

**PAT MILLER-SETTLES**  
**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**  
**(Gayle W. Hanson, Interviewer)**

Hanson: Pat, your name is Pat Miller-Settles. Did you have a middle name?

Miller: My first name is Patricia. My middle name Jann.

Hanson: Ok.

Miller: Miller is my maiden name hyphenated to a married name Settles.

Hanson: What is your address?

Miller: 17232 Gardenland Avenue, Bellflower, California 90706.

Hanson: What state were you born in?

Miller: Texas!

Hanson: What city?

Miller: The City of Fort Worth.

Hanson: You've been in Fort Worth your whole life?

Miller: Well, I lived there until I graduated from high school which was in 1952.

Hanson: What hospital were born in?

Miller: St. Joseph's Hospital in downtown Fort Worth.

Hanson: What is your birth date?

Miller: February 13, 1944

Hanson: What were your parents' names?

Miller: My father's name is Lawson Miller. My mother's name is Annie Lois. Her maiden was Baker. She married Lawson Miller. Her name now is Annie Lois Miller.

Hanson: What is your spouse's name?

Miller: My divorce spouse's name is Carl Settles. Ex-spouse.

Hanson: How many years were you married?

Miller: I think 19 or 20. I don't know. I have to think about it. From 1981 to 1998, 17 years.

Hanson: How many children do you have?

Miller: One stepson. My husband had a son. One son.

Hanson: What was his name?

Miller: His name still is Takahiro Settles.

Hanson: Did you have grandchildren?

Miller: There's one grandchild, Corrine Rebekah Settles.

Hanson: What was or is your occupation?

Miller: I retired as a Student Services Assistant from the University of Phoenix (Arizona). I think I retired in 2011.

Hanson: Did you have a nickname?

Miller: No, not really. Just Pat.

Hanson: Was your mother born in Texas?

Miller: Yes, my mother was born in Kerens, Texas.

Hanson: What was your mother's name?

Miller: My mother's name is Vanny Lois. Her maiden family name is Baker. She married Martin Miller. (?)

Hanson: Where was your father born?

Miller: My father was born in Athens, Texas.

Hanson: Your maternal grandmother's name and where she was born?

Miller: My maternal grandmother's name is Leona. Her maiden name is Burton. Her married name is Baker. And she remarried and her last name was Meeks.

Hanson: What was your grandfather's name?

Miller: My grandfather's name was Rufus Baker.

Hanson: And he was born where?

Miller: He was born in Texas.

Hanson: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Miller: I had one sister.

Hanson: And her name was?

Miller: Shirley Kay Miller. Her married name was Macey.

Hanson: What did your father do for a living?

Miller: Lawson Miller was a butcher for the Swift Meat Packing Company in Fort Worth, Texas.

Hanson: Did your mother work or was she a stay-at-home mom?

Miller: She was a stay-at-home mom but she did have a vocational job. She was a beautician. She was a licensed beautician.

Hanson: Do you remember any special stories your grandmother or grandfather told you?

Miller: Stories about what?

Hanson: Stories about family or something that may be of interest to you.

Miller: My grandmother Leona talked about her family. She had two sisters and a brother. Their mother died when they were very young, and I think she was the eldest. They lived in Kerens, Texas. And so she had to come out of school early to help her father with her younger sisters.

They lived on a farm in Kerens. The Burton sisters sang when they were young girls and the preacher at that time would go from town to town and they would have them singing for their church events.

Then my grandmother on my father's side was also born in Texas, and her family was larger. She had one sister and three or four brothers. My father's mother's name was Maggie Shofner.

Hanson: Who was or were your best friends?

Miller: My friend living in Como was James Etta Wheatfall. Pushy Barrett??? still in FW. Ruth Hall lived in Fort Worth. James Etta lived on Humbert Avenue and Ruth lived on Wellesley Avenue. We were within a couple of streets of each other and maybe two or three blocks of each other.

Hanson: Did you have a nickname?

Miller: No, I didn't have a nickname. They just called me Pat.

Ruby Nell Bridges. Her last name is Queen now. And Alta Jones, Sophronia Howard. Alta, Sophronia and I we all went to the same church, Zion Baptist Church.

Hanson: Do you remember having the chickenpox or the mumps?

Miller: No, I do not! And my mother is no longer living, so I have to search some more records in her files to see if I did. I think I had the measles. But I don't know about the chickenpox. I don't think I had the mumps because that's when you get the ice cream. Right?

Hanson: Yeah!

Miller: I didn't do... No!

Hanson: Measles, mumps and chickenpox those were the childhood diseases back then. Was your neighborhood a good place in which o just walk around neighborhood?

Miller: It was at the time when we were living there. It was very safe. It was a segregated Neighborhood. Our neighborhood was all African American.

Hanson: Yes.

Miller: And so we knew all of our neighbors. We knew our neighbors next door were the Burlesons. We knew the neighbors and there were children in that family. Then we had across the street were Ms. Pate, the Hendersons, my sister's classmates were the Hendersons and then there were the Russells that lived next door. Next to my Grandmother lived, there was a vacant lot between our house and my Grandmother Leona's house. Next door to her were the Sneeds and so Wanda Jean and Gloria Glen Sneed and then two doors down from there were Laura Nell and Tommy Murray. So, we all knew each other in the 5500 block of Goodman Avenue.

Hanson: What were the neighborhood landmarks? Stores or businesses?

Miller: Como had a lake. At some point, the community civic group made a park from that lake and they built a shelter house that was called "The Shelter". It was like an open patio and as I recall it may had a little concession area and a jukebox because kids

would go there. We couldn't go down there. But teenagers could go there to dance at the shelter at the lake.

We didn't fish but our godmother fished, Ms. Renna Woods every Wednesday, and she would take Kay and me and her grandchildren, Dennis and Diane Woods down to the park. She and her mother would fish and we would have a nice picnic every Wednesday, every week.

Then they had a tennis court at the park. It was a nice park. The lake is still there. I think the shelter is, too.

Hanson: What was the name of the school?

Miller: Como, C-o-m-o, like the lake in Italy. Como Elementary School from first to sixth grade, then we went right up across the playground to Como Junior-Senior High School.

All of our schools had no busing and all of our teachers were African Americans and most of them knew our families and our parents.

Hanson: Also, since you were that close, how did you get to school? Did you walk or get a ride?

Miller: Laughter! Well, we lived two blocks from school, but we were a little always rushed, so my mother had to drive us to school in the mornings. But we walked home from school in the afternoon. But morning time was kind of like a marathon, or a dash race or something—an Olympic event. But it was always rushed and then get in the car and drove up to the school.

Hanson: What did you do in the summertime?

Miller: In the summertime, my father had a sister that lived in Los Angeles. So we always took vacations to Los Angeles for the summer. He would alternate between his cousins in Los Angeles and Denver, Colorado. And for a long time, we didn't know there were any other places to go for vacations just Los Angeles and Denver.

Hanson: Do you remember some of the names of your teachers?

Miller: Yes! My first-grade teacher was Miss Cardel Humphries. She was so sweet. A very pretty lady and she drove a green Chevrolet and she wore her skirts and sweaters and her hair was always very pretty.

My fourth grade teacher was Mabel Lloyd, who also was the music teacher at the school and she and one of my father's cousins went to college together so she also became our music teacher. My grandmothers paid for Shirley and I to have piano lessons. Mabel Lloyd was also our music teacher.

But I loved the fourth grade that's where I learned to love Pasta Community and Hazel \_\_\_\_\_ Diary and it was all from Mabel Lloyd in the fourth grade.

Hanson: So, how is your best friend going to school?

Miller: Ruby Nell, James Etta, and Alta Jones Evans. We were friends from the first grade.

Hanson: You did tell me the name of your high school.

Miller: Como! We went to Como Elementary and then the Como High School. Both schools were Como, C-o-m-o and both schools were segregated but with good teachers.

Hanson: What was your high school mascot?

Miller: The Lions. Como Lions. The Mighty Lions!

Hanson: And the school colors?

Miller: Purple and Gold!

Hanson: Who did you go to the prom with? Did you go to the prom?

Miller: I did! I went to prom with a very nice young man from our church, Zion Baptist Church. His name was James Brown, and we doubled dated with Ada Hobbs and Bill Hart.

Hanson: What did you wear?

Miller: To my Junior Prom my dress was a white dress with a green satin with a strap on one shoulder and the bodice had flowers, just beautiful different colored flowers around the top of the bodice and it was fitted at the waist.

Hanson: Did you get a corsage?

Miller: Oh, yes! Yes, James brought me a corsage. It was a beautiful white wish corsage (?)

Hanson: Who was the school principal at that time?

Miller: You need to know that we went in Theodore's father's car. We didn't do the limo thing.

The high school principal was Mr. Oscar Williams. The elementary school principal was Mr. Claude Woodard.

Hanson: Did you have girlfriend, a favorite friend at school?

Miller: James Etta. That was it! James Etta, Ruby Nell, Alta and Brenda Evans.

Hanson: How did you spend your weekends?

Miller: My mother was a licensed hairdresser. So, on Saturday she worked in my aunt's beauty shop, and my sister and I would have to., which was at my Grandmother's, Maggie Miller's home. On Saturdays my sister, Shirley and I had to go with my mother when she would go to her beauty shop. We would go and clean my Grandmother's house. We were domestic workers. We had to clean my grandmother's house on Saturdays.

Then we watched television on our black and white TV. Then on Saturday nights we went to... There was one drive-in movie for African Americans which was at that time called Stop Six. I think it's now called Rosedale Park.

Anyway it was a drive-in movie and that was a big deal because my mother saved green stamps and she would get all these little gifts and things with green stamps. She had this picnic basket and we had a big thermos that she would put coffee or kool-aid in. And then she would fix sandwiches. We'd have snacks in our picnic baskets. My mother would drive to the movies, and we'd have our own snacks. But at intermission, we'd go to the concession stand and get some popcorn and hot dogs. And that was Saturday night.

Then Sunday we went to Zion Baptist Church. At Sunday School and 11 o'clock service. Sometime there was a 3 o'clock afternoon service and in the evening there was a BYPU. But now they call it BTU, Baptist Training Union, and we had bible drills and then night service. And after night service, I not sure if it was the first Sunday or which Sunday, but most Sundays my mother was in the Senior Choir. When Mom was the director of the choir sometimes we would go up to Ashburn's. There was this place called Ashburn Ice Cream in Ridglea. We'd get ice cream at Ashburn. We'd have cake and ice cream after church up at the Alaman's house.

We watched a little TV. Not a whole lot of TV. It wasn't a lot of stations at the time, and it was mostly black and white TV then. Later on we had color but at first the TV's shows were in black and white with just a few stations. And then that all ended like at 10 o'clock. So at about 10:30 p.m. you were back at home getting ready for school and work the next day.

Hanson: Was there a student you admired more than any other when you were in school?

Miller: Well, there were several of them. Peggy Holmes which was at Zion Baptist Church. and "Sugar Boo," Marilyn McWilliams. Those were the pretty smart girls.

Hanson: Was there a movie theater in your neighborhood?

Miller: The community of Lake Como was self-sufficient! We had a movie theater, we had a lake and a park. There was a dry cleaners. There were several small barbecue restaurants. Not large sit-down restaurants. There were beauty shops. My father's sister, Anna Margaret Campbell had her beauty shop at my grandmother's house. There was building that they built down on Bonnell Street. I think it was the 5400 block, which was sorta like professional building, but they had mother's cousin, Eartha Means, had a beauty shop there. Her other cousin Christina Smith and her husband, John, had a shoe repair place there. And then my grandmother was a member of the Eastern Star and they had their monthly meetings there because we had to go there with her several times.

Oh, Mr. Sapp had a big store on Bonnell Street. And there was Alexander's Store. And my mother worked at Alexander's for a little while as a part-time cashier. There were food markets and these markets had everything. They had meats and produce.

Hanson: Wasn't there a laundry mat on that street, too?

Miller: It might have been. I don't know.

Hanson: What was your first real job?

Miller: My first job, I was a babysitter. I was hired by Miss Eula Johnson to babysit her son, Aurico Joshua on Saturday mornings. I think it started at 9 or 10 o'clock. And I would get there in time for Rista to watch Sky King on television. That was my first paying job as a babysitter. And I really liked that job because Miss Johnson had deep freezer, and they had ice cream and we'd have Bosco (chocolate?) and make Sundays while I watched Ariska.

Hanson: Who was your first love?

Miller: I was a very tall, thin, slim person and so I wasn't attractive and my parents were very shielding. So, I didn't to go out very much. So, I didn't have anybody. In fact I don't think I even dated when I was in Como.

There was one guy, Herbert Wilson, who took an interest in me. And sometime Herbert would walk me home from band practice. But there was no romance and no promises of future plans. So I didn't have the luxury of having a high school sweetheart.

Hanson: When did you marry?

Miller: I married in 1981 and I was a full adult. I married in Los Angeles. After I graduated from high school, my parents sent me to school in Los Angeles. So I stayed because after that my sister came out and then my parents moved to Los Angeles. I never moved back to Fort Worth. So, I married in October 17, 1981.



Hanson: Who did you marry?

Miller: Carl Settles.

Hanson: Did you have children?

Miller: He had one son.

Hanson: So, that's the only child you had together?

Miller: That was his son.

Hanson: But you didn't have any children? Right?

Miller: I don't any children of my own.

Hanson: What was one of your favorite books?

Miller: I didn't have any favorite books. I just more or less read what was assigned, like a school assignment.

Hanson: Yes!

Miller: And got books from the library. We didn't have computers at that time, so we did research from the World Book Encyclopedia. But I didn't have any favorite books or novels.

Hanson: Did you have a favorite song or movie?

Miller: Not really? Because we watch the American Band Stand and so things were always changing of that, so didn't really have favorite song. It was kind of like the latest songs that came out. And Daddy would always stop on Friday evenings from work and at Leonard Brothers' store and pick up. We had these recorder players and he'd buy us the latest record of the week. I can't think of a favorite song, well I like Johnny Mathis.

Hanson: What's your favorite season?

Miller: My favorite season is Thanksgiving and Christmas, then Summer. I like them all.

Hanson: Do you have a favorite restaurant?

Miller: I have several favorite restaurant: We go to Outback, Stewart Anderson's, Olive Garden, and the Mexican restaurants.

Hanson: What's your favorite color?

Miller: Purple!

Hanson: What is your favorite time of day?

Miller: Probably, 1 o'clock. That's when I start watching the game shows.

Hanson: What was the best day of your life?

Miller: The best day of my life. I can't say what the best day of my life was.

Hanson: What about the best year of your life?

Miller: I don't know? Maybe 1976. One year I was appointed president of our church auxiliary and I had to go to a lot of conventions, and then that same year I went to Europe and that was the highlight. So, it was probably 1976 or 1977 when I started traveling internationally.

Hanson: Where there a local parade in your community every year?

Miller: Every year on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July the Como community had a parade through the streets of Como. I'm telling you, read my lips, we were a self-sufficient, independent community.

Hanson: Yes! Yes!

Miller: We had everything there. And growing up we were kinda of sheltered a little bit to the point, we knew that it was segregation but it wasn't to the point that we were affected by it. Because we had everything we needed in our community. And our parents provided for us. My mother always made us eat and drink and go to the restroom before those downtown malls where we would do shopping on Saturdays. So, we did not do eating in restaurants and things while we were out when I was growing up in Fort Worth. All restaurants were available to us.

Hanson: Who taught you how to drive?

Miller: My father taught me to drive when I was very young my father, Lawson Miller. Our house was the second from the corner and when he was driving home from work I would wait on the porch to see him drive home. And he would stop at the corner and let me get in the car and sit in his lap and drive the yard cart to the driveway. I was about 7 or 8 years old but I had long legs. And so I could sit in the driver's seat.

When I grew large enough, then he taught me drive. I got my license when I was about 15 years old. I was a very good driver. I loved driving even this day on the highways, across country.

Hanson: When did you get your first car?

Miller: I got my first car... When my sister got to college, she got a car. So we shared the car. There was no student parking at Como when I was there.

Hanson: How much did a tank of gas cost in those days?

Miller: I don't know. It was less than a dollar!

Hanson: Where did you usually go to fill your car up? Which gas station?

Miller: Well, I was out here (Los Angeles), so it was Shell service station. It was closer to the campus.

Hanson: Looking back on 2020 hindsight, what was your favorite year and what was your favorite age?

Miller: 2020 was not my favorite year. And I guess my favorite age would have been probably when I was in my 30s because at that time I enjoyed my jobs, my work and I was traveling a lot. Probably the 1970s were my favorite times. I enjoyed being married in the 80s, too!

Hanson: What was the hardest thing that you ever had to do?

Miller: The hardest thing I had to do was to tell my parents that I was getting a divorce. Yeah. That was the hardest thing that I had to do and regret besides letting go of self when they both passed.

Hanson: When did you remember feeling like an adult?

Miller: I still don't feel like an adult! I guess when I started driving here in Los Angeles. You know after I moved off campus. I had my own place. Soon I got an apartment, then I felt like an adult then.

Hanson: What was your biggest mistake in life?

Miller: My biggest mistake was not continuing to go to school. My biggest mistake was stopping school and going to work instead of completing my degree first.

I got an opportunity...but when they needed to integrate everything and have more black people... Well, I got a Christmas job at the \_\_\_\_\_ reaper at Imagdum, and then they needed someone but on the floor to seen. And so I got promoted and then I just stopped going to school and started working at Magdum(?) because it was fashionable and was making money, and I didn't have to study and be hungry.

That was my biggest mistake!

Hanson: If you could change anything about your life, what would you change?

Miller: I would change that! I would change my discontinuation of school to work.

Hanson: If you had all the time in the world, what would you do?

Miller: If I had all the time in the world, I think I would try to visit more people that are homebound, people that I know in my church and my community, and I'd like to do more community services. I would definitely like to do more traveling, more cruises for traveling.

Hanson: This is the last question I have for you.

Was there was one moment in your life that changed everything for you?

Miller: There were several; however, but the one that stands out most of all...one of our little members at our church was killed in an automobile accident. And that to me was like awakening because he was younger than I am, but he was driving and fell asleep at the wheel. We were all very young in the Youth Choir at New Hope and that has always stayed in my memory. And I think I became more aware of the value of life. Up to that point, I didn't know a lot of people that had died, young people. So, that was in 1967-68, the late 60s.

Hanson: Jann, thank you so much for the opportunity to record you.