ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

TERI GAGE PULLMAN, ILLINOIS MAY 7, 2020

INTERVIEWED BY RACHAEL BLEDSAW AUDIO FILE # BRVB050720 – TERI GAGE

# EDITORIAL NOTE

This document is a rendering of the oral history interview as transcribed by the interviewer from the audio recording. Although significant effort was made to provide a verbatim transcription, for easier reading of the transcript, verbal pauses, repetitions of words, and encouraging words from the interviewer were omitted. In addition, Ms. Gage, who reviewed the original draft of this transcript, was given the opportunity to make minor modifications to the verbatim transcript of this interview. For the original interview, please refer to the audio file.

# ABSTRACT

Teri Perry Gage, former administrative assistant at Brown v. Board of Education discusses the early days of the sit and its transition from the local post office to the school. She discusses in detail the practical struggles of setting up a park to be functional and in specific the navigation and implementation of the internet as a resource to inform the public about the park. Ms. Gage discusses the first web page for the site and her part in creating it.

# PERSONS MENTIONED

Sändra Washington, Superintendent Ray Harper, Superintendent Bess Sherman, Alicia Bullocks, Robin White, Rachael Franklin-Weekly, Cheryl Brown Henderson, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Treva Gordon Sykes.



Teri Gage, 2020

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

TERI GAGE

Interviewer: Recording? Perfect. This oral history interview is for the administrative history of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in Topeka, Kansas. The interviewer is Rachael Bledsaw with Outside The Box on behalf of the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service. Interviewed today is Teri Perry Gage, former administrative officer at Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. The date is Thursday, May 7, [2020]. This interview takes place via Zoom video conferencing.

Ms. Gage, as I’m sure you know, the purpose of an Administrative History is to document the development of a unit of the National Park system, both physically and administratively. Oral histories are one way to get information that might not otherwise be available from documentary evidence. We try to get as much information as we can from as many different perspectives as possible in order to create a robust narrative of the developmental history of the park. This will be used by future park administrators to inform their decisions as they navigate future developments. However, I should inform you that not all the information we gather will be included in the final Administrative History. That depends on how the information advances our understanding of park development. But we do appreciate that you’re giving your time to share your experiences of the development of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site to further this project.

So, to begin, really simple question: could you just state and spell your full name and your last name to help with the transcription?

Gage: Sure. My first name is Teri spelled T as in Thomas, E-R-I. Last name is Gage, G- A-G-E.

Interviewer: Great! Alright, let’s start with your work for the National Park Service, then move on to the specifics of your work at Brown v. Board. When did you start with the National Park service? What was your position then?

Gage: I started with the National Park Service in 1986. I was a GS-2 clerk-typist at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in northern Michigan.

Interviewer: And where did you go after that?

Gage: After that, I went to Lincoln Boyhood National Monument in southern Indiana, and I was there for one year before I went to Brown v. Board of Education. I have now been with the Park Service for about thirty-four years.

Interviewer: Okay. Alright. So, how did you become an administrative assistant at Brown v.

Board?

Gage: (Long pause) I had – it was just kind of a logical administrative progression. I went – you know, I started out as a clerk-typist at Pictured Rocks and was promoted to a budget technician and then to an administrative technician at Lincoln Boyhood, and then the next step was administrative officer at Brown v. Board. And that was right about the same time that there was an initiative in the National Park Service called Administrative Careers, where they were professionalizing the administrative career field. And so, a lot of the people that were administrative technicians were – became administrative officers.

Interviewer: Okay. What in your background do you think prepared you well for that position? Gage: At – for the position at Brown v. Board?

Interviewer: Yes, sorry.

Gage: So, I had studied administrative services, or business administration at Northern Michigan University. And also, just the experience – the job experience that I had at the previous two parks. And I’d also worked in an administrative position for the Economic Development Corporation in my hometown, which is in Munising, Michigan, where Pictured Rocks is located.

Interviewer: Okay. That was a lot of different kinds of training. Did the – did NPS give you any help in your – with your – with training for this position?

Gage: Oh, certainly! At that time the National Park Service had a really good administrative officer’s training program. You went to what they called Administrative Skills One and Two. Both courses were two weeks in length. They – residential courses at Grand Canyon, where the Parks Service has a training center.

Interviewer: Okay. What was your first impression of the Brown v. Board site when you first began working there?

Gage: My first impression was –I guess, was awe and intrigue. It was a totally different environment than I had ever lived or worked in before. I had – you know I grew up in a very rural area of northern Michigan and – about as far north as you can get without being in Canada, in a town of two thousand people. And Lincoln Boyhood, I think, was a town of four or five hundred people, and then, all of a sudden, I’m in Topeka, Kansas where, you know, there’s over a hundred thousand people and a much more urban environment and a much more diverse environment – culturally diverse environment – than I had ever worked for before. But it was very exciting. And, you know, lots of – lots of new things to learn.

Interviewer: Okay. What was it like to have the visitor’s center and the administrative functions in the post office while the object of the park was at another location?

Gage: Again, it was very different. But even though we were, you know, located several blocks away from the school site, we were still very connected, and the school and that property were still very central to our activities. We visited the school frequently. I was there often. And it was such a small staff that we were all – we were all really involved in day-to-day activity and what was going on at the school site. (Long pause) And the – you know the – at that time everybody was very excited about the National Park Service coming to Topeka and about the establishment of the Brown v. Board site, so wherever you went in Topeka, people were very interested and engaged. Felt very welcomed and wanted there.

Interviewer: Well good! What kind of problems did this pose, and how did you and your staff kind of work around them to alleviate any of these problems?

Gage: You mean just the distance between – just being located in two different sites? Interviewer: Yeah.

Gage: I think no major problems. I mean, the school was in need of a lot of work. I mean, it had been basically gutted. A contractor had been using it for storage, but, you know, all the interior fixtures had been pretty much gutted out of the building, and so there was – you know, there wasn’t like they – we could do much there until the renovation work was done. So, I don’t know that it really created problems for – at that time, to be in a different location. The only thing I – really is that it was – it was subject to vandalism, and there was some – there was a park across the street where there was some drug activity going on. And so, there was just kind of, you know, always a little bit of underlying concern about, you know, the security of the building, and, you know, worry that somebody might break in or, you know, do some harm to it. But there was nothing – there wasn’t any really major problems with that. I guess one of the problems, though, was that, like, when we knew the roof would leak, and so, if we had a really heavy rainstorm or something, we needed to be able to get down there to put – we had these big trash – plastic trash cans that would – we would put in place to catch the water when it would rain. So, if something – you know, if something went wrong like that, mechanically or in terms of utilities, you weren’t there to actually – you know, to notice it right away all the time. Sometimes, you’d go down and find that, “Oh we’ve got another new leak,” or something like that. But –

Interviewer: That’s not a surprise anyone wants. Gage: No.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you felt very welcomed in Topeka. How you think the park – the public perceived the park when you first started working there?

Gage: My memory is that the public was really excited about the park being developed and that the story was going to be told and that, I think, there was going to be a National Park Service site in Topeka. I’m sure there were people that weren’t necessarily thrilled about it, but I didn’t – I don’t recall – I don’t recall having contact with many people that weren’t happy about it. I think people were – I think people were curious, and I think there was some anticipation and hope that having a park in that location would maybe catalyze – be a catalyst for some economic development.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think that’s changed over time? And how did it change?

Gage: You know, I don’t know. I’m sure, probably. I haven’t lived there for a really long time, so it’s really hard for me to speak to that. But I think people are still generally happy that the park is there and that that story is being told. I think that the Brown v. Board of Education story is a really big part of Topeka history. And I think that people are proud of it and recognize its significance. So, I would guess that people are probably still happy that the park is there. I have been – I went back there to visit about five or six years ago, and I would say that maybe the economic development that they hoped for has not materialized.

Interviewer: Okay. When you first started working with this particular park, what expectations did you have for the job?

Gage: You know, I don’t know that I had really clear expectations. I was very young in my career, and I had never worked in an urban park before. And I had also never worked in a brand new, newly established, park. So, I was really open to whatever the experience brought. Whatever was – it was – it was more responding to what the needs were on a day to day basis and just setting up. You know, I was there for the first three and a half years of the park’s establishment, and it was – a lot of it was just basic stuff like buying furniture, and buying a copy machine, and getting a filing system set up, getting administrative processes in place to be able to purchase items and pay bills and get employees paid, and get the first employees hired and on boarded. So, I don’t think I had any really broad, big picture expectations for the job.

Interviewer: Okay. So, those were a lot of challenges that you just listed off. What would you say is the biggest challenge to achieving your goals for the job?

Gage: (Long pause) You know, looking back now, it seems so simplistic because everything seems – it seems like everything was a lot simpler years ago. Now, everything is much more complex. I think, probably, the biggest challenges were things like communications, telephones, and computers, and we got – we really were right at the beginning of having internet access in the parks, right at that

time. And we were one of the first parks in the Midwest Region to have a website. At that time, the parks – the National Parks Service didn’t even have its – didn’t have a cohesive, comprehensive, website for all of the parks. It was just like each individual park developing their own site, and that was one of the things that I did for the park. It – yeah, when I think about it now (laughing) so different from the way things are now – the way things are done now. But I think that was – probably the biggest challenge was just the communications part of it and technology, getting things connected, getting computers networked, that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Okay. You – you’ve already mentioned quite a bit about the condition of the building. But what about the condition of the administration of the site when you first came on duty? What was that like? What was it – what was its condition?

Gage: It was really almost nonexistent. You know, Sändra Washington was the superintendent at that time. It was an interim position, She was not – she – there was never any intention that she was going to stay there as the permanent superintendent. She was there just to kind of guide the General Management Plan and get the cooperative agreement in place with the Brown Foundation. And she hired – she hired me as the administrative assistant and did the recruitment for the permanent superintendent to come in, and so, when she left, I was actually there by myself for a while. And so – I mean, I can remember that there was a small copy machine there when I got there, and there was a desk, and I purchased everything else. I purchased the rest of the furniture for the offices: filing cabinets, copy machine, telephone, computers. Really built it from the ground up.

Interviewer: Okay. In 1996, Superintendent Harper left and was succeeded by two interim superintendents. Did you have any interactions with these superintendents before they left?

Gage: I remember – seem to remember that I did, but I don’t – I honestly don’t remember who they were.

Interviewer: Okay! (laughter) That’s fine. It happens.

Gage: I remember they came - Bess – I remember – I remember Bess Sherman. But it seems to me like there was somebody in between – somebody who came in in between there, and I don’t – I honestly don’t remember who that was.

Interviewer: Do you remember anything about Bess’s attitude or their – or her expectations or goals? How they were different from Harper’s?

Gage: The only – whoops, I’m afraid my computer went to sleep. Can you still hear me? Interviewer: Yeah, I can still hear you. You’re fine.

Gage: Good, I’m sorry my computer went into sleep mode. Bess Sherman was much more professional than Ray Harper was. And she was much more direct, more impersonal, but I really got the impression that it was just a stepping stone. She knew when she came there that it was not going to be – you know, that was not going to be a long-term position for her and that she’d be moving on someplace else.

Interviewer: Okay. How did that affect the administration of the park?

Gage: I think that because – she – I don’t think she was real connected with the park or the resource or the community. I think that the administrative officer was viewed more as a primary point of contact for a lot of people.

Interviewer: Okay. Alicia Bullocks was hired as an Administrative Assistant Trainee in 1996.

Did you train her?

Gage: I did.

Interviewer: What did you train her to do?

Gage: What did I train her –? I trained her to be the next administrative officer. So, everything that I did as the administrative officer, I involved her. She shadowed me, and I was – I was setting her up to be the next administrative officer. So, if it was budget, human resources, whatever it was that I was doing, she’d – I was careful to include her in that so that she could take over someday.

Interviewer: Okay. Also, in 1996, you got the addition of an Education Outreach Specialist to the staff. What did that person do at Brown v. Board?

Gage: This is Robin, right – Robin White, that we’re talking about? Interviewer: I believe so.

Gage: Yeah, okay. So, Robin was essentially the Chief of Interpretation, so she led the interpretive programs for the park. And she was really focused on young people and getting out into the schools and was very much involved – focused on Civil Rights interpretation, and diversity. Which was, you know – I mean, a perfect fit with that park. And she started the development of the first exhibits, you know, the very initial stuff. But she, shortly after Ray Harper went to – down to New Orleans Jazz, he hired her as his Chief of Interp. there. So, she had got – she had left before the building was renovated or before any contracts were awarded for interpretive exhibits or anything like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you have any responsibilities or input into the historic research study completed by – at least, in the draft form, by Rachael Franklin-Weekly in 1996?

Gage: I did. I remember – I remember helping her. I remember being down at the school with her and just helping her to find, you know, if she was – if there was a certain document or book that she was looking for, I was helping – I helped her with that. And then, just helped her with some administrative support as she was working on it. But, yeah, I got to know Rachael quite well.

Interviewer: Okay. What involvement did you have in the Brown Foundation Annual Symposia?

Gage: I was more logistics. I handled a lot of the administrative side of it: drafting documents that were needed and doing things like hotel reservations and arranging travel for the speakers, getting information out to people who were interested in attending. And then, just had – being on site to help with logistics and kind of being a go-fer on the ground when the conference was actually – when the symposium was actually going on. They were very exciting events. Very well attended. I think they were – they were really a highlight of the things that happened while I was there. They were pretty – they were very high profile. People from all over the country attended.

Interviewer: That sounds amazing! Discuss the cooperative agreement between Brown v Board and the Brown Foundation. How were you involved with that?

Gage: The cooperative agreement was actually – I believe it was already in place before I got there. And it was my understanding that Cheryl Brown Henderson was – actually had a good relationship with Bill and Hillary Clinton, and she was very well connected, politically. And there was actually a line item in the federal budget every year for – to fund that cooperative agreement I think it was right around a hundred thousand dollars at that time. And so I wasn’t involved in creating the cooperative agreement, and that would have been above a GS-9 administrative officer at that time, anyways. But I helped – I dealt with Cheryl just on a day-to-day basis just with, you know, maybe the paperwork that she needed to receive her payments, and, you know, there were annual reports that she had to submit, and that kind of thing. So, I processed some of that paperwork and transferred it on to the regional office. But I wasn’t a decision maker on the cooperative agreement. I wasn’t – I wasn’t a manager of a property agreement.

That was the superintendent’s job.

Interviewer: Okay. Were there any times you had to navigate through a difficult or delicate situation related to park development or administration?

Gage: Oh, my goodness! (laughter) You know, I – there were some personality type conflicts when Ray Harper was there. He had an art for offending people unintentionally, and so I can remember trying to smooth over some ruffled feathers with people in the community because he, you know, just spoke off hand and may have offended somebody. It was – and it was his first superintendency. I mean, he was – he was learning as he went. But I don’t remember – gosh, I really,

honestly don’t remember anything that was really super-difficult or controversial. I don’t – (long pause) yeah, I don’t really remember anything like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, let’s discuss some of the outreach programs for the park. What were the programs that were going on – and I have – I have a list of a few of them.

What were some of the programs that went on for something like MLK Day?

Gage: Oh, my heavens! (Laughter) That was a long time ago. You know, I remember that we – you know, the park’s staff did outreach programs in the schools. And Cheryl Brown Henderson and her team at the Foundation did a lot of outreach programs both for schools and with different non-profit organizations. I remember going to Lincoln, Nebraska, to see a presentation, and I think that may have been MLK day. One year that we did that, and I know – (long pause) I know I remember riding there with the regional director. But I don’t – and I remember we had – there was – there was a Constitution Day, or maybe a Constitution Week, event where we had this huge copy of the Constitution, and we took it over to the local shopping mall on the west side of town and had an event where people signed the Constitution. And, even as the administrative officer, I went out and did some interpretive programs with – for schools and over at the Kansas Museum of History, there, on the west side of Topeka. And, you know, just telling the –telling the story of Brown v. Board. And again, it was such a small staff that we all had to pitch in and wear a lot of different hats. But I honestly don’t remember a specific event for Martin Luther King Day.

Interviewer: Okay. What about National Park Week?

Gage: (Long pause) Yeah, I’m sorry, I don’t remember. (Laughter) Interviewer: That’s all right! And then, March for the Parks?

Gage: (Long pause) No, I’m sorry, I don’t remember that either.

Interviewer: That’s fine. What were some of the major projects at the site during your tenure? Gage: (Long pause) Hmm.

Interviewer: Or, I guess – maybe I can rephrase this question a bit. What was your involvement in some of the major projects, like the GMP, the Interpretive Plan?

Gage: Yeah. I remember – I remember the General Management Plan – being involved in that and making the arrangements for their meetings. And the Interpretive Planning as well. (Long pause) Again, my support – my involvement in that was primarily administrative. You know, just making sure that they had the materials that they needed. You know, whatever – if they were using slide projectors, that kind of thing, for their meetings at that – at that time. That was pre-PowerPoint. And just, you know, handling logistics, getting meetings rooms – meeting rooms

set up and making sure that the chairs and the tables and everything that they needed to have their meetings were there. But I was – I was not actively involved in, you know, developing language for the GMP. I probably edited the drafts in term of – in terms of, you know, grammar and spelling and that kind of thing and took some notes, but I was not – you know, again, I wasn’t in a position where I was a decision maker during those kinds of meetings.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, you were involved in the establishment and development of the park’s first website. Can you talk about it? What you did, what the results were?

Gage: (Long pause) So, I actually, took a – I found a class in HTML coding at Washburn University and took the class to learn how to create websites. And just – they were very basic HTML websites. I – there was probably, maybe, ten or twelve pages to our website. And just sharing some of the historic photographs and the basics of the story, and then links to other resources like the Brown Foundation and resources at Washburn University related to Brown v. Board, and things like links to other Civil Rights sites within the National Park Service.

Interviewer: Okay. Were you pleased with the results?

Gage: At the time I was, but I’m sure now, if I were to see them now, I’d be like “Oh my god, that’s terrible! Whoever put that up on the internet?” (laughter)

Interviewer: Did you think that something could have been done better, or should have been done differently with the – with the website?

Gage: No, I think for the time period it was – it was fine. It was fine. But, like I said, it was just – it was the very beginning of parks having websites. And the internet was brand new to most of us, at that time. So, it was just not nearly as sophisticated or as stylish – as well designed as things are now.

Interviewer: Okay. What were your responsibilities regarding budget and procurement during your tenure?

Gage: I tracked the budget for the Park, so it was my responsibility to make sure that the money got spent in a timely manner and that we didn’t go over budget. And also make sure that we didn’t spend the money on anything inappropriate. And I did - I had a contracting warrant, so I did all of the purchasing for the park at that time.

The only thing that I didn’t do was contract – or, construction contracting. So, construction contracting is done by our Denver Service Center because of the high dollar amounts and the complexity of large construction projects. But, you know, I did – I did contracts for getting the offices, at the post office building – getting them repainted. I did the purchase order for the new furniture – all the new furniture that we bought, and the computers. Wish I would have kept notes on this stuff! (laughter) I never think to do that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: That’s all right. Did you experience any difficulties in these areas, especially in the budget?

Gage: Not really, it seemed like we had adequate budget for what we needed to be doing at that time.

Interviewer: Okay. Discuss the ways the park has changed since you came on duty there. Do you think it has improved?

Gage: Oh, for sure! I mean the building has been completely renovated. It’s beautiful. The exhibits are beautiful. You know, now, there’s actually a place for people to come and experience the story and experience the school. It is – it is certainly better than it was. You know, I mean, we basically had a travelling trunk that we took around to schools to tell the story. And – it is. I was very impressed when I went back to visit after it was all said and done. And, yeah, it’s – I do think it’s an asset to the city of Topeka. I – you know, may not have brought the economic engine that they had hoped that it would, but I think there were a lot of other factors that have affected economics in Topeka, as well. But it’s – you know, it’s an important story, and it deserves to be told, and it deserves to be a national park.

Interviewer: Absolutely! Did you attend the dedication in 2004, when the park opened for visitors?

Gage: No, I did not. I was supposed to be there. I’d actually even bought a plane ticket to be there, but my husband was dying, and he was very sick right then, so I was not able to go.

Interviewer: Oh, I’m sorry. Gage: It’s okay.

Interviewer: Alight. Regarding the work that you’ve done for Brown v. Board, of what are you most proud?

Gage: (Long pause) You know, I think I am most proud of the two hiring decisions that I made while I was there. One was Treva Gordon, who’s now – I think, her name is Treva Sykes. But she is still – she’s still there, working at the park. Her – she’s gone from being, you know, a part time WG-5 maintenance worker to being their Chief of Facilities. And she’s really an outstanding employee, and I think she – that park is her baby, and she has really dedicated herself to that park. And I think that one of the reasons that the park – that the buildings and the facilities are in as good a shape as they are is because Treva has stayed there and been so devoted to that site. She’s been there for such a long time now. And then, the other person that I hired was Alicia Bullocks, and Alicia was an amazing Administrative Officer. She served as the Acting Superintendent for a while – have you had a chance to talk to her yet?

Interviewer: I don’t believe so.

Gage: Okay, she – you know, she was acting superintendent for a while, but she was really skilled and well educated, and she had – she had bigger dreams. She wanted to be the superintendent, and the regional office (unintelligible) said – finally told her, “You’re never going to get to be a superintendent unless you’re willing to transfer around to some other parks.” And she had four little kids and a husband with a business in Topeka, and she wasn’t able to do that. And so, she ultimately left the National Park Service, and now she’s a GS-14 for the USGS there in that area, and I feel – I really – that is – I’m happy for her that she’s been so successful in her career, but it’s a loss that the National Park Service couldn’t find a way to help her be successful there at Brown v. Board because I think it would have just made a world of difference if she – if some – if a local person from there in Topeka had become a superintendent of that park. I think – I think the park would be even more successful than it is now.

Interviewer: Okay. Aside from those two hires, what do you believe is the most effective thing you’ve done to shape the way the site developed?

Gage: (Long pause), You know, I think one of the things I did was the interpersonal relationships with people in the community. I remember that there was – there was an elderly woman who would come by the office. I’ll bet she came at least once every two weeks. And she was in her eighties, and I honestly don’t remember her name, but I do remember that her husband had – was an attorney, and he had been connected with the Brown case in some way. And she would come by and sit and talk to me, and she would bring her scrapbook and share that with me. And I think that she was – I think, maybe, she felt a little bit disrespected, maybe because of her age – that people didn’t – that, you know, maybe some people on the GMP team didn’t take her seriously. And I spent – I gave her a lot of my time and spent a lot of time listening to her. And I gained a lot from that experience. But, I think, it also helped to heal what could have been a rift between her and the park and made that a more positive relationship. And I also just remember just being out in the community talking to people about the park and about the story and giving them an opportunity to share their experience of being African American in Topeka at that time. And I remember there was a gentleman. He must have lived near the school because, when I would be down at the school, he would show up down there every now and then and talk with me.

And he told me just this heart-breaking story. And at that time, I’m guessing, he was probably in his seventies. But he told me this heart-breaking story. We were talking about discrimination and racism, and he told me this story about how, when he was a young man, and he and his wife had gotten married and started a family. And they had this beautiful little daughter that he was, you know, so in love with and so proud of. And one day, on a Saturday morning, he had gone downtown Topeka to a drugstore to pick up something, and he had his little girl with him, and she was about two or three years old. And she was dressed in just a

beautiful little – and I remember this story so vividly because of the way that he told it, and I could tell that it was really affecting him emotionally. But she was wearing this pretty little yellow dress and white little – white shoes and her hair was all done. And they were in the – in this drugstore, and there was another – there was a mother in there who had a little girl about the same age, who was Caucasian. And the two little children gravitated towards each other right away. And as they reached out hands towards each other, the mother of the other little girl just kind of grabbed her daughter and – you know, to remove her and prevent her from touching this man’s daughter. And how hurt he was by that, and he could see this puzzled look on his daughter’s face like, you know, “What just happened?” And he knew exactly what was happening: that this woman did not want her white child to touch his black child. And how heartbreaking that was for him. And just – I think, being there and listening to those stories is helpful for others. It’s part of a healing process. And I think maybe that may be one of the contributions that I made towards the development of the park. Even though – I mean, it’s not a part of park management. Sometimes the outreach and the relationship building and community building that a new park has to go through, that is an important part of it. You talk about civic engagement, and you think about – you know, you think about GMPs, and you think about public meetings and public hearings and, you know, environmental compliance and all that kind of stuff. But I think that civic engagement can also be, on a more personal level.

Interviewer: I love that story! That’s all I have to say about that. Is there anything that I have not asked you about that you would like to talk about?

Gage: (Humming while thinking) I can’t – you know, I just – when I think about the symposiums that we had, I just think that they were really important. And, you know, the Brown Foundation really – they were the – they were the organizers of the symposiums. You know, the Park was definitely involved and was a partner in that, but the Brown Foundation really was the leader on that. And I I think that was really important to racial healing in Topeka, and in other places too, because so many people came – from around the country came to the symposiums. But I just felt like they were really important, and there were a lot of good things that happened. And I know that things did not end up, ultimately, really well with the Brown Foundation, and maybe some things happened that shouldn’t have happened. But I would also say that some really good things happened as a result of the Foundation, and that shouldn’t be overlooked.

Interviewer: Okay. Right. Well, I’m going to turn off the recording now.

END OF INTERVIEW