

Buckhead Heritage Society

Oral History Project

Interview with Albert Matthews Nixon

November 16, 2014

Interviewer: Chad Wright

CHAD WRIGHT: This is an interview with Albert Matthews Nixon of Flowery Branch, Georgia. The interview is being conducted on November 16, 2014, at 3083 Andrews Drive at the Vaughn Nixon house. The interviewer is Chad Wright, representing the Buckhead Heritage Society of Atlanta, Georgia. And special thanks goes to John Snodgrass and his wife, current owners of the house, who have set up this meeting today so that we can get a good history from Al. His family intimately, obviously developed and has spent many years in it as well, so we look forward to hearing what you have to tell us today.

ALBERT NIXON: Well, thank you very much. On behalf of my father and grandfather who built the house, I'm sure that they would be very pleased to see the way that this has continued on and being maintained and people being proud of what they built.

WRIGHT: And who was, so start with your grandfather and your father. What were their names and how did they come about to build the house?

NIXON: Okay. Let me just sort of start in the middle and then we're gonna back up to that. My grandfather and his wife built this house, had three children, two daughters and a son, who was my father, Bill Nixon, William Nixon. And we will talk about . . . now the two daughters, one was Emmy, and she married Parker, Bill Parker. And then the other daughter was Vaughn. And she married a Courts. And the reason that's important is, Bill Parker took it upon himself one time to do a family tree, that we have here, where, but it's mostly towards the end, includes the Parkers also with the Nixons. But maybe I could just read something to you that explains a lot. My grandfather that built this house, Vaughn Nixon, born 1879 in Athens, Tennessee, and then died in 1942 here in Atlanta, is buried in Westview Cemetery. Educated, was in Athens public schools, and then Webb Bell Buckle School in Tennessee. Emory at Oxford and Harvard. Active in athletics, in school affairs, member of the Chi Phi fraternity. On completion of education became associated with his father in the Atlanta Woolen Mill. Became president in 1918 and succeeded in that capacity until death. An active Atlanta citizen, Rotary, Capitol City Club, Piedmont Driving Club, etc. I'm having a very difficult time reading this. It's because of the old print here. Steward and active with the Methodist church. Was endowed with warm, friendly society and enjoyed the friendship of his wife and circle of friends. His hobbies were his wife, his home, and his business. In 1925 built a beautiful home on Andrews Drive and lived there until his death.

WRIGHT: Is that his obituary?

NIXON: No, this was written by hand by my uncle, Bill Parker. And he was just doing the lineage of the family. And so it, my father and then, that's my grandfather that built the house here, and then my great-great-grandfather, General Vaughn, John C. Vaughn, who was in the

Confederate army and wrote a book called “The Last Confederate General.” And I meant to bring a copy of that book today.

WRIGHT: Well, tell us your first memory of the house?

NIXON: Well, what I told John, my father married—my mother’s side of the family was from Thomaston, Georgia. And when we lived here in Atlanta, first, the first house that we lived in was on Chatham Road. I think it’s 28 Chatham Road. The house is still there. Just before you get to the end. On the corner is the cemetery. And so that house is next door to the cemetery. And he, when the Atlanta Woolen Mill changed from steam power to electricity, he had the old smokestack that was built out of brick, torn down and cleaned. Each brick. And that white house that’s up on Chatham Road is built out of those brick from the smokestack from the Atlanta Woolen Mill. And so that’s where we lived until, where we were all born. Now I have two older brothers. And that’s where we lived then.

WRIGHT: Do you happen to remember, because we’ve done a lot of restoration in that cemetery. Do you happen to remember if, where the church actually sat in relationship to the cemetery? That church is long gone.

NIXON: No. Didn’t even know that there was church there. So, it’s, when I was very small, well, let’s see, I was three years old, we moved to Tuxedo Road. And then, we lived there until I was, I remember, first grade, second, third grade. My father and my mother decided to move to Thomaston. That’s where her family was from. So they sold the Atlanta Woolen Mill and moved to Thomaston and bought a cattle ranch and Royal Crown Cola bottling company. But when we sold the house on Tuxedo Road, that’s when we moved in here and lived here for a couple of years prior to moving to Thomaston. So that’s why we were here.

SNODGRASS: Your entire family was here.

NIXON: Yes.

WRIGHT: You entire family, with your grandfather?

NIXON: Well, no. My grandfather had already passed away. He died the same year that I was born. I was born in January and he died in December. So I never really knew him. But we lived here for a couple of years. And when we take a tour of the house, we go upstairs, I can show you exactly the bedroom where I stayed with my mother and father. And then my middle brother had a room across from the master suite where my grandmother lived, where she stayed. And my oldest brother, I don’t remember, he never really had a room here. He was always off at boarding school. So, he never really had a bedroom for himself here. But that sort of explains why we were living here with my grandmother and grandfather.

WRIGHT: And we’re going to take a tour of the house and let you reminisce, but in terms of the grounds and just your experience here, what was your sort of day-to-day activity when you lived in the house, back in the time your grandmother had it?

NIXON: Well, it’s, when you grow up in an environment like this, you think everybody lives this way. With chauffeurs and butlers and maids, cooks, you just think that this is the way that, I was not exposed to anything other than that. When I lived here we had a playground group, just

dropping some of the names, Bob Glenn, Jimmy Alston, Bonneau Ansley, Peter Brewer [?], all these boys that lived here in the neighborhood. We would get together over at Bob Glenn's house. And I can't think of the name of the director, the person that they hired, but he was a famous Georgia Tech track star and a football player. You'd know, recognize the name. But he was sort of our coach. And after school we would just play in the backyard at the Glenns' house, and sort of thought that that's the way everybody lived. And it was okay, but you couldn't go next door and play with the next-door neighbor. I remember on this side, going through the woods here, the next house over, which was a long way away, they had a couple of dogs in a kennel in the back, and I would go over and play with the dogs through the fence. And that was about it. And then there was Harrison Jones that lived up on West Paces Ferry. And we would play cowboys and Indians, and make bows and arrows and stuff like that, go through the woods. But it's a lot of woods, and we spent a lot of time in the woods. When we moved from here to Thomaston, that's when I became a country boy. And we had next-door neighbors and people to play with and friends. And so I was in, as country say, hog heaven when we moved to the country. And was very happy with that. But, still, I learned, went through high school, learned how to drive, and I would come up and spend weekends with my grandmother and go to functions, debutante balls and things like that.

WRIGHT: Did she entertain a lot in the house?

NIXON: Ah, she, not that I remember her entertaining. She liked my mother very much, and they would slip off to New York City and stay in the Waldorf-Astoria and go to Broadway, the play and the shows, and have a good time. So, it was kind of funny that, my grandmother, her nickname was Dearie. We all called her Dearie. And so it was funny that Dearie enjoyed being with my mother more so than she really did with my, with her own two daughters. They were a little, not as social and having a good time as my mother did. Good sense of humor. Lot of fun. Knew where to go, what to do, and so forth. So they had a good time.

WRIGHT: And how long did your grandmom reside in the house? From the day they built it until, obviously, the fifties when you were here?

NIXON: Well, the date when they sold it—

SNODGRASS: September of '64. The C&S Bank, the trust department of C&S Bank, C&S Bank offered the house for sale.

NIXON: So when the house, I mean, when my grandmother died, the estate said, does anybody want it to live here, and so, there was the Parkers, the Courts, and the Nixons. And we were living in Thomaston, you know, and the Parkers and the Courts, they had their own homes and children. And so, they said, no. So that's where the estate sold the property.

WRIGHT: And do you, know, John, just going to jump off, how many owners were there before you—

SNODGRASS: I'm the third owner. The Watson purchased it in '64 and held it until they sold it to us in '96.

WRIGHT: Okay, thanks. And has a lot from the outside of the house changed?

NIXON: Not at all. When I first drove—this is the first time that I've been in this house since my grandmother died. And, well, I take that back. We did have, was it Watson?

SNODGRASS: Wayne Watson.

NIXON: Wayne Watson, yes. My middle brother was looking for a home and he was considering this house since we had lived here, it was in the family. So we took a tour of the house and I don't think that he was interested in selling it, but I think they were just, the real estate agent said, can we come by and see it and look at it and so forth. So I remember that, where you parked the cars, I mean, everything to me looks better, much better than it was when my grandmother passed way. Because the, just on the outside, the landscaping, you go up the steps to the formal garden in the back. That had fountains and was, you could tell was, a landscape architect had designed something that was very nice, with the boxwood and the fountains and so forth.

SNODGRASS: With parterre sections.

NIXON: Yes. But that had all deteriorated and was not operational. There were some rose bushes and things, but it was just, it was not maintained. And I'm in the fountain business, so that's how, I know how much labor it takes to maintain fountains and to maintain something like that. So my grandmother did not, did not find it necessary to maintain. But it, so, very pleasantly surprised to see the condition of things better than it was when I was here.

SNODGRASS: Do you recall how many staff were here and if they lived in the apartments in the back, or if they lived offsite?

NIXON: I think they all lived offsite. Because I remember going down to the garage and where the apartment were, and there was no one really living there.

WRIGHT: If you had to guess how many staff there were to sort of maintain the upkeep?

NIXON: Well, here's a picture of five of 'em. And it's, there's two butlers. One of them was the chauffeur. And the cook is in the middle. That's Jessie. And on the far right side, you can't really see her, that's Mary. She was the maid. And John was chauffeur and butler, and then also the inside butler. But then there were two that are not shown there that were outside gardeners. So that was five, six, seven. Seven.

SNODGRASS: We have an interview with Mary.

WRIGHT: We do?

NIXON: Mary was really special. She had a high-pitched voice and was real sweet and real nice. She was my number one playmate, was Mary. And you'd go up to the back stairway, which I assume is still there. There was small room where the maids did their ironing and things like that. She would let me iron socks on the ironing board.

WRIGHT: Sounds like Tom Sawyer to me.

NIXON: But that was it. To play with Mary and do the things. And so, when my grandmother died, Mary got a job with the Courts, as their maid.

WRIGHT: Is that any relation to Richard Courts?

NIXON: Yes. That's who I'm talking about, Richard Courts. So I was tickled to death when one Christmas or whenever it was I went to their house to see the Mary was there and still working for the family.

WRIGHT: So how long do you think she worked with the family?

NIXON: Gosh, it would, maybe til she was seventy-five or something. In the interview, I don't know if that has a date on it, but she was ninety. But I have no idea.

WRIGHT: So was the house very formal back in the fifties?

NIXON: I thought so.

WRIGHT: Were there set breakfasts, lunches, dinners?

NIXON: Oh, yeah.

WRIGHT: The whole family attended? Describe that a little.

NIXON: Yes. Well, of course, when my family was here, also, with Dearie, and my middle brother, we would eat in the breakfast room right off the pantry and the kitchen. And then every Sunday we would have the Sunday dinner in the formal dining room. And that's where we would get pretty—I've got pictures of that also. I don't know if you wanted to see some of the pictures now, or—

SNODGRASS: You mentioned the gas pump before we got started. Was that a functioning gas pump?

NIXON: I don't think so, no. Gas stations were easier to go to. I remember my grandmother had a Cadillac limousine. And I thought that was . . . a big, black, long limousine. The neatest thing about it was it had the fold-down seats in the middle. And I just thought that was great. If I was the only one in there I wanted to fit in the fold-down seat. I just thought that was great. But, yeah, we would, I can't remember when Lenox Square was first built, but I mean, I'd drive up here and we'd go together, go out and have lunch together, go to the shopping center, someplace with my grandmother. So I would sort of escort her along.

WRIGHT: And where was the gas pump?

SNODGRASS: It was right back here. So it was here when we purchased the house and we had it restored. We had to remove the tank for environmental reasons but kept the pump.

WRIGHT: That's neat.

NIXON: That is my grandmother Nixon in the center there. And then on the right side, is Bill Parker, her right. Bill Parker. I'm not sure who that person is there.

WRIGHT: I'll actually hold these up to the camera.

SNODGRASS: That was the staff here.

NIXON: That's another, Dearie's on the right.

SNODGRASS: Let's get this one one in front of the camera. Do you remember who's in it or would you like to . . .

WRIGHT: We'll take a shot. Probably, better hold it up there . . . This is hard to do.

NIXON: Okay. Dearie or my grandmother's on the right. The lady next to her is my mother, and then my father is next to my mother. And I really can't see who that gentleman is. Okay, that is Richard Courts.

WRIGHT: Is that really?

NIXON: Yeah, that's Richard Courts there. And I can't really tell who that is there.

WRIGHT: It looks like Richard. How about this one here?

NIXON: Okay. On the right, well, our left, that is Elaine, Elaine Courts. The Courts family had Richard and Elaine, two children.

WRIGHT: That's Richard's sister.

NIXON: That's right. Okay, the gentleman, oh, okay. I can hardly tell, it's so dark. Elaine's on the far left, and then that's Parker, Emmy Parker, and then it looks like it's Bud Parker and Richard Courts again and my mother is very dark over in the far right side.

WRIGHT: And who's the child in her lap?

NIXON: I don't know who that is. That's—the Courts and the Parkers had children, a lot of children. And so that's some of them. And that's me with Emmy Parker, my aunt. And this is Bud Parker and Richard Courts on the right.

WRIGHT: Explain to me again the relationship between the Parkers and the Courtses and the Nixons.

NIXON: Okay. These are just children. Children of the Parkers and the Courtses. Again, Vaughn Nixon, who built the house, with my grandmother, they had three children. It was two daughters and a son. The son was my father, William Nixon. And the two daughters, one was Emmy and the other was Vaughn. And Emmy married a Parker. And Vaughn married a Courts.

WRIGHT: And so your grandfather you said, I think I mentioned this before to you, was he in the textile business mostly? And then you mentioned the bottling company as well. Did I understand that correctly?

NIXON: My grandfather, okay, so my great-grandfather, well, let's see. Great-grandfather, William Markley Nixon, was in the textile business in Athens, Tennessee. And then my grandfather, who built this house, went into business with my great-grandfather in the textile business. And then they moved from Tennessee to Atlanta and I remember Dad talking about when he was young, living on 14th Street, downtown Atlanta, you know. On 14th Street. And then, you know, his father built this house and they moved here.

WRIGHT: Did they have mills in Atlanta also?

NIXON: Yes. Well, the Atlanta Woolen Mill. They built the Atlanta Woolen Mill.

SNODGRASS: Is your father still alive or has he passed away?

NIXON: No, he passed away.

SNODGRASS: When did he pass away?

NIXON: Oh, gosh, it's been fifteen years now. He was very much involved in the textile business.

SNODGRASS: Are there any other photographs in your photo album you'd like to explain and put before the camera?

NIXON: No, that's basically it.

WRIGHT: Well, if you're comfortable with it, we can take a walk and roam the house a little bit, and you can recount some stories. Are you comfortable with that being on video?

SNODGRASS: Okay.

WRIGHT: Let's get the lineage here . . . [inaudible discussion]

[. . .]

WRIGHT: Well, let's see. We're going to get the lineage here. That's a heck of a document. Primarily here.

SNODGRASS: If you look, his father, his father's father's father.

WRIGHT: What I can do also, is I can take a picture with the camera as well. I'll do that after. Here's the pantry here now.

NIXON: But you can see, going way back to the Rawsons. Edward Rawson, William Rawson, Hutchins. People on my grandmother's side.

WRIGHT: So what memories do you have here in the kitchen?

NIXON: Well, Jessie was our cook. And she was a great cook. Fried chicken. Cookies. Strawberry shortcake. Too many vegetables. But, you know, she was great.

WRIGHT: And what was a typical breakfast? What was a typical meal-day like?

NIXON: I can't remember what we had for breakfast. Eggs, bacon, biscuits, a wholesome breakfast. But I remember for lunch, in the big dining room, where we would all sit at the long table that, to me as a child, seemed like it was a hundred yards long, with tons of people there. And we had the butler and Mary serving, so there would be three people serving at one time. And fried chicken. That was my favorite. They always let me have the drumstick. And we, when I was little, I had to sit next to my mother because she made me behave. And then as I got older, we had the children's table over to the side, where Richard Courts—and I don't think Elaine,

they ever made her sit with the boys. It was kind of them not to do that. But it was Bill Parker, Bud Parker, Richard Courts and myself, and my two brothers. We would sit at the children's table.

WRIGHT: John mentioned that he has updated the house with plumbing, electrical, as well as added in AC, central AC as well. How was it without air conditioning in the summer in the house?

NIXON: You know, I don't remember that. We moved to Thomaston and we didn't have air conditioning there. When you grow up with it, I guess with these high ceilings it was comfortable and nice. I don't even remember fans. It wasn't a problem. And we had the steam heat from coal. Coal chute. We'd bring the coal in and it would slide down into the basement. Someone would shovel it into the furnace and fire it up and we'd have, we'd stay nice and warm.

WRIGHT: And the kids, again, now these days the kitchen is more or less the gathering place for family. Back then, kids, adults didn't really go in the kitchen much, did they?

NIXON: I wasn't allowed in the kitchen. I had to leave Jessie alone in the kitchen. And I was considered a pest and a bother, and you just didn't do that. I'd slip back here once in a while when I could and slip a cookie or something. She was very generous and very nice.

WRIGHT: Anything else you want to recount in the kitchen? Any memories jogged?

NIXON: No.

SNODGRASS: [inaudible]

NIXON: Yeah, Jessie had a recipe that, I know that some of my cousins have the recipe. A sugar cookie with pecans. She would make a roll, and then slice it very thin, and cook those. They'd be very crisp. Yeah, that was very famous. No matter what dessert we had, we had to have those cookies.

WRIGHT: When was the last time you had one?

NIXON: Well, I think it was, at the Courts house. They had the recipe and we were all over for dinner one night and they had that for dessert. The cookies, yeah. My mother would make them. She had the recipe. She would do a great job.

WRIGHT: Where to next?

SNODGRASS: The dining room I guess.

[. . .]

NIXON: They were the original drapes and they were in very bad condition. They were, the lining and all, was falling apart in the back. But he did not want to change it. Those look nice.

WRIGHT: So what memories are jogged in the dining room?

NIXON: It was about four times larger than this. [laughter]

WRIGHT: The dining room table was?

NIXON: No, the room itself. Because I was small. My grandmother sat here and my father would sit at the other end of the table. And my mother would sit here. And then if we had, the children's table was over here, next to the fireplace. And, of course, they just came out from the kitchen, from the pantry to serve, two or three people serving at one time. Most importantly, is the room is basically the same. The wall paper is exactly the same. I mean, it looks great.

WRIGHT: So you think the wallpaper's original then?

NIXON: Absolutely. I know that. And I wish I knew, you know, I was not interested in things like that at that particular time growing up here, but I'm sure my grandmother and my grandfather they picked this out with, I don't know if Neel Reid had any input, the architect, or an interior decorator. . . and they signed off on it. I don't know.

WRIGHT: Was there, it sounded like this was a central gathering point. Was this the place to come for all the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals for all the family? For your uncles and aunts.

NIXON: Well, it was, yes. But just for Sunday, Sunday dinner we would come. You know, it was a gathering place on the weekend for the family. And so we would come most every Sunday.

WRIGHT: So all sides gathered here Sunday.

NIXON: All sides, right. The Parkers, the Courts, and my grandmother. You know, we would all gather here.

WRIGHT: Do the chandeliers look familiar? Do they seem original from your memory?

NIXON: I can't remember. It could be.

WRIGHT: And in terms of Christmastime as well, would, was the Christmas Day meal here? Were the presents opened here? Would they decorate any special ways?

NIXON: I don't—yes, we did have Christmas here. The Christmas tree in the living room. Presents in there. And, yes. I don't really remember celebrating, well, I can tell you this story. My brother, his name is Bill. When we were growing up here I was Albert and he's Bill. Mom and Dad and the family and my grandmother went off to church at St. Philip's on Easter Sunday. And left my brother and myself here. And we had already found all of our eggs. Hardboiled, colored eggs. And my room was upstairs, and his was too. Well, we got into an egg fight, with hardboiled eggs. The house was pretty much a mess, a real mess when they came home. And so we were in trouble about that.

WRIGHT: Where to next?

[. . .]

NIXON: This—John, what would you call this? A sitting room? Parlor?

SNODGRASS: Parlor, yeah.

NIXON: This was one of our favorite rooms to say that we were going to have Sunday dinner here, and so we would gather here or either in the sunroom. So these were the two. And we never really gathered in the living room, except for Christmas. A big day, something like that, where we had a lot of people.

WRIGHT: And how many rooms are in the house, total?

SNODGRASS: The original plan showed that as a ballroom. Do you recall it ever being set up as a ballroom?

NIXON: No.

SNODGRASS: That's the living room.

NIXON: Just exactly the way the pictures were that you saw. But this was very comfortable. When I lived here, young, little, my grandmother had a box full of blocks. And the grown-ups would sit in the easy chairs and talk and carry on a conversation to solve the problems of the world, and I'd sit here in the middle of the floor with my blocks and built forts.

[sound of moving to next room]

NIXON: John, do you have any idea where these paintings came from?

SNODGRASS: I was told that Neel Reid picked them out in Europe and brought them over and that they were original to the original construction of the house. That's the story I was told. I don't know. They've been in every photograph including the ones you provided of the house that I've got.

NIXON: The reason my brother, middle brother, moved to Mexico. And he had a large painting that was similar, not quite as big as that, it looked like an old Dutch, an ocean scene. And he had that in his house, in his home in Mexico. But we understood that it came from here also. Don't know.

SNODGRASS: These two large photographs or paintings are permanently attached to the walls.

NIXON: Probably were the original.

WRIGHT: And the foyer?

NIXON: We never used the front door. Never been in or out the front door. Always—

WRIGHT: the back.

NIXON: The main entrance always was the back. [sounds of moving on]

[. . .]

NIXON: I remember . . . the pictures you photographed, that's where my grandmother was sitting, in the photograph. We did not use the fireplaces in the house when we were living here. I guess it was just too much to build a fire and clean it out and so forth. It just wasn't need. But they had something in this fireplace that had a red screen that moved with lights behind it. And it

looked like embers and a real fire. It looked like a charcoal fire. And it had a motor. And this screen would rotate.

WRIGHT: This was in the fifties.

NIXON: Yeah. I thought that was really neat. Today it's gas logs. But that's what they had back then.

WRIGHT: And so the living room slash ballroom, as the plan shows, your family rarely used this room, then.

NIXON: That's right. We were more informal with the sitting room, the sunroom . . . sunroom, and the other small room. We'd gather there, retire there after dinner was over with.

WRIGHT: And the panels are lighter than you remember.

NIXON: Oh, yes. This looks, this is great. The molding and all.

[. . .]

SNODGRASS: So, there are two stairwells in the house. The servants stairwell that comes off the kitchen, the back stairwell—we can logically start from that and go around—

WRIGHT: Sure. Whatever you're comfortable with.

SNODGRASS: So, our laundry room now was a sleeping porch, and we converted that.

WRIGHT: A sleeping porch. Do you recall . . . If you'll just stand right there, Al.

NIXON: This was where Mary would spend the night and stay here if needed. Somebody, you know, to take care of my grandmother or whoever if needed.

WRIGHT: And this is where you were ironing socks, huh?

NIXON: Yeah, this was where Mary would let me iron some socks.

WRIGHT: You still iron your socks?

NIXON: Not today. I'm lucky to get 'em washed.

[. . .]

NIXON: Okay. This was my mother and father's and my room. My bed was over here next to the wall, and my mom and dad were here, and the bathroom was back there. So this was a very big, nice comfortable bedroom.

WRIGHT: Did she have to bring extra beds in when you guys moved into the house with her, or was it already set up, do you remember?

NIXON: I don't know. I mean, because we had three beds, yes, three beds in here. Obviously, you can see right now it's pretty comfortable, but with one large bed, I'm not sure where they came from, whether they came from our house. Don't know.

[sounds of moving]

NIXON: This was a sitting room. This room I remember being much lighter in color, I think maybe just white walls. This was the upstairs living room, sitting room, very comfortable. And I remember when we first got our first television, that's where it sat, right over there. And we only had one channel, and that was Channel 2 in Atlanta. I remember watching, oh, I can't think of the name of the program now, but the little puppet shows, things like that after school. And I remember my grandmother asking me, "should we wait until they have color TVs or just go ahead and get a black and white now." And we said, "let's go ahead and get a black and white now." Because we thought that six months from now they might have color television. We never would have, we'd still have . . . that would have been a long wait. And Woody, I forget the name of the TV show that all of us kids would go to. And sometimes we'd be on television, you know, the little puppet show after school.

[sounds of moving]

[. . .]

NIXON: Yeah. John, there was another bedroom that was here.

WRIGHT: It might be the master bath now? Possible?

SNODGRASS: Yes, that is correct.

NIXON: My middle brother, this was his room, and this was my grandmother's, the master that was here. This was when we had the egg fight at Easter, this was where his room was, and that's where we had the fight. [sounds of moving] This is my grandmother's bedroom, which I didn't really spend much time in here at all. I wasn't allowed in. But she was here, very comfortable. And a large bed, basically the same as it is now. Very nice. Beautiful.

WRIGHT: And was she . . . did she pass in the house, or did she move to a home before it went back to the estate?

NIXON: I was off at school, so I don't remember, you know, how long she was sick and what the illness was. I wasn't here at the time.

SNODGRASS: The plans [show] that what's now my closet was their bathroom, and what's now my bathroom was their nursery. So they had a little nursery off the master, and then their bathroom in this room.

WRIGHT: Interesting.

NIXON: I'm sorry I'm not much more helpful.

SNODGRASS: So, when we bought the house, the upstairs was a massive attic. Massive attic. There was no finished space up there whatsoever. And what we did, we put a playroom and a bedroom up there.

NIXON: Oh, really?

SNODGRASS: It was all just kind of storage with wooden plank floors.

NIXON: It was huge. It covered the whole house.

SNODGRASS: And then there was evidence above the kitchen of a fire at some point in the kitchen. Do you recall anything about a fire in the kitchen?

NIXON: No.

SNODGRASS: It was contained and it wasn't, but it just kind of charred some of the wood. Didn't have to replace everything. But there was definitely a fire in the kitchen.

NIXON: Interesting.

WRIGHT: Okay. Anything else?

[. . .]

SNODGRASS: Just for the history's sake, if you want to talk about what was back there that's no longer back there, was a four-car garage and a three-bedroom apartment, all under one roof and one building. And I'm pretty sure that's, in the early days when the house was first built, that is where the people, the servants stayed. And when we bought the house it was completely abandoned. It was not of the quality level of this house. It was kind of falling in. And with original tubs. They had the toilets with the pull chains and tanks above, and all that kind of stuff. So if Al wanted to talk about that—

NIXON: But that's no longer there.

SNODGRASS: That's no longer there. But if you just wanted to talk about it so that it's part—

[. . .]

NIXON: In the backyard, you have the driveway that comes up and the parking there. And then it continues on around about a hundred yards as I remember, into where it deadends into a four-car garage with living quarters upstairs on the end. And that's where some of the help lived originally. But then when we lived here it was mostly the help lived at home and commuted back and forth. I don't know if you can get, if you can see from here, if you can see the small fountain, you might could even zoom in, you can see how nicely landscaped and formal that is. It was not quite that well maintained when my grandmother passed away.

WRIGHT: And the garage-slash-apartments are no longer there.

NIXON: They are no longer there.

[. . .]

WRIGHT: In terms of when you left, was it tough to leave the neighborhood and transition down to Thomaston? Did you keep in touch with any of the friends once you moved out?

NIXON: Well, I joined the Nine o' Clocks and later on the Piedmont Driving Club, and so a lot of my playground buddies, we continued to see each other. Not as often as I would like, but I really enjoyed being, growing up in the country on a farm.

WRIGHT: Well, if you had to pick your favorite memory of the house from a nostalgic standpoint, what would it be?

NIXON: Well, I think it would be spending time with my grandmother, just one on one with her.

WRIGHT: What kind of woman was she?

NIXON: She, she was, she made a real effort to get close. And I appreciated that. And so when I could drive a car, I was sixteen years old, seventeen, and I would come up and spend the night. And she would even, instead of taking the Cadillac and the limo with the driver, she'd get in the car with me. And she was taking her life in her hands, but we would go somewhere for lunch and have a good time. I remember one time with my grandmother, I think it could have been Elaine's, my first cousin, Courts, marriage, and we went, I don't know where my parents were. Out of town or somewhere. But I went to the wedding with my grandmother. And we sat there in the church through this long wedding. And I'm not really attuned to this. Then we drove to the Piedmont Driving Club for a huge reception there. And she knew everybody there. And she spoke to every single person there as we came in. And I had to stay with her holding on to her skirt the whole time. And we spoke to every single person going in, and going out we spoke to everybody again. And when my mother and father said, "Albert, how did you enjoy the wedding?" I said, "it was the worst thing I've ever done in my life. I'm never going to get married myself. That was awful." But she was a good sport, and we enjoyed, I loved her company.

WRIGHT: Well, we appreciate your time this afternoon and your memories and recountances of the property and your family and the time here, and we'll sign off on that.

NIXON: Well, again, I'm thrilled to see the condition and how well it's maintained and how proud John is for having the house and maintaining it this way. It's his home, and I'm just tickled to death and I know my father, grandfather, and other relatives that have been here would be very appreciative of that.

WRIGHT: It's hard to believe it's only been three owners since it was built in the twenties.

NIXON: Yes. Absolutely.

WRIGHT: I think every one of them's probably enjoyed the history.

NIXON: And the other thing is, people buy a house with five acres of land in Buckhead and subdivide it. And it is so unusual to see the five original acres with the original house still here. You know, instead of ten little bitty houses.

WRIGHT: That's one thing that makes it so special.

NIXON: Yes.