

finished expressing his indignation. After paying his bail, he returned to the courthouse to find Ms. Pearl calculating in her head how many marbles might be in the jar in front of her – another ridiculous test. The stranger was informed that after Ms. Pearl was done with the jar, she would be required to complete a form and get the signature of three white men who would vouch for her. Outraged once more, the young man snatched the paper from the clerk and signed his own name across all three lines before throwing it back. Apparently, there were no more ludicrous tasks barring Ms. Pearl's registration after that.

Ms. Pearl Jackson Green has incredible resolve and a calm that comes from acceptance and faith. She has always believed in the good of humanity and has ascribed to the teachings of great leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who she learned from while attending Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery. She may tell of the time when a cross was burned on her front lawn or a gun was fired at her house, but she does not hold the actions of the few against the many. She may have experienced terrible ordeals, but she also remembers the kind and considerate people who helped her. She probably has more stories like the one on the bus or at the courthouse. While sitting in the Lawrence County Archives in what used to be the Moulton Bank, she recalled the time when her husband and she were turned down for a loan based on their race. While the bank manager would not allow his employee to give the Jacksons a loan, the man quietly tried to help them around the problem, perhaps at risk to his own job.

Even so, not everywhere was the same. Other parts of Alabama were much more hostile in their discrimination against and terror towards people of color. Nonetheless, Ms. Pearl is not the only one to mention that a cross was burned on their front lawn in Lawrence County – presumably by the KKK as an intimidation tactic. Ms. Patshenia Cole, of Lauderdale County, was interviewed in late 2017 for the Florence African American Heritage Project. Ms. Cole's mother, Georgia L. Echols, was Ms. Pearl's second cousin. They were born only two years apart. In fact, in 1940, Ms. Pearl and Ms. Georgia were living next door to each other. They grew up very similarly and according to Ms. Patshenia, a cross was burned in front of her mother's family's house in Moulton

during one of her visits home. This may be the same occurrence Ms. Pearl remembers, but it may not.

In Lauderdale County, Ms. Patshenia and another interviewee, Ms. Anita Cobb, recall a much more quiet time. Ms. Patshenia says "nothing really happened in Florence... In North Alabama, we never did have much fighting or rioting or anything like that. It was a very calm place... most of the whites, they respected you and treated you OK and you did the same for them." Ms. Georgia Cole also became a teacher. She was one of the first African American teachers to go to one of the all-white schools. In about 1969, Ms. Georgia taught at a school in Lexington, in northeast Lauderdale County. Ms. Patshenia and her sister accompanied their mother and were the only students of color for about nine years.

Having a teacher for a mother must instill great pride and a love of history and family because Ms. Hattie Pride Smith, Antia Cobb's mother, was also a teacher. Ms. Anita grew up in the Bend of the River, or the part of Lauderdale County west of Florence snug in a large bend of the Tennessee River. Ms. Hattie began teaching in the late 1930s, in a time of segregated schools and teachers boarding with local families. When Ms. Anita was six, the family moved to Florence, specifically to the Canaan neighborhood. It was a wonderful childhood, Ms. Anita attests. Although she knows that segregation was present, it did not seem to be at the forefront of most people's minds. Yes, the bus station had a "colored" waiting room and "whites only" water fountains. The courthouse was segregated and the schools and the hospital, as well, but Ms. Anita says that Florence did not discriminate like other places. She recalled going to Talladega, Alabama and finding the local people of color accustomed to a very different way of life. There, she says, "if a black woman wanted to buy a hat, she could not try it on, she had to buy it because they thought the grease in her hair might stain the hat or something." These kinds of prejudices were not prevalent in Florence. If "you wanted to buy shoes, clothes, hats, anything you wanted. If you wanted to buy it, you had the opportunity to try it first," in Florence.

Ms. Anita particularly remembers Rogers Department Store that was located downtown on Court Street as a fine establishment where she and

her family never had such problems. The local bakery and Trowbridge's ice cream bar were frequented by the families of Canaan, especially on Sundays between breaks at church. The relationship between the races was a kind of business casual. Many of the women of color living in Canaan worked as domestic servants in the homes of wealthier white families. Some of the domestic workers were "picked up in the morning [by white employers], carried to work, and brought back in the afternoon." That was just the way Florence was, too busy to bother as Ms. Cobb tells it. This attitude was noticeable during World War II. Ms. Anita says that when the air raid sirens would call out a warning, everyone – black and white – would go to the Negley Hotel and take shelter in the basement. It mattered little who was next to you during the sirens. There was no "colored" shelter and no "whites only" shelter.

In Courtland “there would be a water fountain that said, "Color," and there was a water fountain that said, "White." We would sneak up and drink out of the white fountain to see was it different? But it wasn't different...”

- Ms. Carolyn Wilson

