

**Oral Memoirs**  
**of**  
**Christine Kinlaw-Best**

An Interview Conducted by

Mark Miller

March 2, 2012

History Harvest

Spring 2013

*University of Central Florida Public History Center*

Copyright 2013

This material is protected by US copyright. Permission to print, reproduce or distribute copyrighted material is subject to the terms and conditions of fair use as prescribed in the US copyright law. Transmission or reproduction of protected items beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the copyright owners.

## **Interview Histories**

Interviewers: Mark Miller

Transcriber: Mark Miller

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the Public History Center, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

## **Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Christine Kinlaw-Best is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on March 2, 2012.

## **Abstract**

Oral history of Christine Kinlaw-Best, interviewed by Mark Miller on March 2, 2013 for the UCF Public History Center's History Harvest. In the oral history, Kinlaw-Best discusses how she found information about the History Harvest, her family's attendance at the school building at 301 West Seventh Avenue since it opened in 1902 as Sanford High School, her family's report cards from the various schools that were housed in the building, what changes have been made to the building, how students were transported to the school when her grandmother attended, how children helped their parents farm when the school year ended, and the different schools in Sanford.

## **Christine Kinlaw-Best**

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by [Interviewer' Name]

March 2, 2012

[City, State]

0:00:00

### **Introduction**

**Miller** My name is Mark Miller and I am interviewing...

**Kinlaw-Best** Christine [Kinlaw-Best].

**Miller** Christine. Alright. And this is March 2<sup>nd</sup> at the History Harvest at the Public History Center – 2013.

**Kinlaw-Best** Okay.

0:00:31

### **Reasons for attending the History Harvest**

**Miller** And we just want to ask you a few questions on what brought you here or what is it that you are sharing with us.

**Kinlaw-Best** I found the notice on Facebook and so...

**Miller** Very nice.

**Kinlaw-Best** Uh-huh. I had you know – how you click, like, on the Public History Center and so I saw the notice on Facebook and saw the call for the local artifacts for the school. And so I gathered up some of my things for this school and brought them down.

0:01:00

### **Items contributed for scanning**

**Miller** And what are there – what are some of your things?

**Kinlaw-Best** I brought – my whole family went to this school from the time it was built – when it opened its doors in 1902. Two of my older great-aunts though moved away, so I don't have their report cards, but I did bring report cards of one of my great-aunts from 1907, when the building was just five years old.

**Miller** That is exciting.

**Kinlaw-Best** A brand new building. So I have her report card from then. And I brought a picture of her so she would kind of go with the report card. And then her

younger sister – my grandmother – attended here also. I brought one of her report cards that's a hundred years old. It's from 1913, when she was here in the third grade. And I brought my uncle's report card from 1914, so that's 99 years old [*laughs*]. And then my mom and dad both went here. I happen to actually have one of my mom's report cards from here that actually, you know – it's like the rest. It's Sanford Grammar [School] and that one's 80 years old. It's from 1933. And then I went here all through elementary school, in this building.

**Miller** Oh, wow.

**Kinlaw-Best** Fifty years ago. So, our whole family went through here. And by the time my kids came along, of course, obviously the school had then been closed and not in use anymore as an elementary school.

**Miller** Did your whole family collect this or was this your idea?

**Kinlaw-Best** Ah, it was – well, my aunt had her things, and when she passed away, my mom got it. And when my mom passed away, I got it, so it's been as, you know – generations have passed on, then it's all made its way down to me.

**Miller** So this has been a personal experience for you.

**Kinlaw-Best** Uh-huh.

**Miller** The entire school. Everything about that.

**Kinlaw-Best** Yes.

**Miller** Is there, uh – for instance, what are the significance of these items to you personally? I mean...

**Kinlaw-Best** It's, um, my family [*laughs*]. That's the best way I can think of it. Its significance is preserving my family's stories. Just as my granddaughter now is excited about things, because I went to Seminole – well, we go back once again, Seminole High School, which is here. It was Sanford High School first, but my granddaughter likes to brag that six or seven generations have all gone to the same high school. And, of course, Daddy went to Seminole and played football for them. I went to Seminole and now my 16 year old granddaughter is at Seminole High School. So, you know, that's what these mean to me, is, ah, carrying on the family.

**Miller** Yeah. You – I think you have a unique story. I'm sure there's not too many along those lines.

**Kinlaw-Best** Uh-huh.

**Miller** We want to thank you very much for bringing this in – it’s a tremendous asset. We want to thank you for that.

**Kinlaw-Best** You bet.

**0:04:00 Experiences at Sanford High School and Sanford Grammar School**

**Miller** Is there anything you might want to add about your experiences or anything you had in this school – I mean of this sort...

**Kinlaw-Best** One thing I’d like to try to think of and remember is when my great aunt was going here in 1907, it was only just this building. The two wings didn’t exist yet and so when you – even though this looks so big from the outside, when you stop and think about it, you can see why they needed to add the wings almost immediately, because there really aren’t that many classrooms in just this building. Because so much of it was upstairs was auditorium and, of course, even when I came here, we didn’t have a lunch room in the building, we had to go out and into the back and have lunch out back.

So my grandmother told stories of – I was just telling one of the girls in there – when she came to school here, of course, there was not a “motorized” school bus. And so the horse’s hooves – it was a horse-drawn buggy thing, like a big trailer that had rows of hard seats and a top on it and it had canvas sides that rolled up. And Grandma used to always talk about how you could tell when it was time for the bus, because Sanford’s cobblestone streets – you would hear the *clup, clup, clup, clup, clup* of the horses coming and the kids knew to run outside and the bus would pull up and you got in the wagon. If it was hot, the sides were rolled up. If it was raining, the sides were rolled down and they drove you here to the front of the school and dropped the kids off. And then the “bus-driver” [*laughs*], with his horse, would literally park out back here, right behind the school. And he would just hang around all day. And ‘cause school was only a few hours then too, they only went about three or four hours a day here. So then when they were finished, he – the kids just all loaded back up in the wagon and he proceeded to drive all around Sanford and let everyone out again in front of their house. So that’s a special memory to me of Gram telling me about “the Bus” for this school.

**Miller** Everybody had their chores to get home to and...

**Kinlaw-Best** And most everybody worked in the field. Everybody was farmers here, in Seminole County. So you had to get home and work in the fields. They also went to school like four months out of the year.

**Miller** Oh.

**Kinlaw-Best** That was a whole school year. So the rest of the time you were helping your parents with farming. So...

**Miller** Was it the same with you when you attended here? Was it...

**Kinlaw-Best** When I attended we were already back to the whole full long day. Uh-huh.

**Miller** Alright.

**Kinlaw-Best** So, I say that like "long day." I guess every kid thought that about their school then. So anyway, that's mostly about it.

**Miller** Well, with the wings and the rapid growth, it is a testament to how quickly Sanford was growing.

**Kinlaw-Best** Right.

**Miller** And your family was definitely part of that.

**0:07:04 Sanford grammar schools**

**Kinlaw-Best** One thing I did want to just mention to you – because for so long it was called just "Sanford Grammar" – but this school had a long period it was called "Westside Grammar" [Elementary School] too, and I know a lot of people think maybe that it might be a different school, but it's not. This – this building was west – all through the 60s was called "Westside Grammar," because at that time we had Eastside Grammar, which is the little bitty school over on Palmetto [Avenue] and we had Southside. All of them had original names. Westside, Eastside, and Southside. But Southside is over off of Thirteenth Street and so this building was called Westside Grammar for at least through the 60s, when I went here. All of my report cards and even the class pictures are all stamped Westside Grammar. So I just wanted to put that in too, so there's not any confusion if ya'll look at those and go, "Oh, that's not Sanford Grammar," 'cause it is. It is still Sanford Grammar. It's just for a while there was called "Westside Grammar."

**Miller** So Eastside was the original grammar school? Or...

**Kinlaw-Best** Ah. Eastside is the one – the little – it was the Tajiri Arts Building, it's on Ninth [Street] and Palmetto. And that one was built around 1880. That building is still standing. And that was the original and only elementary school and that's why this was the high school and that was the elementary.

**Miller** Oh. Okay.

**Kinlaw-Best** But it was called "Eastside Primary." and Southside is still standing. It's a retirement home now – in the school. And this was Sanford Grammar and then Westside Grammar and then back to Sanford Grammar again. [Laughs]. So...

**Miller** Which is the Little Red Schoolhouse?

**Kinlaw-Best** That's the one I'm talking about. Over on, uh-huh...

**Miller** Okay.

**Kinlaw-Best** Eastside Grammar. I have pictures of it with the big sign across, over the door that says Eastside Primary. But all the celery farmers and the kids from the Eastside, like going out towards the beach – towards New Smyrna [Beach]. That's – those kids went there and the west-side farmers, which were out First Street, like going towards Seminole Towne Center Mall. That's where I grew-up. You came here, because you were the "westside kids," and then the kids to the south of the city went to Southside.

**Miller** Oh. That's great!

**Kinlaw-Best** So...

**0:09:14** **Closing remarks**

**Miller** If you have – want to share those pictures, you know, you said you have pictures of these time-lines. Anything of that nature, where you're interested in, especially someone of such great experience with the school system in this area.

**Kinlaw-Best** Okay.

**Miller** Excellent.

**Kinlaw-Best** Okay.

**Miller** Well, thank you very much.

**Kinlaw-Best** You're welcome.

**Miller** It was tremendous and we really appreciate everything.

**Kinlaw-Best** Thank you. You bet.

**Miller** Alright.

*End of Interview*