

*Beth Odle:* My name is Beth Odle.

*Carol Kaplan:* And I'm Carol Kaplan. We're located in the Nashville Public Library's Special Collections. Part of our feeling in Special Collections, mine especially, was that we were there to do history for people who were not generals, who were not, you know, first ladies, but real people.

*Beth Odle:* Right.

*Carol Kaplan:* One of the best things I ever did, and it's my favorite story, and it's been years and years but I've never forgotten it, was this woman who came in. She was maybe 40 years old, and she had lived here as a child with her father and mother and her older brother. And something had happened in their family. Her mother had died, her father couldn't keep the children together, and they were put in separate homes, and then they were adopted out. And she'd never seen her brother since.

*Beth Odle:* Mmmhmm.

*Carol Kaplan:* But she remembered her brother. She knew...she had traced him and she found out he was dead now. But she really came in just to see if we possibly had anything about her family or her brother. Could we trace anything? And it turned out, we could find where she lived. Well, in those days, you went to school in your district, so I've lived here long enough to figure out where her brother probably went to school.

*Beth Odle:* Right.

*Carol Kaplan:* We had some annuals. Looked through the annuals, nothing there. I was so disappointed, and I remembered, it was just like serendipity, somebody had given us a box of annuals. And it was still downstairs because we hadn't processed it; it had just come in.

*Beth Odle:* Mmmhmm.

*Carol Kaplan:* And we went downstairs, opened the box, first one was the right one, opened the page, there was the kid.

*Beth Odle:* Wow.

*Carol Kaplan:* He had played basketball, and he had done something else, and so there were several pictures. Took them upstairs. I cried, she cried, everybody in the room was crying. She had never had a picture of her brother, and now she had all these pictures. So, you know, that, I thought, was the most important thing that we did, was to help people like that.

*Beth Odle:* Mmmhmm. One experience I had that is very similar to that. I take care of the photograph archives for the most part. They're this wonderful collection of photographs from the civil rights movement in Nashville from the 1960s and beyond. And, uh, a couple of years ago it

was the anniversary of the school deseg, 1957, and this lady came in and she was wondering if we had any pictures, you know, what kind of things we had, and a lot of the pictures have been publicized, but not all of them have been publicized. And so she told me which school her brother had attended, and so I went and I found this picture of her brother with a hand in each parent's hand, walking toward the school with all the people yelling and screaming at them for the first day of integrated school in Nashville. And I brought it out, and I showed it to this lady, and she said, "Oh, that's the back of my father's head. You know, I recognize it, that's my brother." It was really so emotional, I gave her a paper copy of it and it was so emotional that she just, she left. I mean, a lot of times, people find themselves in, in the history that you present them, it's very moving.

*Carol Kaplan:* I think about the African American lady, elderly lady who came in one Saturday and said to me, "My children won't believe me. I know my family were not slaves. Can you help me?" Just like that.

*Beth Odle:* Yea?

*Carol Kaplan:* And I said, "Yes ma'am." And so we went and looked, and sure enough, she was right! They were in the census in 1850, and they were in the census in 1860, and they were not slaves.

*Beth Odle:* Wow.

*Carol Kaplan:* And so she said, "Are you going to be here tomorrow?" And I said, "Yes ma'am." She said, "I'll be here too." And she comes in the next day, and she has got her entire family. There must be 50 of these people, little kids, adults, everybody. She says to me, points to me and says, "Now you show them what you showed me." And I showed them what I showed her. And she said, "Now you see? Now the next time I tell you something, you will believe me!" And it was just so fun. And I had so many people like that, especially, um, older people, who would have a story about their family, and, you know, like, "Well I'm related to Jesse James" or something. And they would come in and say no or yes, and we could prove it or not, and especially if you could prove it, they were just like "see, I told you so." And I think that knowing the people that we met and the fun some of those were, I think that was the most fun of this whole thing, was helping those people find what they wanted.

*Beth Odle:* Right. And it's so great when you find the information, it's like getting a prize or something.

*Carol Kaplan:* I know. You feel like "nobody else could have done that but me."

*Beth Odle:* Right.

*Carol Kaplan:* And sometimes, that's true!

*Beth Odle: Right.*