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## Interview with Jeanette Mayo, wife of Walter L. Mayo

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Researcher's name: Jessica Phillips

Event: Interview with Jeanette Mayo, wife of Walter L. Mayo

Place: Home of Jeanette Mayo.

P: This is Jessica Phillips and its November second, 2001 and we are interviewing Jeanette Mayo inn her home in Columbus and we are going to talk about her husband, Walter L. Mayo and his artwork. We need some basic information kind of about dates of birth, the family tree, if you could give me those?

M: Of just him?

P: If that's all you know. Basically, whatever you know, we don't know much, because there hasn't been much done on him. Basically, anything that you could tell us about the dates of birth about either of them. We have a year, we have 1908.

M: Yes. September 06, 1908. Can you wait for a moment? (She goes into the living room and returns with a couple pieces of paper with information about birthdates and birthplaces on them. Also brings the brochure from the Family and Son showing at the Columbus Museum and asks me if I had seen it.)

M: Okay. Walter was born September the sixth, 1908. His father, Walter Octavia Mayo, was born....Hmm I don't know where it is. (Referring to the information on the paper)

P: That's okay....we didn't think you would be able to tell us much about him.

M: See I met his father when he was here, when he was very sick. My husband went and got him, he wasn't my husband then...went and got him to come live with him and since my husband was a member of the same church, when the father came I met him through the church.

P: Well Walter O. was born in Marysville, Ohio, right? And then they moved to Mt. Vernon....What was his mother's name, Walter L.? Do you know her occupation?

M: I know...mmmm....

P: Well if you can't remember now, just keep it in the back of your mind and write it down for us if you do remember.

M: Oh, well I do know. I don't offhand, I don't remember, because he never talked much about his mother.

P: Did she live to be older?

M: No. Just the men in the family were older. His father married again when his mother died, and then that lady...I shouldn't say this because I don't know, but she was institutionalized. And then she died. (Leaves again and returns with another sheet of paper) Okay, now what do you want to know? His mother's name was Fannie Waldon Mayo, and she was born July the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1870 in Bucyius Ohio. She died January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1925. His father was born November the 17<sup>th</sup>, 1877 in Marysville Ohio, and he lived to April the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1970. He has a sister, Walter L. Her name was Helen Elizabeth Mayo Cobb. She was born February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1905 in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and she is still living. She is 96 years old.

P: Where does she live?

M: She lives two streets from me.

P: And what kind of condition is she in?

M: She talks okay sometimes, but she goes way out.

P: That's his full sister, not a half sister?

M: That's right.

P: Did he have any half sisters or stepsisters?

M: No.

P: Do you know if she ever produced art? Did she ever paint or carve?

M: No. She didn't like to do anything. She had her children doing all the housework-She really didn't like to do anything.

P: How was his relationship with her? Did they get along well?

M: Oh, yes. Till-Well she still thinks...she asks every so often, "When's Bud going to come along?"-They called Walter Bud. She was at the funeral, but she doesn't remember it. She said, "It seems like he hasn't been here for a long time." She goes and then she's in another world.

P: Do you know anything about what part of the South they came from, or where his family was before they moved to Ohio?

M: No, I really don't. None of that's here...it's just the kids who were born to family and all that (referring to papers again)

P: And how many children did he have?

M: Two.

P: And those are both by his first wife?

M: Yes. Christine Conway Mayo. Walter L Mayo Jr. Born May 4, 1935, and he died June 4, 1975. He was flying an airplane and it started acting up, and it was going down, and he thought he could bring it down because he was in the Navy...but we didn't find him for sixth months, and that's when Walter and I started talking. So that was in 1975.

P: And then he had one more child?

M: Yes and her name was Eleanor Christine Mayo.

P: Is that the girl in the painting done by Walter L. Mayo in one of the back bedrooms?

M: No that's my daughter. That's my granddaughter Bethany's mother, Sherri Lynn. Eleanor was born March the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

P: And she's still living?

M: Yes, she lives in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. She's retired.

P: Did any of them ever do art?

M: Nope.

P: They never painted, drew, sketched, anything?

M: Not that I know of. Now, I don't know in their earlier life, you know, I knew them through the church, you know, cause the daughter used to play piano in our church, but no, none of them did art.

P: Did Walter L. ever serve in the armed forces?

M: No.

P: Now we know you probably aren't going to know much about his early life, but we are just asking just in case you do.

M: Well he shared a lot, but I don't know what he shared.

P: Did he ever speak about his childhood, like his education?

M: Oh yes, he spoke about his childhood, talking about his daddy whittling, carving, and that's how he learned to draw. Whatever his father carved, he would try to draw it. And they both loved horses, that's why when you went to the basement there were so many horses.

P: So he would watch his dad carve, and he would try and draw what his dad would do?

M: Yes and when he was in his twenties he sent away-he loved art so much-he sent away for a correspondence course.

P: Where their any people in Mt. Vernon that he would keep in touch with?

M: Well there was a man by the name of James Payne, but he's here now. He just lives over here on Brooklyn Street.

P: Oh yea, and what kind of health is he in?

M: Great health.

P: We are kind of curious, can you describe what his relationship with his father was like?

M: Oh, like a mother taking care of a son. He really watched out for his father, always. They said he was always saying, "Oh Daddy you shouldn't do this" you know, just like a mother would

say. He loved his father, he never had much to say about his mother. You know, I said, "Did you love your father?" "Yes, she was fine." And that would be the end of it. I knew not to go there, because I wouldn't want anybody to pry into the way I felt if I had answered the question to the best of my ability.

P: Did he ever tell you any stories about with him and his dad when he was younger.

M: Yes, he told me something about a plow...he did something wrong, and his father showed him...his father was patient and kind like Walter. Walter was the most gentle loving person...and I mean you can interview every member of our church that knows him, and they all same that his goal was to make it into heaven, and he treated everybody like he wanted to be treated. Just an amazing soul. When we got married, he took my daughter as his own. And he would always say, "This is my daughter," and she was 14 when we were married. Let's go someplace else...(beginning to get a little teary eyed)....

P: You said something about the horse and plow...did they live on a farm?

M: The father lived on a farm in Marysville, and I think they did some kind of...you know where they had the hand plows...it was something about that he was talking about, and his father would say, "You will only learn by doing." And Walter would talk to my granddaughter, she would flip the lights on and off, and he would tell her to either turn them on or leave them off. Because in the olden days, we didn't have lights, and she didn't know anything about that. So he sat down, and he drew a lantern, so she would understand that electricity hasn't always been here. He was just so patient and kind.

P: Did they also live on a farm in Mt Vernon?

M: Now, I have been to Mt. Vernon, and all I saw was a house. Now I imagine that they had farming things there, and then the place built up, you know, like so many places...But I really don't know.....

P: Lets talk about church. We keep seeing this theme coming up in his work, and we are really interested in what church was to him.

M: His life.

P: Was he interested in it at a young age?

M: Well, you see that I didn't meet him...I joined the church in 1961, that's when I met him. And he was the Sunday School Superintendent, was a trustee on the board, and was always patient and kind, and he lived to die. He really did. It's amazing, you don't find many people like that but everything he did...he loved sharing with people, and he loved talking about his family especially his father...he talked a lot about his father.

P: Did he ever talk about his dad's helping to found a church in Mt. Vernon?

M: His father was a Deacon...No, he just talked about the church?

P: Did he ever talk about the church in Mt. Vernon?

M: oh yes. He remembered going to the church, but he didn't go very long because he moved to Columbus.

P: How old was he when he moved to Columbus?

M: You know I don't know. I imagine late twenties, because he and Christine got married then.

P: Did he ever talk about the activities he did in the church in Mt. Vernon?

M: No. Just going to church. It was a must in his household, whether you liked it or not you went. When you went to church you go to church, and you sit, and because people come in in the row in back of you, you keep your head straight. You don't turn around to see whose back there. You never turn and I am on her all the time about that. (Referring to her granddaughter in the next room.)

P: Didn't you once show us sketches he had done in church?

M: Oh yes, but he never turned! He would sketch whoever was speaking, and then when he had school of Christian training with Reverend Meeks, he sketched him and he didn't like the little once that he sketched so he made a big one, and the week-two weeks after his funeral when I went back to the class, cause class had already started, and Reverend Meeks had the first two lessons for me, I mean he had saved them for me 'cause he knew I was coming, Reverend Meeks took time to take me into the corner and talk to me, about that, and you know...It didn't keep me from weeping...I'm getting better at it now, it's been a year and a half, and I could never understand why people would be crying in church sometimes and their family member had gone like two or three years before, but now I understand. But anyway, I presented the picture and Reverend Meeks just stood there and wept. He hugged me, and he was just a-crying, because Walter was interesting-I mean, he was a bible scholar. Really. He and Pastor Wood used to talk, our pastor.

P: Is that Jesse Wood?

M: No...

P: Jesse Wood's father?

M: Jesse Woods Father. You know Jesse?

P: No, we know of him. We are planning on trying to get in touch with him.

M: Well, you ought to get in touch with his father, his father lives two streets up.

P: Everyone lives near you!

M: Well you know why he bought this house? Because of Pastor Wood, so he could walk up there. And he did a lot of walking!

P: And Pastor Wood was the one he was close to, not his son?

M: Well he did signs for Jesse, and he did everything for the Simultaneous Revival, which Jesse is the President of. But Pastor Wood he was really close to. And Pastor said at his funeral that he's never known a man like Walter. And he said, "I'll never take this back," he said "I have

some good men in my church but none of you are like Walter was.” And then he cried. He’s tried to talk to me, but then the tears get flowing.

(at this point her granddaughter walks in and I am introduced to her.)

P: So you told me that he was Superintendent of Sunday school, and he was on the Trustee Board. Were there any other titles that he held?

M: Well, we together did the newsletter. He started it, he always did it, and then when Pastor Wood nominated me as public relations director for the church, then together we did the newsletter.

P: Did he ever draw or sketch little things for that?

M: Oh, yes. Happy Thanksgiving would be all pretty, and Christmas, and Easter, and then we have a thing called Shepherds Tent, which Pastor A. Wolfson wrote, and now my son-in-law has taken over my husbands job. He does the mailing, I do everything-well we’ve made it a little simpler because of computers and all that, so the church secretary runs everything off, and I hand out the slips every month, I rotate everything, we have thousands of auxiliaries, and every month I have between eight and nine people, but the three people that are always on it is the Youth, the Music, and the Pastor. And because he have so many youth. (Her granddaughter walks in and Jeanette speaks to her for a moment)

P: So, that’s what he did, those four things.

M: And he drew pictures. People come to him with Christmas cards and they want a big picture...My daughter has lots of them. Christmas cards that he drew.

P: Do you have back copies of the Newsletters that we could maybe look at?

M: You mean, way way back?

P: Just stuff that he had drawn.

M: Well, I’ll try and find some. There’s one closet I haven’t gone into yet.

P: So what were his duties at the church? What kind of stuff would he do there?

M: Well sometimes he’d, if the regular teacher didn’t come, he’d teach whatever class was vacant. When he gave up, he had back surgery, so he gave up being Sunday School Superintendent after many years, I can’t remember how many, Pastor Wood could probably tell you, but then he would just keep the Sunday School moving, asking questions, and he always try to ask something to stump them. Some of our young men, you know, decided to get him better by bible studying. And sometimes we’d get some good discussions going.

P: Did he ever teach art in Sunday school? Did he ever do an activity with art?

M: No. Nothing other than the granddaughter, showing her how to make the lantern. And he could print just beautiful.

P: Now, let's talk about the Homecoming banner process. How did he start doing those?

M: Well, they were having Homecoming. They've always had Homecoming. He joined the church in 1946, Bethany Baptist Church, and when he found out they were having Homecoming he asked whoever was in charge... Now I've heard this story many times but I don't remember the names of the people, but he asked whoever was in charge, Would you like a picture for homecoming, so that's when he started... Homecoming always has pictures, so that's when he would start early and take out some theme biblical and put it on and give them a scripture where they could find what he painted and that type of thing. And then it got that everybody in church wanted a poster for this and a poster for that, but he just wrote, you know, scribbled the letters on whatever they wanted and whoever was coming, but he did banners for just Homecoming and for... what is it we have, what did you sing in the choir for? (asking her granddaughter) Simultaneous Revival, she sang in the choir.

P: What is that, you mentioned that before?

M: Okay, that's where all the black churches here in Columbus get together and for one week they have a visiting pastor in their church. They have church every night. And then in the daytime there's one big church that will sponsor whoever comes. Well they don't sponsor them 'cause they charge for their breakfast. They just give them breakfast, and then they have the, they give a little donation back to the church, which kinda helps. We use ours as missionary money, 'cause we sponsor 200 churches in Kenya.

P: Really?

M: Yes we do. 200. We get a letter every month. Every month the Revered Ortorio writes a letter and Pastor reads it from the pulpit. And he read a letter last Sunday, the Sunday before last, and he was very saddened about what had happened in the United States and he was telling how he felt about it, which was nice. But that's what we do. And, so when they come together on the Sunday before the Revival starts, all the churches come together and it's usually at the Veterans memorial, and then he would make the banner and put on it whatever they wanted.

P: Would he take stuff from Scripture for that too?

M: No.

P: So Scripture was just for the Homecoming Banners. Would he paint for the Revival? Would there be pictures on there?

M: No. No pictures. Just lettering, but it was from that cupboard to here, about this high, from the floor up this high. (Showing a distance of about ten feet in length and four feet in height.) And sometimes he would come up here and kneel and do it, sometimes he would do it in the basement, in his doghouse, and I felt sorry for him because once he started it he had to finish it. I would have to just push, and say, Now you just have to take some time off, you can do it tomorrow, you can start tomorrow. And he'd go, let me just finish this letter...

P: What was art to him? He painted a lot of religious stuff....

M: It was his love. Next to me.

P: Well he painted you, his two favorite things together.

M: Yick.

P: No, we like those. Was painting for him, painting religious stuff, kind of a form of worship? A way of creating and....was it almost like praying for him?

M: It was...that's what he tried to depict in the Homecoming signs...You know, that back there in those days they worshiped like we worship, you know...

P: There's that saying that Singing is praying twice. Do you think for him painting was kind of praying twice? His way of giving worship?

M: Might have been. I'll ask him when he calls me tonight.

P: Didn't you say that when he would do the homecoming banners he would often pray about it?

M: Oh, yes! I said, Well are you ready to do the banner? No, I gotta pray on it first. And then when he felt like he had everything together, 'cause I showed you how he'd sketch it out first on the pad, and uh then sometimes he'd think, It's just not gonna work like that, maybe I should do this. And I've seen him start one picture, and go to another, and then go right back to that first picture. So yea, I am sure he did a lot of praying, 'cause he would pray-I mean he would pray! One night, the telephone rang, and I said Well Bud's gone to bed...."Well I just need to ask him one question..." This was his family. And I said, Okay I'll see. And I'd look back in his room and he was down on his knees praying, and I said well I can't disturb him right now, and they said well why can't you and I said, Because he's praying, and I will NOT disturb him. And, "Well I'll wait." Fifteen minutes later, I said, Oh I heard him get in the bed, so I went and asked him the question. She said, FIFTEEN MINUTES? So I guess he had a lot to talk about. And he did a lot of praying, he really did.

P: And you told us, I believe, that he would start thinking and working on the homecoming banners early?

M: For Homecoming, it was probably March he would start doodling-that's what he called it. What are you doing, just doodling for Homecoming. And I'd say Oh Okay. And I would call him up from the Doghouse and say, Why don't you come up and watch TV with me, you know, so he'd come up, bring his sketchpad, and doodle again. So it really didn't work out but I tried to keep him away from spending all his time doing it. 'Cause he enjoyed newscasts, he enjoyed listening to them and doing the pictures, the girl...o what's her name, Dina Tyler, she's-her father had a drug store here in the city, and she came for the big reception and everything, which I kinda...well Doc told me she was coming but I thought oh no, I don't believe that. You know how you kinda think. But sure enough, I was up there speaking, and I looked, and I just...Oh I can't do that now I have to finish what I'm saying... She did come, from New York, she works for CBS. And I presented her with a picture he drew of her, very very pretty picture, when she was younger. She said, Oh that hairstyle, she said, Oh I'm glad I got a new one. He did a lot of doodling. Whatever. In church. And he would work on different things you know. I'd see him sometimes working on the cross, No he didn't like that one, and then he'd cross it off and do a new one.

P: Was it more of a hobby then? Was it a way to pass the time?

M: It was a love. He really loved painting. He really did. He liked that kind of painting, he didn't like painting walls.

P: You've told us that he liked to sketch while watching TV. And you showed us his sketchbooks where we saw pictures of Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey. Do you think that he felt like he... They are prominent black entertainers, did he look up to them?

M: When Oprah got her show, he was proud, and I was proud too. I think most African-Americans were proud that she got her show. They hated to see Donahue leave, but she had a better format than Donahue. And she's really doing a lot now with the disaster stuff. He was proud. He's proud of anybody that got ahead. We had a little boy in our church, Daryl Banks, and he did cartoons, which my husband did too for the newspaper here, for the Ohio Sentinel.

P: How long did he do those?

M: I don't know, you'll have to ask Amos Lynch, 'cause he was married to someone else and I really don't know.

P: Who is Amos Lynch?

M: That's the boss. It was the Ohio Sentinel when he did it, but now it's the Columbus post. Its on the old Taylor Avenue, 1611. What was I talking about?

P: We were talking about black entertainers and their inspiration...

M: Oh I was talking about Darryl Banks. This young boy, and he came to our house one day, and he wanted to talk to Mr. Mayo about cartoons, but Daddy wasn't interested in that anymore, but he was glad to see that Daryl did so well, and he finally did a cartoon, and he made the newspapers and all, which was great, and he was so pleased. And he said, just to think he came to talk to me and see if he should really go for it.

P: And he told him to go for it?

M: He told him to go for it. He said, young people just need to get out there and do it. If you fail you fail.

P: Probably expressing a bit of his disappointment that he wasn't able to make it as an artist...

M: Yea he really wanted to go to art school here in the city, and that's why when he died we had the Columbus Foundation has a thing for him. It's the Walter L. Mayo scholarship fund, and you can donate money there and they will send a person to Columbus Studio of Art and Design, which is just wonderful. And the Schaireleits from Mt. Vernon, they came down here and I think I've gotten \$800 dollars that they gave... I mean a lot of people from our church have donated, so I am sure they have enough for a scholarship, but I wish it was more, I wish that I could go out there and pick money off the tree, because he was always pushing for the young kids. He didn't want them to go wash dishes, he didn't want them to push a broom, but he was willing to push a broom. He just wanted them to get a good life, a good income.

P: So was his social life mainly organized around the church? When you all had barbecues in the backyard or whatever, was it always with people from the church?

M: Usually. The church and family.

P: What kind of activities did the church do that you guys were a part of?

M: The church has a lot of activities. For the children they have...instead of Halloween, they have a Hallelujah party, and you come dressed as a biblical person, and in order to get in you have to say a bible verse.

P: Did he ever help organize anything, any kind of get-togethers?

M: No, because I was always into that part...he helped us. Well he did help us. We had a Hawaiian Party, and that's how we really got to know each other. They wanted something different on the tables that we had, and they said, Oh be nice if somebody knew how to make candles. We never knew. But we sure did learn. And we made candles. It was fun, it was, and it smelled so good, you know the scents that you put in, I liked Sandalwood, and it just smells so good. So you know, we'd do that and then we'd usually go someplace to eat and then he'd drop me off at my house. And so we got to know each other and then one day he called up and said I want to take your daughter and you out for Valentines Day. That started it.

P: Was he involved in any other black fraternal organizations?

M: No. He didn't believe in it. He didn't think that was right. He thinks that if you wanna belong to an organization it should be the church.

P: Well, let me ask you a little bit about the Correspondence School. Do you know, now this was during the Depression...do you know if that school was supported, or if Walter L. was supported or received any money from the Federal government through Works Progress Administration funds?

M: No, he didn't get any help.

P: And was he living in Columbus at this time?

M: Yes he was. I was trying to remember...no, it was a federal art school...well well not sure, lets go back....(consults some papers) I don't know, no. Federal doesn't seem to be, but then it does....uhmmm...its not in here.

P: What's the year that he started doing Homecoming Banners?

M: You'll have to ask Pastor Wood. He joined the church in 46, he was doing Homecomings when I joined the church in 61. I have no, I know he had been doing the banners for fifty years, for Simultaneous Revival, That I know, because Jessie told me that. He used to come home with me for dinner when I was married to Sherri Lynn's father, and I'd have nothing but children in the car. And we had a brand new Valiant, and we were coming up the driveway kind of slanting, and somebody did something in the back and I turned around and next thing I knew I put a crease in the fence he had just put up. And I turned around and said, and if anybody says anything to Mr. Flowers I'll have your head! And they came in, and they fixed everything and set the table, I would have made dinner the day before and somebody would take the chores, and they would do that. And we would have afternoon service and the kids were going back with me, so when Jesse was going out the door he said, "I sure don't know who put that crease in your fence!" He

couldn't keep anything to himself! I kid him about it, I say don't tell him 'cause he can't keep anything to himself! He laughs.

P: When would Walter L. usually sketch-while watching TV, or while down in his doghouse?

M: Yes. Oh he spent a lot of time in his doghouse. He'd go over the bills, then he would read, he's got thousands of Biblical books down there plus in the room he shared after he had his cancer surgery, and he got up so often in the middle of the night, so he said why don't I just go sleep in the spare bedroom, because I know I disturb your rest. Well he did, but you know that was okay. Anyway sometimes I would see the light on at 2 am in the morning...He was up reading. Either reading the bible or reading a book.

P: Was it for him a way to relax after a hard day?

M: I think so. 'Cause it seemed like he was a new person when he was working on something. It just seemed like, I don't know if I can put another foot out in front of the other, and then the next time I'd see him he's taking the steps two at a time. He got renewed. Yes, he enjoyed what he did. He didn't like praise. One Sunday, he did something, and I said "They didn't say anything about you doing the cover for their thing." And he said That's okay the Lord knows I did it.

P: That says to me that maybe it was kind of a way of worship, if he only cares that God knows...

M: He just loved to do, and he wouldn't...if people insisted on paying for something, he'd say Well you can give me what you think it's worth. And that's what he accepted. If they gave him ten dollars and it was worth fifty dollars, he accepted it. It was okay with him. He never complained about anything, except when he was sick. He couldn't stand pain.

P: Did he continue to draw and paint when he was sick?

M: Yes. When he fell down, he tumbled down those basement steps. It's 13 steps, he tumbled down all of them backwards with his hands full of papers that he was bringing up the steps. I was always on him, You carry too much, just make two trips. That would be better. And I said, One day you just gonna do the flips! And he'd say, Ahh that'll be a sight. This one day I was getting dinner, and I said Dinner will be ready in five minutes, because we kept the door open all the time. And he said, Okay I'll be up. And next thing I heard was like a ball rolling, you know, and he broke his shoulder, his right hand. So he did try to do things with his left hand, and he got pretty good at it, 'cause he was laid up for two months.

P: That shows a lot of discipline and devotion. Well let me see if there is anything else....Is there anything else you remember about his dad or his early life?

M: No, I don't....If I do I'll jot it down. Uhhh, because I am at the age if I don't say it, I forget it. Most of the time, I think I've said everything I know about his father and him. There may be a few things that might come back, but I will take a pen and pencil and put it by my bed like I do when I want to tell my daughter something and can't forget.

P: Is there anything else about anything that we haven't talked about?

M: He was a marvelous man. This house is my wedding gift, and I didn't know it was. My house went up on the market, on that very same day, it was sold. His house took about two or three months, it was sold after we moved here. And so, you know, we had a joint bank account, and I

said, well we will just take care of all the expenses for the house because there are always those little things that you forget about. And I am debating now whether I am going to stay here or not, because taxes are so high but so far the Lords been pretty good, so I'll just try it for another sixth months. But we moved in December, and in February, he came in through the garage door and he threw this thing on the table, and he said, This is your wedding gift, and I looked and it was a deed, and I thought Lord Have Mercy, and I cried for days and days. It was unreal. So I will probably stay here as long as I can...my child is so sweet about doing things for me. My son-in-law, he's okay. He's a nice person, but he's into himself, sometimes you need to give a little more time to your child, he doesn't like to hear that lecture but I give it to him everytime I see him.

P: Well we would like to come back another time...We just talked to George Booker, and George is an old man who has lived in Mt. Vernon his whole life and he is kind of the African-American patriarch of the town, and he saves all the newspaper clippings about people in the town...he's knows a lot about African-American people in Mt. Vernon and what they've been doing there...We are not sure he would know either of the Mayo's, but he would know a lot about the kind of world they lived in.

M: How old is this man?

P: In his nineties I think...he knows a lot about the culture within they existed...whether there were any black art leagues...whether the father was involved in a black fraternal organizations...we are trying to get back to Mt. Vernon and try to find out about their life there...it's just hard because everyone there is so old now.

M: There's his sister that would really know, but she didn't know half the people at the museum, okay, and then I didn't know that was her-people were pulling me, and there were so many people there, and I thought Lord they came out of the walls, where did all these people come from? And so I saw the wheelchair but didn't think because I had seen a couple more, and I walked past her. "Well you're not gonna talk to me Jeannie, huh?" and I thought, Lord that's Helen! That was his sister. And then Sherri-Lyn went to talk to her, and she said, "Who are you?" So she didn't even know. But she knew me. And I said, well that's because your pretty and I'm ugly.

P: Well, I'm going to stop this.....