

Walt Campbell

- 15:51:42:18 [Eric Darling]: And on you. Thank you
- 15:51:48:21 [Mickey Youmans]: Clapo. That they say
- 15:51:51:22 [Eric Darling]: That's an industry term.
- 15:51:55:15 [Walt Campbell]: You got the clap.
- 15:51:57:20 [Tom Kohler]: I was getting ready to say it, but go back and here you throw right at me.
- 15:52:02:02 [Walt Campbell]: That was implicit, I think.
- 15:52:03:13 [Tom Kohler]: Say the word.
- 15:52:03:18 [Eric Darling]: We're good.
- 15:52:04:03 [Tom Kohler]: Ready? Alright. Well Walt, thanks for taking the time to be with us this afternoon. And if you don't mind, could you tell us your name and also spell it and also after you do that, if we could get your preferred pronoun?
- 15:52:19:13 [Walt Campbell]: Sure. Walter Campbell, W-A-L-T-E-R C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L. And he my preferred pronoun. Is that all you need?
- 15:52:31:17 [Tom Kohler]: That's it
- 15:52:32:06 [Walt Campbell]: So far. Okay.
- 15:52:33:07 [Tom Kohler]: Now, if you don't mind, would you talk a little bit about yourself, who you are, a little bit about your Savannah history, and also a little bit about what you've done professionally?
- 15:52:41:18 [Walt Campbell]: Sure. I was born and raised here in Savannah and went to several elementary schools, then went to Armstrong State College, graduated for there with a history degree, then got into University of North Carolina Greensboro to do European history. Did that with a combination of Latin American history. Got my master's degree there. Then went on to Chapel Hill where I got my PhD in southern history. So then
- 15:53:12:20 while, and in Chapel Hill I started working with another historian who had become a filmmaker and did a lot of filmmaking presentations for elementary schools, for other types of things. Just a whole swath of things. We did television programs for UNC Public Television on and all, all kinds of things. Then we, I did a bunch of other work on my own, had a, an Emmy

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- 15:53:41:21 winning program Mickey helped with, it's called the Editor in the Dragon that dealt with this man who was a southern North Carolina newspaper editor who won the Pulitzer Prize.
- 15:53:55:09 [Walt Campbell]: His name is Horace Carter. But he did it for writing editorials against the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1950s. And since that time, I've been mainly focusing on writing books. What I've written books for the big, it's called the William Rand Kenan Charitable Trust. I wrote a book, a biography of a man named William Rand Kenan, wrote a history of Duke Medicine. I'm working on, currently on a couple of things. I'm trying to do a history of the Bamboo Farm here in Savannah. And I'm
- 15:54:30:00 also working at this point on another book on Rand Lee Foundation, which was a foundation that was started by this man Kenan up in North Carolina. And it deals with the research that goes on with cows and milk that, you know, has taken place over time. So that's what I'm currently working on. I got those projects going, you know, several others that people want me to do. And I guess, I don't know, four or five books now that I've written. So
- 15:55:00:04 this is one I'm gonna talk about today a little bit that I hope to do in the future. 'cause it comes back to my general original interest, which is Savannah history. So
- 15:55:10:07 [Tom Kohler]: Let me ask you, if I may, growing up in Savannah, was your family faith connected?
- 15:55:16:05 [Walt Campbell]: Yes. My family was fa very much so. I guess my father's family came here from Waycross in the 1930s. Wasn't much happening there. They were sports oriented people. He became a sports writer for Savannah Morning News. And then he went on to become general manager of the baseball team out there at Grayson Stadium for years. He did that. And so my dad and his family, very sports oriented. My mom moved here about 1941 from Houston where her family had been connected to the Methodist church
- 15:55:50:08 and all the way back to Indiana, to the Methodist Church. So they came, they got very active at Wesley Monumental. And when my mom and dad married, my dad became interested too, gradually. So what they became MYF counselors for years for us and drove the bus. My dad drove the bus for these summer
- 15:56:12:07 trips that we used to take and go out.
- 15:56:17:04 [Walt Campbell]: But my mom was very active in, and she liked the ecumenical movement here in Savannah. But I remember her telling, and I think I've got this correct, is when, you know, Mickve Israel fire and they needed a alternate congregation. They came across Wesley and I remember she was talking about that. But yeah, she became a college counselor. She was always trying to do something in terms of Methodism and faith and that kind

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- 15:56:47:10 of thing. For me, you know, I married a woman, Mary Lee Melton, whose father was a Methodist minister, and she continues to go every Sunday. But like me, you know, she's more interested now in the, the music than in the message. But she still likes to listen. And, you know, I I I can't claim any particular faith at this point, truthfully, you know, I'm an academic who has put aside some of those beliefs. But, you know, for me it's still,
- 15:57:21:22 I can never, never shake it. You know, I keep wondering, does, okay, when I'm there on my deathbed, what am I gonna think that there is nothing happening or there is something happening. So there, that pretty much sums it up.
- 15:57:35:07 [Tom Kohler]: Thank you. I know that as a story and you're here today to help us understand a certain part of this community's history. And do you just want to dive in and let's run at it?
- 15:57:47:20 [Walt Campbell]: I think that's probably the best way since, you know, I've done so much research on a person and thing in Savannah that's relatively unknown to begin with. You know, it's what I, the, the topic here for what y'all are doing is faith in action. You know, Savannah's interfaith community, and this person, this family is really wasn't much faith in action in the 1830s through the 1850s. They were the Unitarian community here. I'll tell, I'll talk a little bit about that. But what
- 15:58:20:18 happens is one of the sons of this Unitarian Group moves away, you know, and comes back and then starts putting the Unitarian faith back into action. So to give that a little background, some big background. Who were the Unitarians? (phone dings) Well, is that me?
- 15:58:42:14 [Eric Darling]: It might be. Yeah.
- 15:58:44:04 [Walt Campbell]: Sorry.
- 15:58:45:01 [Eric Darling]: That's okay. Alright, we'll let you take it from top.
- 15:58:46:11 [Mickey Youmans]: Pick it up. Go from there.
- 15:58:48:00 [Walt Campbell]: No. Okay. I know this is gonna be follow up. Let me just turn this off. How do I turn my phone off? I never turn it off.
- 15:59:03:12 [Eric Darling]: Maybe a long press on the power button
- 15:59:06:13 [Walt Campbell]: Here.
- 15:59:07:10 [Tom Kohler]: Left side. Is it an iPhone?
- 15:59:09:10 [Mickey Youmans]: Want me to do it?
- 15:59:09:21 [Walt Campbell]: Yes it is.

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- 15:59:10:11 [Tom Kohler]: I'm sorry. Right side.
- 15:59:12:11 [Walt Campbell]: Okay.
- 15:59:15:03 [Mickey Youmans]: Can you see it?
- 15:59:17:04 [Walt Campbell]: Oh, slide power off. Okay. Alright. Sorry. So I'm not sure where I started it, but let's go back and talk about who were the Unitarians. So the Unitarians were very different than most faiths that you had in the south period. Unitarians were mostly New England people who came south. And specifically a lot of 'em were very well off. They were also merchants and others who came to Savannah in this particular case. And
- 15:59:52:10 what they did was they, there are several beliefs that very peculiar to Unitarians that kind of, you know, challenged the people in Savannah. One of them was, they believed, you know, that Jesus Christ wasn't the son of God. You know, he was a great prophet that people should follow, but he just wasn't the son of God. So that, that, that's pretty one strike against
- 16:00:16:08 him for most, you know, faiths here in town. You know, they also believed, you know, that things that were, were not God made. You know, you can't blame this on God. Things that are here are human made, which means humans can take care of them too. So that was also a, a problem for a lot of folk here, you know, because, you know, it was a clearly, God was ruled everything. So that was going to be why they were here. So this presented a problem for the Unitarians. I'm gonna get in a
- 16:00:50:04 second tell you who they were and that kind of thing. But right off the bat, the Unitarians in the north become the most active vociferous people against slavery. And they, they are the leading abolitionists everywhere. So that becomes a real problem for all the congregations. There are two or three congregations formed in the south of Unitarians in the 1820s and thirties.
- 16:01:16:08 [Walt Campbell]: That's it. There's one in Charleston, one in Augusta, and one in Savannah. And they all have a big problem with this. They have the both of them. The one thing that I mentioned, the truth about the various beliefs about Jesus Christ and Augusta, right before the congregation is formed here in Augusta, what they do is the Unitarians try to get together in an interfaith operation. Say, look, we believe this. We wanna work together to create a Sunday school here in Augusta. Well, at first it works out, but then all of a sudden the Unitarians are told by
- 16:01:48:19 everybody else, no, sorry, we can't do this because you don't believe what we believe. Well, okay, it doesn't go that far in Savannah, but what happens 1830, 31 a group of Unitarians who are people who have come down from the north, wealthy merchants, for the most part, they want to form a congregation. At that

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point, Savannah would grant religions a certain place to build, you know, themselves a house of worship. And so they're granted one in Brown

16:02:18:18 Ward, I think it is, and 1830. So they actually start forming a congregation in 1831. Well, what you have to remember now is the Unitarians throughout, there's this early period from 1830 to 1859. They disappear in Savannah and never come back until the 1960s. You know, I think you have interviewed somebody here associated with, but in any event, what happens is in the 1830s, they're granted land and, but then they start building a

16:02:51:20 church and twice it's burned down. You know? But because obviously it's the same sort of thing happens in Augusta too, you know, the, the, there's just problems. And it's, you know, these are hardheaded wealthy people who are among a bunch of ignorant southerners for the most part.

16:03:11:23 [Walt Campbell]: I think that that would be the way that they look at it, because these people, they believed in strictly in education. You know, that was one of the things, you gotta be educated, you know, our congregations, we like people who are rambunctious, who rebel against standard thought. That's what we want. We want our congregations to be thinking people. So they, you know, all in all, these are very different sorts who have come here, wealthy New Englanders for the most part, who have very different ideas about it. But they get this church started, they

16:03:45:18 have problems from the very beginning in the nine, in 1840, the American Unitarian Association sends down a minister because basically they don't have one that's there. I mean, you have to understand, these people have probably between 15 and 30 members throughout this whole history. So it's not a large congregation, you know, so they ask for the American Unitarian

16:04:12:05 Society to send them somebody, you know, because they've had a temporary minister. And so they do. And there's a man named Middleton Mock, I think is, he is, but the people in the Unitarians, in Savannah get word that he's an abolitionist. So here's where the, the things turn in Savannah with the Unitarians, they may be, you know, they may have other people who are abolitionists, but their money is bound up, not directly. If they own

16:04:43:00 slaves, they own a couple. Most of them are, are people who just deal in slave. They bring 'em in, sell 'em, and that kind of thing. But they don't really, oh, maybe one or two for house support and that kind of thing. So what happens is they are vested very much in slavery. Northern Unitarians are not. So the family, we're gonna talk, I'm gonna talk about it. The Baldwin family is some of the founders of the Unitarians there. And they,

16:05:12:17 their family is the leading abolitionist family up in Massachusetts, in other words.

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- 16:05:18:12 [Walt Campbell]: So what happens in Savannah with the Unitarians is they become, they, they continue to develop, they get a congregation. They finally get a, a church built beautiful church, exquisite beautiful church. And I, and it may be the one that's, that's still around. I just don't know how that works out. I haven't completely figured that out. But, so in the 1840s, then they get this full-time minister named Pierpoint and Pierpoint also, you know, from the outside. But Pierpoint's son comes in, I
- 16:05:53:07 think it's his son, and he's the one that writes Jingle Bells, you know? And so that's kind of the crowning point of what the Unitarians do, basically before they disband, because by 1859, they, they're having trouble finding a minister. They're having, you know, eight or 10 people are going. It's just, it's a wreck. Because by that point, you know, abolition slavery has become whacked, you know, right up against the Civil
- 16:06:21:21 War in the 1859. So basically they disband the congregation, you know, and so I think this is the church that they built that will later be the one that the slaves buy the freedmen after the Civil War by and roll it through the streets of Savannah over to make a church out of it for themselves, an Episcopal church. You know? So in any event, what happens in Savannah, there are two
- 16:06:53:00 families, there are five families that start this church. Two of them are the Baldwin family and the Philbrick family. Okay? They, the most important one that I'll mention here is are they're both, both. So the Baldwin family, big merchants, wealthy, and they, they established themselves Philbrick, this, I don't want to burden with genealogy here, but the
- 16:07:18:18 Philbrick family marries into a Unitarian minister's family. And she moves down here to Savannah, and she's part of it, well, her father, the Unitarian woman's father, he comes down and works as a minister for a while, you know?
- 16:07:36:16 [Walt Campbell]: And so what happens is, Baldwin, this man we're talking about, and I just kind of lay the groundwork here, George Johnson Baldwin, we'll move back to, he was born in Savannah, 1856, you know, his family will move away after the Civil War up to New York. He will move back in the 1880s, and he becomes president of Savannah Electric Company, you know? And so that, not only that, but he's president of several other
- 16:08:13:11 electric companies across the south and is the Jacksonville, Tampa, Key West Electric companies, Houston, and another one in Texas. In any event, very wealthy people. He comes back and he gets hooked up with a company called Stone and Webster out of Boston, which is basically one of these real, truly Unitarian families in Boston. And so he, he begins to start
- 16:08:43:02 reforms here as he becomes more wealthy. So just, you know, just to, to back up a minute, what happens with the, his Baldwin ancestors who start the church, they are what they do as they become very involved with certain things in the city,

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charities and other things. The Seamens, one of the early ones, I forget the actually the name of that

- 16:09:08:19 beginning name of it, but Seamens Museum and the, the Philbrick family members of the local, the 1830s, they're members of the city council. You know, they're very, very active people. But what happens is, when the Unitarians fall apart in the 1859 and kind of abandoned by then, our man, George Johnson Baldwin, his dad is, works with a, it is Baldwin something
- 16:09:37:08 and Paddle for the largest shipping group in Savannah at that point. They are investing in railroads, they're investing in steamships companies, you know, they are becoming super wealthy and there, so what happens during the Civil War? Well, George Johnson, Baldwin's father who has married and a Unitarian woman, you know, from the north. So Baldwins is at the age of three when the, when the Unitarian congregation breaks down, you know, and
- 16:10:10:09 they stay in Savannah though, and his father becomes really angry about the whole abolitionist movement.
- 16:10:18:15 [Walt Campbell]: And he becomes the first owner of the first ship for Mark as Mark and whatever they call it, for ships that are allowed to go out and take other ships for contraband. So this is the first Confederate Marque and Reprisal, I think is what they call it. So this Baldwin guy, you know, who is a Unitarian, you know, he becomes this, you know, this guy, and actually one of the members of this ship, this boat
- 16:10:51:03 that they go out, is a man named William Mahome, who is one of the leaders of the Wanderer slave ship that has had drawn so much attention here, you know. So in any event, these are some fairly unsavory characters that are associated now because they're defending their, their economic livelihood in Savannah and by perpetrating slavery. Okay? What happens, Baldwin's
- 16:11:20:02 father stays in Savannah during the Civil War, you know, and doesn't leave. And one of the members of the Unitarian church, that's, you know, the church is gone, but is Richard Arnold, you know, Richard Arnold, you know that name. Here he is the person who's then mayor when Grant comes into Savannah and they send, and they surrender the town. So a Unitarian is the guy who's the mayor at that point, you know? So that's, that's, that's just
- 16:11:51:05 kinda a little fun fact to go in there, because that, that was one family, it was in there. Oh, well, Baldwin leaves, George Johnson goes with him. He's a young man. His dad moves up to Brooklyn, he's gonna be a big importer of fertilizer and other things up there. They're gonna make it into fertilizer. Well, George Johnson Baldwin goes up there, goes into the Brooklyn to Polytechnic Institute, gets an education there, and he goes on

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- 16:12:20:08 to MIT from there, gets an engineering degree at MIT, very smart guy, goes back to Georgia, starts working in the Chestatee Pyrite Mine in Western, in Lumpkin County, or I think it is.
- 16:12:34:04 [Walt Campbell]: In any event, that's what he's doing, you know, there. But then he moves to Savannah, he marries a woman with real important connections there. So there's a lot of wealth. So 1880s, 1890s street cars are going in Savannah, you know, they're going out to all of the various places around out to Wilmington Island, out to the other resorts they call it. You know, that's because, and there, and what's happening is, is there's probably six, eight different streetcar lines with
- 16:13:08:06 six or eight different streetcar owners on it. So they're not all the same people, and they're mule drawn. You know, the mules pull those streetcar out there, and this is the 1860s, 1870s, they're going out there. And so when Baldwin arrives in the 1880s, when he's come back to live there, what's happening in the 1880s electrification of street railways. And so
- 16:13:36:11 what happens then is the big makers of our electrical equipment for the street railways, they need these businesses, these small mule drawn. And so there's six or seven, but the people can't really afford here in Savannah or anywhere else to you know, com. What they have to do is, the big companies like General Electric and Thompson Electric, they have to
- 16:14:06:15 take stock in these local companies with local stockholders. 1890s comes economic depression. Suddenly the electrical manufacturers who are providing all the electrical equipment for the street railways, they can't pay their bills to the banks where they loan to make the electrical equipment. So what happens all over the United States, all of these small,
- 16:14:34:11 little locally owned companies that once existed, they now are, are just kind of subject to what, what's gonna happen. So Baldwin goes back, connects with the people in Boston, Stone and Webster, electrical engineers. Stone and Webster's wives are both Unitarian, you know, they both went to MIT like he did. So they, they set that up.
- 16:15:01:18 [Walt Campbell]: They said, well, you know, what you need to do is help us. So what they come in and do is they buy up all of these street car lines and consolidate them into one company, the Savannah Electric Company. And then Stone and Webster does this in about 70 cities across the U. So they're huge. So now Baldwin, who has watched his mother and father, and all of those who started the Unitarian community just go sad because it disappeared. He's going to come back and he's gonna show 'em. So he starts
- 16:15:37:02 all kinds of reforms, you know? And like in 1840s, his father and grandfather way back had actually let their new church, the new Unitarian Church, Georgia Historical Society, come in and give lectures. There it was before the building

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was complete. George Johnson Baldwin actually starts, he gets the Georgia Historical Society to agree to establish a White public

16:16:09:03 library within the Georgia Historical Society. And this is, you know, this is before the Black people start their own library. And before Savannah actually starts its own, too. But so what happens then? He, he, he's involved with everything. His, his forebearers back in the past had been involved with beautification. Baldwin - one of

16:16:35:16 the first things he does, he becomes associated with beautification of the Colonial Cemetery out there. Who does he hire to beautify? Guy named Berckmans, who actually was a pulmonologist in Augusta, whose Fruitland nurseries actually formed the basis of where the Augusta National Country Club now sits. So this guy, Baldwin, per he knows who Berkman is, he hires

16:17:02:18 him to come in and design the old Colonial Cemetery to redo and move along. So you, you're looking, do you want to ask me something at this point? Just let me keep going.

16:17:13:15 [Tom Kohler]: I, I'm just stunned. So keep going. Yeah,

16:17:15:19 [Walt Campbell]: I mean,

16:17:16:03 [Tom Kohler]: This is just like, whoa...

16:17:17:03 [Walt Campbell]: Yeah, well, I mean, and what happens is, excuse me, go ahead. Actually,

16:17:21:22 [Tom Kohler]: Timewise, maybe we should make a shift.

16:17:24:21 [Eric Darling]: Okay, let's cut and then we can do that.

16:17:26:18 [Tom Kohler]: Yeah. Alright.

16:17:27:09 [Mickey Youmans]: You want cut? Cutting,.

16:17:30:00 [Eric Darling]: Rolling. Thank you. You can settle and start when you're ready, Mickey.

16:17:37:04 [Mickey Youmans]: Alright, hang on a second. Lemme put this over here where I won't mush it. Mush it, mush it down. Mush it. There you go. Alright, that's full. So let's just kind of pick up where we left off. Maybe if you gotta back up into a little bit.

16:17:52:08 [Walt Campbell]: Sure. So when George Johnson Baldwin returns to Savannah in the 1880s, he brings with him the memories of his family as both sides of them were the most important Unitarians in Savannah. They, and he had, you know,

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Unitarians, they married into the family all around. And so he brings that memory back, and he also comes back with the people he's working with. Huge electrical

16:18:25:21 engineering firms, Stone and Webster of Boston, who are also Unitarians, well, at least the wives were Stone of Stone and Webster were, because it's very interesting that men at this period who were scientists and others, and late, late 19th, early 20th century, they didn't like to talk about religion because at that point it was kind of thing, you weren't really a scientist if you believed in religion, you know, you had, if you were really a scientist, you believed in logic, data, et cetera, and that kind

16:18:56:05 of thing.

16:18:56:12 [Walt Campbell]: So that's where Baldwin, so you never hear, you never hear Baldwin when he comes back, say, I'm a unit, you know, he doesn't claim any religious faith. His wife is probably a Presbyterian. But in any event, what happens is he comes back and he's backed by these people, you know, basically Stone and Webster who, who are Unitarians out of Boston, which they called the Province of Reason for a reason. And so he gets there and he starts saying, okay, you know, my people were interested

16:19:27:15 in education, they were interested in charities. So as I mentioned a little bit earlier, they, they, he tries to get a library established for White Savannahians through the Georgia Historical Society. And they do it, the historical society agrees to form a reading room, basically, where kids can come in, White kids can come in and read, and it lasts for a few years. And then they build, you know, the bigger one on Bull Street, you know, which is still segregated, but actually the Black people in Savannah had

16:19:59:22 one before the White people. But in any event, so Baldwin is instrumental in getting the Georgia Historical Society to do that, you know, which is really a big deal. Well, this is probably his height, the powers from like 1900 to 1910. He's in on helping to get the (Great) Savannah Races in the city, bring those in. You know, he's also helpful in just doing any number of things. One of the most significant of which was, and he was on the Park

16:20:30:17 and Tree Commission, you know, and he, he said, what he wants to do is convince Savannahians of all the wonderful things, they have this beautiful place, you gotta know how to plant trees, flowers, or et cetera. So he's, he pushes that on the Plant and Tree Commission.

16:20:46:04 [Walt Campbell]: This is in 1890s, early 19 hundreds, you know, when he's doing this. This was the Colonial Cemetery stuff too, at the same time. And one of the Unitarian visitors who comes down and visits with him writes this editorial in the Unitarian newspaper that says, you know what? I went out to that beautiful Forsyth Park. And he said, and you'd be amazed, all the military groups want to

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use it as a marching ground, you know, and he said, all of this beautiful space is wasted. Why don't they

16:21:20:06 build a playground for kids to play on? And it say, this was before, you know, the whole thing was established. And you know, he just say, he says, it's, it's time to set these military companies aside. And so the mil, somebody tells him, well, yeah, the military companies are gradually going away. So there was an impetus there to help reform Forsyth Park through the Park and Tree Commission, you know, and specifically when he gets into the

16:21:49:14 street cars too, they want to beautify the squares. They want to plant trees and other things in the squares. And throughout Savannah, because Savannah, with all of its resorts and out in the area that people are coming in to go out on the street cars. He wants it to be beautiful when they come in. So he's all pushing, you know, it's all the time to have this beautification throughout the city. Well, another thing

16:22:17:02 he does is he, he sets up these Kate Baldwin Free Kindergartens. He starts funding them. They're gonna be open to anybody in Savannah, you know, they even have a Black one that gets started, but it's named after his mother, who is the daughter of a Unitarian minister. You know? So it's this sense of education, you know, he wants people to be educated, he wants to

16:22:47:07 stimulate it. So the Kate Baldwin Free Kindergartens, they give money, they bring, hire women to do it.

16:22:53:07 [Walt Campbell]: Some of the Savannah ones originally, but they also hire Unitarians to come in. And not only do they set up kindergartens where kids can go to the kindergarten, but they set up the training school. So, in other words, the teachers who are gonna teach in these are brought in and taught. Plus they are taught in a whole school afterwards how to do this. Plus they form these Baldwin, you know, I, I forget exactly the name after school mothers' clubs. So the mothers of the kids and the

16:23:25:17 kindergartens can get together and talk about what they want to do for the kids. And then plus they, you know, this becomes a big deal. And they're pushing really hard towards getting the city to make these kindergartens part of the whole school network in Savannah. Well, one of these things that's based on, there's this, there's this German educator named Froebel. And Froebel has the belief that the way you teach kids in kindergarten is

16:23:55:08 you get them to use their hands to manipulate wood, to paint, to go out and observe nature. You know, let 'em have more free reign than you would normally think, but let start moving them towards a sense of what they'll do later in life, you know? And so that's what these Unitarians are doing all over the US is adopting these German, you know, idea of kindergarten education, which becomes very, very important for a while, you know, and

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- 16:24:25:17 then kind of disappears. So he starts, they start about eight to 10 of these Kate Baldwin Free Kindergartens. One of 'em is, you know, the, the Jewish community has kind of their own, and they start to join, but then they don't. And, and it is understandable 'cause they're real. They wanna protect their traditions of faith there.
- 16:24:49:16 [Walt Campbell]: And, but there again, Baldwin is real close with the Jewish community because, you know, his father and other relatives, back in the olden days, while the Unitarians were getting started, they worked with Isaac Minis and these other Minis family peoples. And so they stick with it. And when Baldwin is in Savannah working the most, he's with the Jewish mayor, mayor named Herman Myers, which is Myers Junior High School, of course. So in any event, they become involved with consolidating
- 16:25:20:02 the street railways. They're involved with these kindergartens. The kindergarten becomes rough because like, there's a group called the King's Daughters, you know, who wants to join with them. And they tell Baldwin initially, yeah, we're gonna join a whole and get together, but suddenly they pull out, they're not gonna build a kindergarten together. So it's not clear what's going on at this point. But, you know, it has something to do with Baldwin's wealth and power, because he comes in, he's president
- 16:25:53:18 suddenly of the street railways, you know, they own an electric company, you know, he's controlling how the races, more or less he fights against, to separate the races on the street cars, because there's lots of people who want to put 'em in separate cars and wants. But he says, you know, the difference here is between clean Black people and clean White people. He said, it's not just race. I don't mind sitting
- 16:26:19:23 next to a, a Black person who is obviously clean. You know, so it's a kind of, you know, it's, it's pretty peculiar. But this, this continues to tumble outwards, his wife Lucy becomes involved with music and theater in Savannah starts all of these. I mean, it's probably the origin of the little theater in Savannah is through her staging these things just in
- 16:26:49:19 various places where they can rent. Well, also connected to Lucy is the fact that when she comes in, she's, you know, she gets into the Women's Club of Savannah. It's known as that at that point, The Women's Club. Well, what happens is she says, okay, what we need to do is we need to name this after the Countess Huntington who actually gave the money to John
- 16:27:19:17 Whitefield to start Bethesda.
- 16:27:21:17 [Walt Campbell]: You know, so that's what we need. We need to name it the Huntington Club. So up until like, she was the president of the Women's Club, that's what it was. But she has the name change to the Huntington Club. So all of this is kind of ticking some people in Savannah off in some ways, because they

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don't, they know who Baldwin was for the most part. They know what he believed. He knows all this Unitarian history, these Unitarian people are staffing the Baldwin Free Kindergartens, you know, they're run that kind of thing. He's getting control of the street

16:27:55:12 railways an electric company. And, and basically he, he's in a, not only is he in on that, but he becomes a liaison out to Georgia State Industrial College, Savannah State, you know, he goes out and starts working with his cousin, William Baldwin, who's one of the leaders of the Southeastern Educational Association, which is trying to figure out which way Black

16:28:25:19 colleges should go, should they go the way of Booker T. Washington? And that is with industrial education, you know, basically you're Black people, you're born to do labor. You need to learn how to do indu. You don't need to think about math, you don't need to think about literature. You don't need to think about that stuff. You need to focus on what you can do with your hands and get by that way. Well, you know, W.E.B. Du Bois

16:28:53:10 completely the opposite, you know, W.E.B. Du Bois, I say, no, there's no end to what Black people can do. Let 'em study, let 'em do. So you've got in Savannah Atlanta University where kind of W.E. Boy, DB Du Bois' people hold sway. And down here in Savannah Industrial College, well, the big philanthropists become involved. Baldwin's cousin, as part of the Southeastern Educational Association, wants to implement the Booker T.

16:29:21:15 Washington part at Savannah State... Georgia Institute.

16:29:26:22 [Walt Campbell]: And so they begin to push that, you know, and, and, and Baldwin, really, I can, you know, I, George Johnson Baldwin, I can't figure out where he fits in with this, but he goes with his cousin out to Georgia State Industrial College for Black people, for Negroes, I think they call it. But, and so he's, he's emphasizing that, well, there's this guy named Monroe Work, a black man who was out there working at the college. And I, I don't want to get too deep into this, but Savannah's

16:29:59:18 Black community is pretty divided between this guy named John Deveaux who was really important. He was owned the Savannah Tribune, and he was really important. And then this other group of people out at Savannah State under Monroe Work, and they stay divided. So Monroe Work, he can't decide the Black man. He can't, he writes all this stuff, you would love it. He writes all this stuff about the, the shrimping industry, the fish

16:30:27:12 industry out at, at Thunderbolt, Isle of Hope All, I mean, it's so good. He talks about all the Black people and their work there. But in any event, Monroe Work starts banging heads. Well, George Johnsons Baldwin's wife decides that she's gonna help out Monroe Work. So she goes as a White woman and speaks to the Black Men's Sunday Lunch Club or whatever, I think something like that, which

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is led by Monroe Work. So she goes, as a White woman there, takes another woman with her who presents other stuff, and

- 16:30:58:11 they talk, you know, to this. And, you know, the Black community's real thankful about, wow, this woman came out and talked to us. And, you know, so Baldwin, they're trying stuff across the race lines, you know, and some of it's pretty conservative, some of it's fairly liberal, that kind of thing.
- 16:31:16:15 [Walt Campbell]: And Lucy, his George Johnson Baldwin's wife tries, starts this whole effort through the Huntington Club to go out and get Black folk to clean up their yards. And they actually have people who come around and inspect the yards once a month to see if they picked up trash. And that kind of, and it's works, you know, I mean, you know, they start cleaning up these neighborhoods and that kind of thing. But in any event, I, I, I'm not, I haven't finally figured out exactly why it falls
- 16:31:49:15 apart. There's a man named George Tiedeman, who was mayor for several years, who was a real close ally with Baldwin. And then the, the Jewish mayor, Herman Myers had, he'd gone through several terms, but he dropped out. So, but in any event, Tiedeman loses out. But the big deal is Baldwin, while he is still in power, 1906, I think it is, he wants to start something called the Associated Charities of Savannah, the Associated
- 16:32:22:08 Charities of Savannah. He's saying, look, you know, this is shortly after the 1890s, the depression, lots of people are streaming into Savannah looking for work. They're, you know, poor, they can't find jobs, et cetera, et cetera. So some of these people that have money in Savannah, they want to do something for these poor folk, but they don't know how to do it. You know, I do, I go hand it out to that guy with a sign on the street out there. No, we don't
- 16:32:48:17 do. So Baldwin says, okay, what we're gonna do is we're gonna, we're gonna organize a place where you can get clearinghouse information on qualified people. So that, in other words, you come to us and talk to us, and we'll tell you what is the best way to give your money so that anybody, all of these people come together in associated charities to talk about the best way so they can get information.
- 16:33:14:22 [Walt Campbell]: Who do they give to? How many people, et cetera, you know? So that is formed, he formed that, you know, in like 19 six, and it goes along for a while and then goes boom. When he, well, it is basically he falls out a lot of the people around him die, you know, or go or outta office. And then he is drafted during World War I to go be the head of the Hog Island shipyard up in Pennsylvania. So he leaves to go run
- 16:33:45:20 that thing, you know, and that, and that kind of eliminates him. Then he goes to the West Coast to run a big shipping operation out there. He dies in 1927 or something like that. So in any event, you know, what I'm working on, and I'm still

Walt Campbell

trying to figure out exactly, is, you know, it seems to me what happens is Baldwin's family start this Unitarian process in Savannah. It's rough go of it. It doesn't last long, you know, but the inspiration,

16:34:17:07 the family connections Unitarian remain, plus the business connections. So when he gets back, he's kind of like, okay, dudes, you know, we did, we weren't able to do it at this point, but we're gonna try many of the things we can do now to, to implement these changes and these things. So that's, that, that's basically the story I'm working on. It wasn't Unitarians come interfaith cooperation till much later. You can ask the woman tomorrow

16:34:46:21 about it. But what it was is faith in action by this one man who was connected with the Unitarians, and he, I mean, it was some of, some of the most progressive reforms in the south in Savannah through this guy, until they just kind of disappeared again. You know? So that's, that's my story, and I'm sticking to it

16:35:12:10 [Mickey Youmans]: When, and yeah. So when you say it disappeared, sort of, sort of like, what timeframe is that?

16:35:17:08 [Walt Campbell]: Yep. Well, they, they moved, Baldwin moves back to New York when he takes up during World War I, when he takes up, you know, with the shipyard mail and, and the family goes with him now, his, his, his sons and daughters are in, and one son is in Jacksonville, Florida. You know, one son works for the Savannah Red Brick Company. You know, some point, I don't know how that happened, but in any event, so yeah, I mean that, so he goes out west, run the shipping, and then I think

16:35:50:07 I, I'm not even, then he builds a house in Asheville, and I didn't even cover that part. He's a real big promoter of, you know, the nature and forming all of these national parks and this kind of stuff. He joins with all these other folk to do it. So I think they probably live in Asheville for a good bit of time. And he dies up at the big hospital in Baltimore. What is it? And you know, I, I can't remember the name of it, but it's, it's the big hospital there.

16:36:18:15 So yeah, I mean, Savannah has changed a lot a, you know, when he leaves and, but there's, there's so much put into place. But one thing we can just need to return to is most people, when they hear, they don't, they don't know who George Johnson Baldwin is, you know, at all. But they know who Stone and Webster is, because there is the Stone and Webster Chophouse down at the riverfront they built with the old Savannah Electric company plant.

16:36:52:10 Baldwin had that built in 1912, and that's the one that the guy comes along later buys, develops and puts it in. So there is now exist today, a Stone and Webster Chophouse, you know, so that's, most people don't know who Baldwin is, but they do know who Stone, they at least recognize the name.

16:37:11:18 [Mickey Youmans]: Right. Wow. Yeah.

Walt Campbell

- 16:37:14:23 [Eric Darling]: Getting a little bit back into the story, Walt, about the origins, George Baldwin's origins as a Unitarian family. Do you think that that had a bearing on his, you know, the abolitionist leanings and the progressive agenda of the church? Of course, certainly had, it was instructive to him in his life and taught him things that he carried forward and, and implemented later in life in his own way. Although it wasn't necessarily, you know, faith-based when he did it, it was
- 16:37:47:14 faith-based in terms of how it came to be in him. Do. Is that how you would describe it?
- 16:37:52:23 [Walt Campbell]: Well, you know, I, I've...
- 16:37:54:22 [Eric Darling]: Sorry, talk to Mickey...
- 16:37:56:01 [Walt Campbell]: I've struggled a little bit with that question of trying to figure out what it was that made him want to do these things, you know, because clearly he knew about his father, you know, absolutely was opposed to abolition, you know, and, and that, you know, and he knew that that was a problem for the Unitarians in the South. So he never called himself a unit. Oh, I forgot one whole big part of the story. He never
- 16:38:26:01 called himself a Unitarian, never even said where he went to church, but people knew it because of the family's history. But then what happens, God, this is, so I almost forgot this part. The, what, what's the President's name? Oh, gosh. William Howard Taft. William Howard Taft is a Unitarian, you know, and when he starts running, you know, for election, a lot of
- 16:38:56:11 people throughout the United States go,
- 16:38:58:19 [Walt Campbell]: Whoa, wait a minute, a Unitarian running for President? Well, Baldwin actually sends his son up to William Howard Taft's brother's school up in Connecticut. I forget where up north, but it's the Taft School for Boys, you know, and it's Unitarian. Well, Baldwin actually sends his daughter to Bryn Mawr, one of the little special women's colleges. And there she rooms with William Howard Taft's daughter, you know, and so they
- 16:39:36:09 actually, the Baldwins have the Tafts. Taft will come through into Savannah, and the Baldwins will have 'em over. So here, this Republican guy sitting right there in the home of this huge, completely democratic, you know, city of Savannah, and the only people that are Republicans in Savannah are a few business folk maybe, but Black people, you know, so it's
- 16:40:01:07 kind of like they know who this guy Baldwin is, but he's the one that wants to bring in, you know, and make us vote Republican, you know, and that kind of thing. And the Republicans had a lot of power, because if you're President, you can appoint federal positions. Well, the big one in Savannah was Collector of the

Walt Campbell

Customs and the Port of Savannah. And that was a Black man for a long time. This John Deveaux guy I mentioned earlier. So in any event, you

- 16:40:29:22 know, there's, there's all of these Unitarian connections that just kind of, you know, I I, I had to discover 'em over time because, you know, it's not mentioned a whole lot, but it, you know, it had a deep effect on what Baldwin wanted to do and what he was able to do, and then how quickly it disappeared, what he couldn't get done, you know, because, and one thing I haven't been able to, I wanted to find today before I spoke with you, was
- 16:41:00:01 the Kate Baldwin Free Kindergartens continue, you know, for a long time the Baldwin's sons and daughter try to fund it for a while.
- 16:41:09:23 [Walt Campbell]: It gets too expensive, but they become somehow a clearing house for social programs in Savannah right up, I don't know, maybe 1960s and seventies. They, the, the, what was the girl, let's see, the girls' home for pregnant young girls that was here in Savannah. They, they, that that funding for that was kind of shift over into the Kate Baldwin Free Kindergarten. So it became a very weird kind of clearing house
- 16:41:42:08 for charity and social programs in Savannah. I mean, that some of that stuff is in the Georgia Historical Society that I haven't been able to see yet. So I don't have the specifics of it, but, so did that answer the question?
- 16:41:57:08 [Eric Darling]: I think so, yeah. Did you think that the abolitionist leanings of the unitarian movement in Savannah had something to do with their demise, with the timing of the onset of the Civil War and things along those lines?
- 16:42:12:03 [Walt Campbell]: Undoubtedly, they, you know, the abolition, the Unitarians kind of disappear in 1859, and it's not clear why. It's, they can't keep a minister for the most part. The whole abolition movement is just becoming really strong. Of course. And the major thing is, is that the people there, you know, the Baldwin family was strongly connected to this leading abolitionist in Massachusetts. You know, he was called the Voice of Abolition or whatever. So it, it became impossible for them to even
- 16:42:49:09 function, although they weren't abolitionists, you know, it just as a church by then, they probably had, you know, 15 people, 20 people that would go, you know, and that's the church that eventually the Black people bought and rolled down the street. And then I think what happens is later that the Unitarians, when they come back in 1961 with, they form Unitarian Universalist Church, and then I think they buy that building, if I'm not
- 16:43:17:13 mistaken. And wherever it is, I, that's one of the things I need to do. Right. In terms of that.

Walt Campbell

- 16:43:24:21 [Mickey Youmans]: Right. Let me ask, let me ask you, if there's, Eric, if you think about this, is there a way to take a say just for the, let's say that somebody's gonna log into this and get, don't know anything, don't know what abolition is. Is there a way to sort of tie together the over overall concept of what it is so that people would hear what you're saying and have a clear vision Oh yeah. Of con the connectivity between the two sides and abolitionists and, and that kind of thing. Is there a way to
- 16:43:58:03 say that?
- 16:43:58:08 [Walt Campbell]: Well, well, sure. I mean, I just repeat some of these things. You know, what abolition is, is see, the Unitarians believed, you know, that what existed, the evils that existed were not God created. So what does that mean? It means people created them, and because of that, people can alleviate those evils or get rid of them, which led them to believe that that's what you could do with slavery. So let's, it stands for
- 16:44:30:04 abolish, abolish translates into abolition, you know, so what they want to do is they want to abolish slavery. Well, the Unitarians in the South, especially these people in Savannah, they make their money off of slavery. They don't actually hold a large number of slaves, but everything they do is connected with making money from the cotton fields in southwest Georgia, you know, all the way into the port, to everything else that goes out
- 16:45:01:21 through the port.
- 16:45:03:08 [Walt Campbell]: So yeah, abolition is a big deal, you know, and what happens is it just becomes difficult for them to survive amidst that kind of thing. I mean, there are long letters from Baldwin's father to the cousins up in Massachusetts saying, you know, see what, what the abolitionists in the South do say, and, you know, this is economical. Not only that, but what they think is, look, this slavery has existed for eons.
- 16:45:33:09 You know, if God didn't create it, who did, you know? And if, and certainly we accepted it in the formation of the United States, so you know, that God bless the United States in its formation. So what's gonna happen if you abolish slavery? And they were, they were right up to a point, the United States is gonna go, poof, is not gonna exist if you abolish slavery. And it almost came to that because we had a Civil War over it, of course.
- 16:46:04:17 So it was one of those things that, you know, the sort of the internal ideas of Unitarianism caught up with the Southern Unitarians more so than the Northerns, because it was easy to be up there in Massachusetts and just raise Cain about abolishing slavery. You know, it was not easy to do in Savannah.
- 16:46:26:00 [Eric Darling]: Yeah. It presents an interesting predicament as a Unitarian, do you abandon your faith?

Walt Campbell

- 16:46:31:02 [Mickey Youmans]: Yeah, that's what I was trying to get clarified.
- 16:46:33:21 [Eric Darling]: Right. Do you abandon your faith or, or do you abandon your convictions?
- 16:46:37:08 [Walt Campbell]: Right, that's right. Or, or your, your economics sounds like
- 16:46:40:18 [Eric Darling]: They abandoned, right? They abandoned their faith, instead.
- 16:46:43:11 [Walt Campbell]: They did.
- 16:46:44:07 [Eric Darling]: They made the economic choice instead of the moral choice.
- 16:46:46:05 [Walt Campbell]: They did. You know, it's a, it was a hard one, I'm sure.
- 16:46:50:06 [Eric Darling]: Yeah.
- 16:46:51:07 [Mickey Youmans]: Wow.
- 16:46:51:13 [Eric Darling]: And in retrospect, the incorrect one,
- 16:46:53:16 [Walt Campbell]: Yes, definitely.
- 16:46:55:05 [Eric Darling]: But, I guess in that context, it was the only way they felt they could survive.
- 16:46:58:15 [Walt Campbell]: You know, Baldwin's father was really wealthy because, I mean, it was like, the company that he was with was not only the largest shipper in Savannah, they were also building steamboat lines, railroad lines and other things so that they could get to the cotton and other products in the interior where they could then bring them to the port. And they were called commission merchants. So what you would do is
- 16:47:31:13 you would go to the farmer in the countryside and you would say, okay, you've got that cotton growing there. You know, what we'll do is we'll come, you put that ripe next to the railroad tracks, we'll come pick that thing up. We'll take your cotton, we'll take it back to Savannah, we'll unload it, we'll sit it there on the wharfs, we'll find a buyer for you, et cetera. We'll ship it for you. Once it's done, we'll put it in a warehouse for you before it goes. And that's what happens. That's how they make their
- 16:48:01:02 money. They charge a little bit at each particular interval of what they do. So they become really wealthy doing this, you know? And so that, that, that's why it was so hard for them to give up what they were doing. It was huge amounts invested.
- 16:48:17:22 [Mickey Youmans]: Yeah, that totally makes sense, man. That's
- 16:48:22:03 [Walt Campbell]: Alright.

Walt Campbell

- 16:48:23:02 [Mickey Youmans]: I had no idea.
- 16:48:24:19 [Eric Darling]: While we have you in the chair, Walt I know that you have an anecdote about the Black congregation that assumed the ownership of a building that was provided by a White congregation,
- 16:48:34:10 [Walt Campbell]: Well that was the, you know, yeah.
- 16:48:36:07 [Eric Darling]: Would you tell, would you tell that story as best you can?
- 16:48:38:21 [Walt Campbell]: Yeah, I mean that, you know, that might be a good one to ask this woman tomorrow too, who's gonna come in. Because it's not really clear to me what they say. They, they had no building Unitarian tell, tell the story. Oh, I'm sorry.
- 16:48:52:07 [Eric Darling]: I'm sorry. Just the story as you know it.
- 16:48:53:23 [Walt Campbell]: Yeah, yeah. This, the story is, I understand it and all the details are not clear to me, you know, but what happens is the Unitarians have a hard time building an original church. They, they, they're given the land to build it on, you know, but apparently the things they started, and it's burned down. Nobody knows who did it. But eventually there's a man named Moses Eastman, who is also from up north, but he's a silversmith who is really wealthy in Savannah. And he helps these other
- 16:49:26:00 wealthy guys, the Baldwins and the Philbricks put together money to build a nice, beautiful church there. And they build it. And then it is probably in the 1840s, because that's the church that they let the Georgia Historical Society use to give lectures in. So what happens, 1859, basically the whole
- 16:49:49:14 congregation disappears. The Unitarian, what do they do?
- 16:49:54:12 [Walt Campbell]: Well, I think it just sits there. The church sits there and it's not, not used. So after the Civil War, what happens is the Black folk, they're liberated, you know, they're freedmen now. So a particular congregation, and I'm, I'm not sure whether it's a, an Episcopal or a Baptist congregation, buys the building, puts it on logs, and roll the building to another square in the city. So it sits there and becomes their
- 16:50:26:05 church for years. You, you know, well, when the Universalist and the Unitarians get back together in the early sixties, they buy that building as far as I understand it. But it may, they may have bought that one and then built another new one because the, the building where the Unitarian Universalists are now is a really beautiful building, you know, so there is, there, there is, I know that they bought the one building that was the
- 16:50:56:12 Unitarian church and moved it to another part of the city, but, you know, just what transpired afterwards, not exactly clear. Okay. Right. Yeah. Is that all right?

Walt Campbell

- 16:51:09:12 [Eric Darling]: Seems like quite an endeavor to move
- 16:51:11:10 [Walt Campbell]: That does doesn't it? In such a fashion. It does. You they really wanted. The brick streets and what not. Yeah, I I, so that makes me, I I, you know, nobody's, I haven't ever seen any specific information on it except one line, you know, that that's what they did. Yeah. You know, maybe
- 16:51:27:05 [Eric Darling]: Our Unitarian knows.
- 16:51:28:00 [Walt Campbell]: I would hope so. That that would be cool. Yeah. You know, I mean, I haven't had so many other things to look at.
- 16:51:34:10 [Mickey Youmans]: Ask, maybe ask her about the, the, the, the, the building that was rolled down.
- 16:51:40:11 [Walt Campbell]: Yeah,
- 16:51:41:09 [Eric Darling]: Yeah.
- 16:51:43:00 [Walt Campbell]: So
- 16:51:43:17 [Eric Darling]: Just in general terms, and you may not feel comfortable talking and that's fine, but do you have a general take on contextually Savannah as a, in a historical context, as an interfaith community? We've heard from a lot of people who've told us that it is sort of unique in some, just from an...
- 16:52:03:17 [Mickey Youmans]: Just an overview of what you see from the outside and what you've learned historically. And you know,
- 16:52:08:23 [Eric Darling]: And, and they've trumped it up to various things. But by and large, I mean, a lot of it's happenstance... We're a port city, and that has a lot to do with it.
- 16:52:16:09 [Walt Campbell]: It does.
- 16:52:17:02 [Eric Darling]: And the early settlers that were Jewish
- 16:52:19:23 [Walt Campbell]: That's right.
- 16:52:20:21 [Eric Darling]: Formed a third of the population of town at the earliest days. Things along those lines, we heard from a professor of history who told us that. So, I mean, in, from your perspective as an historian and as a Savannahian too, would you agree with the premise and what are your thoughts along those lines about Savannah as an interfaith community in general?
- 16:52:41:23 [Walt Campbell]: Well, I think as Savannah, as a general interfaith community, as an interfaith community in general, you know, is right on. I mean, all I have to go on for the most part is my, my vast study of Savannah. And that there were lots of

Walt Campbell

things. The race was, the race problem was always there, but, you know, it's never was intense as other cities was, and Charleston. But my mother was very much into trying

16:53:14:18 to work with other religions and other people. So for me, when I think of interfaith, I think of my mom and I think of the period probably, you know, 19, late fifties, early sixties, you know, that it, that when it was really getting started, because I mean, she used to go out and, you know, look and do things with other groups and sing one, one way they do it would get

16:53:42:03 together and sing with people, local choirs and other stuff like that.

16:53:46:07 [Walt Campbell]: They would have rummage sales to help people with. That's what they called it then, you know, as I'm sure there's a different word. So, I mean, just my sense of the interfaith community is, you know, is like, I don't have enough direct knowledge to know specifically on what level they interacted to be interfaith. As a, as growing up in Savannah, when I went to play sports, I joined something

16:54:19:11 called the Tiger Club. The Tiger Club. Oh, that's another thing I forgot to mention about Baldwin. Baldwin. Let me, I'll come back to the Tiger. Baldwin actually hired, got the Unitarian John Nolan to come down and design Daffin Park, you know, so it was designed by a Unitarian that Baldwin brought in. You know, I think if I sit here, I'll think of too many

16:54:48:18 things. But in any event, where, where, where, where did I leave that before Tiger? Tiger Club. Tiger Club, okay. So the Tiger Club, our family didn't have a lot of money, but my family was connected to the Tiger Club through a man named Fred Garris who ran it. And it was out there at the big park, Daffin Park. We would go and play, but all the kids, there were all of the like

16:55:16:19 Country Day kids, you know, and others who had money in Savannah. 'cause we always had, they always had these beautiful little Tiger Club uniforms. Well across Daffin Park on the other side, you know, were the Panthers, you know, the Panthers were Catholic kids for the most part, you know, so, you know, we really did not know that much about each other in elementary school. I mean, we knew that some of, I mean, some of my earliest friends

16:55:46:22 were Jewish kids, you know, Jerry Eckstein, I used to go to his house and see his dad wrapped up in all of these things that were very bizarre to me.

16:55:55:15 [Walt Campbell]: You know, kind of shawls and other stuff. I guess he was. And then the Garfunkel Boys, they, and when I injured my leg in basketball, these, they came on the Sabbath, walked to the hospital to see me from their house. You know? So, I mean, I've always been kind of like an interfaith guy that never put a whole lot of stock in class or race, you know? So maybe that is part of this too.

Walt Campbell

But, you know, what happens if you move from that level, the Little Tiger Club and Panther Club, which was

16:56:29:04 for younger kids. Then you get into junior high and high school. You know what, I was growing up, I had in junior high, I had two Black kids in my Bartlett Junior high school. Well, I mean, this is, this is, I don't know, this is more race than it is faith. But, you know, I went out one day at PE in Bartlett, junior high school, and one of those two kids, those Black kids out there was throwing the

16:56:59:05 football 50 yards in the air in junior high. And I was like, God, almighty! So I went back and told the coach there, and he said, okay, we'll give him a tryout. We'll see what can happen. You know, so they brought him in and the first thing they did was head on, head tackling for this one kid against all of these White big guys, you know? And he stayed with it. He

16:57:27:14 became, his name was Richard Mack, and he became one of the best athletes in Savannah at Windsor Forest High School, you know, and it was just that kind of thing. I went to Jenkins High School, we had three people there that were Black, you know, two girls and one guy, Benji Gadson, who was the son of a, you know, one of the county commissioners or something was like, so when we started playing basketball there, we were playing with other kids from other, you know, White communities, Catholic, other Jews, you

16:57:59:14 know, but we were playing against Black folks and they beat our brains in, you know, it, and it was just in basketball anyway, football was different sports.

16:58:10:05 [Walt Campbell]: So, you know, to me, it's kind of hard to reflect on the ecumenicity or the interfaith history of Savannah, because I kind of grew up with a mother who preached it and kind of, you know, my, my dad loved sports and he, that was one thing. I don't, he wasn't, he wasn't, he loved the fact that Black people were good athletes. That's where he got

16:58:40:10 respect. They got respect because they could play sports. He liked them, you know, he wasn't prejudiced against, I, I mean, I think in general he probably was, but what allowed them to go through. So for me, the whole race thing, class thing, religion thing was all kind of balled into one big ball. That's hard. That's hard for me to separate into interfaith. You know, I, I, I, but I, I always had the feeling I, that, you know, that

16:59:11:22 Savannah was a, a big community of a lot of people who interacted pretty well together. You know? That's the way I remember Jenkins. I mean, so, I don't know.

16:59:23:13 [Eric Darling]: Interesting. I remember talking a, a, a colleague of mine who went to BC ah, always talked about how there were Jewish students at this Catholic high school, and they, you know, in very interesting, they brought a rabbi in to teach religion class,

Walt Campbell

- 16:59:39:20 [Walt Campbell]: Really?
- 16:59:40:07 [Eric Darling]: Jewish kids. And he was always jealous of them. They got both the Christian and the Jewish holidays off. So he was jealous.
- 16:59:47:00 [Walt Campbell]: That's funny.
- 16:59:47:17 [Eric Darling]: But, but it's, it goes to show something that is peculiar. I think that,
- 16:59:51:17 [Walt Campbell]: No, that's a good observation. You
- 16:59:53:04 [Eric Darling]: Don't see a lot of Catholic parochial schools with Jewish students in a big enough, you know, numbers that you would have, you know, special provisions for religious education for them, or that they would think that that is something that needs to be made a provision for. So anyway, I think that's peculiar to Savannah as well.
- 17:00:12:09 [Walt Campbell]: No, yeah. I mean, I'd like to figure out what y'all hear, because my guess is, is what you're gonna find is that most of it takes place after the 1960s. I mean, that was a big change in, in society and culture and everything else, where the tendency to move towards greater cooperation was a clash. But it was happening, you know? I mean, is that what you're hearing? Is, are you hearing earlier?
- 17:00:37:10 [Mickey Youmans]: Yeah.
- 17:00:38:19 [Eric Darling]: Well, yes, to some. I mean, to be fair, we're not talking to a lot of historians. So we're not talking about contextually, most of people we're talking today.
- 17:00:47:00 [Walt Campbell]: Yeah, sure. And people who's familiar with it since that time. Yeah.
- 17:00:51:07 [Eric Darling]: Social programs, especially today.
- 17:00:53:09 [Walt Campbell]: Yeah. That
- 17:00:54:04 [Eric Darling]: That are in place.
- 17:00:55:17 [Mickey Youmans]: Yeah.
- 17:00:56:14 [Walt Campbell]: Great. I mean, I, you know, I think I wanna learn more about what y'all find, but I, you know, I was just having a, a time struggling with it from my own perspective to put it into something you could use.
- 17:01:08:01 [Mickey Youmans]: This lady we had this morning, early, the,
- 17:01:11:03 [Eric Darling]: I think we can cut, Mickey. Are you, are you good?

Walt Campbell

17:01:12:20 [Mickey Youmans]: Yeah. Yeah, I'm good. We're good.