatur that we want to expand upon this marriage." And told him--and I invited him, and we will have some people from Burkina Faso coming to Decatur next year—I told him, after we'd gotten over this rather emotional moment, and it was emotional.

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I tried to—as is the custom in Burkina Faso—to try to leave on a happy, laughing note. I said, “Well, you know, President, in my country we have a saying that in-laws can drop in on each other any time they want to, and they usually do.” And when the translation of that went over to him and explained what in-laws was, he laughed and said, “OK, your in-laws will come to see you, and we expect you to come to see us without any further invitation.” He said, “You have in-laws in West Africa.” And he’s right. We’ve always had in-laws in West Africa. We’ve had brothers and sisters in West Africa. And those of us who are white are as much a part of the history of West Africa as those of us who are black. And those of us who are black and those of us who are white have as much to gain from a relationship with West Africa as anyone else. And that’s what we’re doing.

And I’ll close this with a visual picture of a photograph that we use when we go around to all the elementary schools. Now, I’ve got a set of slides that I show at the drop of a hat. Matter of fact, my friends are beginning to avoid me with the slides, too, I notice [audience laughter]. But one of the slides that we start off with shows a younger Kinabe [spelling?] boy holding his brother in an embrace—a

little—his brother had become frightened by the cameras and had started crying. And his brother just sort of instinctively reached out and pulled [inaudible] to him. And I’ve shown that set of slides forty-nine times since March; showed it the forty-ninth time this afternoon over at Fifth Avenue School. And I use that photograph to explain to first- and second- and third- and fourth-graders what we’re about; and I’ve found it works well with adults, too. I ask them, “How many have brothers and sisters?” And invariably hands shoot up. I said, “If your brother or your sister were crying or were scared or were hurt, would you help them out?”

“Oh, yeah, yeah.”

“And if they were crying, would you put your arms around them?”

“Oh, yeah, yeah.”

I said, “OK, that’s what sister city is all about.”

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We in Decatur are trying to put our arms around some brothers and sisters who are hurting and are crying, and they're afraid. And it has to be instinctive, just like that brother doing with his brother. It has to be an instinctive reaction. And that's what we're doing by capturing the moment and combining it with our history. We must instinctively reach out to our brothers and sisters everywhere—in this case, in West Africa—and put our arms around those brothers and sisters that are hurting. And I think that Decatur will get much more out of this than we ever put into it. And we intend to follow up on it. And hopefully that it will expand beyond Decatur. And it already has, because Governor Joe Frank Harris declared October 12 as Decatur-Burkina Faso Day in the state of Georgia, and we carried that proclamation to the president of Burkina Faso. And I think if nothing else comes out of our trip—and there will be others—it will be a feeling here in Decatur that we made a statement to no one else but ourselves that we are a caring community. Thank you very much. [audience applause]

JAMES MACKAY, resuming position on camera next to MIKE MEARS: Well, those of you who were here last week—I mean, last month—and heard Clark Harrison would agree that we've had two spectacular presentations—well, three, now, because I found what Max [Cleland] had to say of enormous interest, and we thank the UDC [United Daughters of the Confederacy] for sending him that questionnaire

to fill out [general laughter]. And you know, that's the reward of local history. The other day—well, I spoke down to [sic] the Life Enrichment crowd, and we were all in accord that the study of local history is richly rewarding in terms of your own appreciation of who you are. And a fellow came up to me and said, "Mackay, I was stationed and Camp Stoneman in California in World War II, and I didn't have the slightest idea who it was named after until I walked out and saw the historical—

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