

**Interview Records of Hazel Robinson
Completed for the Black Lives Matter Oral History
Project**



**Hazel Robinson was interviewed By Lilly Boston
02/10/2024**

Website:

www.blmohp.sewanee.edu

Contact information:

blmohp@gmail.com

Prepared by Andrew Quinonez

Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Field Notes	4
Transcription	5-26

ABSTRACT – Hazel Robinson

Narrator: Hazel Robinson

Interviewer: Lillian Boston

Interview Date: February 10, 2024

Location: Crossville, TN

Length: Fifty-eight minutes and forty-nine seconds

Hazel Robinson was born in 1943 in Kansas City, Missouri. She worked for 13 years as a nurse and then opened a small business. The interview begins by discussing Hazel's background and all the places she has lived. She then illustrates her various moves throughout the United States. After Kansas City, she moved to Michigan, St. Louis, Missouri; Bowling Green, Kentucky, and finally, Crossville, Tennessee. She then discusses her journey into nursing during the Civil Rights Movement. In 1960, Hazel was in Kansas City when she pursued nursing school. She graduated in 1965 and began working in an indigent hospital. She discusses her journey through nursing school and the effects of the Civil Rights Movement on her education. Her career as a nurse ended in 1978, and she then moved to Michigan. Her time in Michigan and St. Louis was short, and the most notable portion of her life was in Bowling Green. Hazel discusses her life in Kentucky and starting her small business in the South. She also talks about her experiences with racism as she was moving to and living in the South. She then discusses her experience with the Black Lives Matter Movement and the effects it had on her day-to-day life. Her first exposure to Black Lives Matter was in Tennessee during the 2020 election. After delving into such a weighted topic, she takes a few steps back and discusses what inspired her to be a nurse. While she is unable to definitively say the exact moment that led her into nursing, she believes it is due to the age gap between her and her siblings. Her role as a caretaker transcended into not only her career but personal life as well. Hazel also compares her experiences in the north and the south, emphasizing the southern hospitality. This interview is part of the Sewanee Black Lives Matter Oral History Project.

Field Notes – Hazel Robinson

Narrator: Hazel Robinson

Interviewer: Lilly Boston

Date: February 10, 2024

Location: Zoom Call

NARRATOR: Hazel Robinson was a former nurse and entrepreneur before moving to Crossville, TN. She was born July 6, 1943, in Kansas City, Missouri. Throughout her life, she was educated in all-black institutions, and this continued as she obtained her BSN. Much of her adult life took place in Missouri, as she had various nursing jobs. Her nursing career began working in a “safety-net hospital”, which is designed to support the uninsured. Briefly, Hazel served as a nursing instructor, but soon found a better job for Western Electric. This company was substantially larger, and she served as a nurse for the employees. Her next job was smaller, but more community-oriented, as it served “the projects”. The company was called Wayne Miner, and it provided food and medical services for underserved communities. Before leaving Kansas City, Hazel worked for Model Cities Health Care and specialized in gynecology. She also began PA school; however, she had to quit due to her husband being transferred. Hazel and her husband moved to Michigan, but their time there was brief. Her next notable job was in St. Louis, Missouri, where she worked as a school Nurse. Her nursing career came to an end in 1978, and three years later she moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky. In Kentucky, Hazel pursued her love for crafts and started a small embroidery business. She initially ran her store out of her house but eventually moved into a mall. Her business was open until she retired in 2000. In retirement, Hazel and her husband relocated to Crossville, TN. This is where she currently resides.

THE INTERVIEWER: Lilly Boston is an undergraduate student at Sewanee: The University of the South, and is currently doing research on eugenics and the impacts of Black Lives Matter in her community.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW: The interview was conducted via Zoom due to inclement weather in Crossville, TN. There was a brief moment when Hazel needed to step away from the camera toward the beginning of the interview. Also due to inclement weather, the video can be seen cutting out twice. The audio was lost once, but the conversation was able to be picked up smoothly. Hazel was willing and patient when answering questions, and often depicted stories of her encounters with any of the discussed topics. It should be noted that this interview will be included in the Sewanee Black Lives Matter Oral History Project.

NOTE ON THE RECORDING: This was recorded over Zoom. This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston ([00:49](#)):

Ms. Hazel, can you hear me? I think you're muted.

Hazel Robinson ([01:14](#)):

Okay. Now can you hear me?

Lilly Boston ([01:17](#)):

Yes ma'am. How are you?

Hazel Robinson ([01:19](#)):

I'm doing well. How are you today?

Lilly Boston ([01:21](#)):

I'm doing good. I'm so excited to finally get to talk to you. This is so exciting. I've heard lots of good things from Dr. Gibbs. So I'm very excited. All good things. All good things. Okay. So I've got a couple of topics that I want to touch with you on today, and this is for my African-American History class. So we're trying to go from our hometowns and get with some people from our community and learn kind of their backstory for this oral history project that Sewanee's doing.

Hazel Robinson ([01:54](#)):

Is that the school that you're going to, Sewanee?

Lilly Boston ([01:59](#)):

Yes. But before we get into that, I just want to get to know you. So where are you originally from?

Hazel Robinson ([02:07](#)):

Okay. I'm originally from Kansas City.

Lilly Boston ([02:11](#)):

Oh, wow.

Hazel Robinson ([02:13](#)):

And we moved..

Lilly Boston ([02:15](#)):

Tricked me on that one. She was all about Louisville.

Hazel Robinson ([02:18](#)):

Well, she didn't know all about my backstory. We went from Kansas City to Michigan, from Michigan to St. Louis, St. Louis to Bowling Green, Kentucky. So that's where she got that Louisville there. But we lived in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and then we finally retired here in Fairfield Glade. My husband worked for General Motors, so we got moved around a lot.

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed
Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston ([02:46](#)):

Oh yeah, that'll do it. That's so amazing. So you've done a lot of moving in your lifetime?

Hazel Robinson ([02:55](#)):

I have.

Lilly Boston ([02:56](#)):

Very cool. So she

Hazel Robinson ([02:58](#)):

Also, can you hold on a moment? I have to go check on something for my husband.

Lilly Boston ([03:02](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. No problem at all. Okay.

Hazel Robinson ([03:36](#)):

Okay. I'm sorry. I'm back.

Lilly Boston ([03:37](#)):

No problem at all. So Dr. Gibbs also told me that you have a background in nursing, and I found that really intriguing because I took the first part of this African-American History course last semester, and I did a whole project on the experimental medicine that happened during slavery, and that was what I really dove into. And so hearing that you were a nurse, especially during the sixties, was really interesting to me. So I would love to hear what was that like? What was your process getting into nursing school, and where were you during that period?

([04:17](#)):

Where were you during that period?

Hazel Robinson ([04:19](#)):

Kansas City.

Lilly Boston ([04:20](#)):

Oh, wow.

Hazel Robinson ([04:21](#)):

Yeah, I graduated from nursing school and it'd have to be 70. I got married in 69 a year before I got out of nursing school. So I graduated from nursing school in 70, and I went to work at the hospital where I trained and I worked in gynecology, and it was a medically indigent hospital. You know what that is? Okay. All right. So the patients that we had what they call medically indigent, it was not like a private hospital. We had welfare patients and patients who really could not afford a hospital with private rooms. Okay. So the hospital that I worked at did not have private rooms. We had wards, which was an open area where the patients were. However, my hospital was a teaching hospital, so we had interns

02/12/24)

Page 2 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

and residents. So even though it was a medically indigent hospital, it had more diverse care than a private hospital.

(05:52):

And the fact that there were all types of doctors being trained there, we got predominantly, have you heard of Meharry Medical School? It's in Nashville. Okay. Meharry at that time was an all black medical school. So we got most of the doctors from Meharry. However, we did not have just black doctors. We had black and white doctors. But I guess before I started working, there was a black hospital because patients were not allowed to go to the other hospital. So then after integration, then that's when it all opened up to white, I mean, black and white patients. So anyway, I

Lilly Boston (07:10):

Hazel, are you there? Oh, there you are.

Hazel Robinson (07:29):

Sorry. The internet goes in and out here.

Lilly Boston (07:34):

That's okay.

Hazel Robinson (07:34):

But anyway, 65 was the year that I graduated from nursing school. My son was born in 69, so when I graduated from nursing school, I worked at the hospital and until I got pregnant, which was 68, and he was born in 69. And so then I started teaching practical nurses. I did that, and I guess for a year it was a very stressful job. So after I got my students through state board, I thought, this is not, it was just too stressful. So after that, I went to work for Western Electric. They had a medical department, and I worked second shift, no third shift, because they had just enough people working that they required a nurse. So I worked third shift, and I did that maybe a year, two years. I found that I couldn't sleep anymore, so I had to find me another job, third shift, I was awake and just could not get sleep until maybe two hours before time for me to go to work. So at that time, there was a program started called Model Cities. Well, model Cities was basically a new healthcare program, and there was a clinic was set

up, and that's what we were like doing physicals and all for the community.

(09:18):

And wait a minute, no. Before that I worked for Wayne Minor. Wayne Minor was what they would call the projects. You heard the projects.

Lilly Boston (09:29):

Mhm.

Hazel Robinson (09:29):

Okay. So I worked with with the OB GYN doctor, but mostly with the obstetric. We had such a patient load that I would see the well patients and he would see the sick patients, the patients who were, you know, the pregnant ladies. So then after that, I got what I thought was my dream job with Model Cities. And so along with doing the medical work. So then I was going to school to be a pa. Then my husband got transferred.

02/12/24)

Page 3 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston (10:16):

You were in PA school?

Hazel Robinson (10:18):

No, well, I was starting. Yeah.

Lilly Boston (10:20):

That's amazing.

Hazel Robinson (10:22):

And I was starting, it was a new program then, and it had just started.

Lilly Boston (10:28):

And where was this.

Hazel Robinson (10:28):

Excuse me?

Lilly Boston (10:31):

Where was this?

Hazel Robinson (10:32):

In Kansas City. I'm still living in Kansas City. Oh,

Lilly Boston ([10:35](#)):

Wow. All of this in Kansas. That's impressive.

Hazel Robinson ([10:38](#)):

Yeah, Kansas City, Missouri. See, there's Kansas City, Kansas, and Missouri. I went to high school in Kansas, and then after my husband and I got married, we moved to Missouri. But anyway, so then he got transferred to Michigan. So we moved to Macomb County, Michigan, and I went to work there for the Macomb County Health Department and worked there until then, I guess a couple of years. And we got transferred to St. Louis. And then I got a job school district, which was at that time, that was the first year that our son started the school. And this was great because I was working at the high school. And so when he was out of school, I was too. When he had snow days, I did too. So after that, that was my last job in the medical field.

Lilly Boston ([11:45](#)):

Oh, wow. Around what year?

Hazel Robinson ([11:50](#)):

I stopped working in 78. And in 78, my son was diagnosed with cancer.

02/12/24)

Page 4 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed
Transcript by [Rev.com](#))

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston ([12:10](#)):

Oh my goodness.

Hazel Robinson ([12:12](#)):

So then life just happened. He's alive now. He had a rhabdomyosarcoma. So he was nine years old and he had a year of chemo. He had six months. No, he had three months of radiation and six months, I mean a year. But he's alive now.

Lilly Boston ([12:49](#)):

That's Amazing.

Hazel Robinson ([12:49](#)):

So that's the end of my medical career. So then when we moved to Bowling Green, then I opened a small business

Lilly Boston ([12:59](#)):

Oh wow.

Hazel Robinson ([12:59](#)):

And it was an embroidery business, and I started out with one machine, which I was at home in the same year. My son went to college, started college. So then after I moved into a strip mall and I got two machines, and then I got another machine that did four items, four items at one time. So I actually had six heads, and I had, at my high point, I had four employees. So sold the business in 2000 and moved to Fairfield.

Lilly Boston ([13:44](#)):

Oh my goodness. Gosh. So what year did you move to Bowling Green?

Hazel Robinson ([13:53](#)):

We moved to Bowling Green in 80. Okay. 1980.

Lilly Boston ([14:03](#)):

That's amazing. I love to crochet and embroider and all the crafty things. So

Hazel Robinson ([14:09](#)):

Yeah. Well, that was how I got into it. I used to be a crafty person.

Lilly Boston ([14:14](#)):

I love that.

Hazel Robinson ([14:15](#)):

But all the machines that I had, they were run by the computer and it worked on the premises. Have you ever seen a computerized embroidery machine?

02/12/24)

Page 5 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston ([14:24](#)):

I have.

Hazel Robinson ([14:25](#)):

Okay. To me, it works on the premises of a computer and a printer. You put stuff in the computer and then it would send it to the machine and the machine would do it. Yeah.

Lilly Boston ([14:39](#)):

That's so cool. Okay, let's see here. I'm trying to figure out, so which of these would you say that you, I

know you've got some Midwestern places, some Northern, that kind of, but where would you find your community? Where would you consider that you felt, I don't know, most content or most at home?

Hazel Robinson ([15:09](#)):

That's a good question. I would guess because of Bowling Green, because we lived there longer than we lived any place while we were married. Since we were married, because we lived in Kansas City, I was 20, let's see, I was maybe 30 when we moved to Michigan. And we were there two years. And then we moved to St. Louis and we were there four years. And then we moved to Bowling Green, and we were there like 20 years. So Bowling Green felt more like home to me after leaving Kansas City. Yeah, it's a great place to raise your kids and all, it used to be a small town when we moved there, but it has really grown over the years. Yeah.

Lilly Boston ([16:08](#)):

Okay. So let me look here. So you have mentioned, you said you graduated nursing school in 1965, and I think that's really interesting because at that point the civil rights movement was coming to, it was still in the heat of everything, but how would you say that that affected your nursing school experience or if it affected it?

Hazel Robinson ([16:42](#)):

Well, it did not affect, if it did, I was not aware of it. Okay.

([16:55](#)):

Because I was working at the hospital when Martin Luther, Martin Luther King was killed. I remember I was at work and there was a lot of rioting going on because at that time, I think I was working days, and the nurse that was relieving me could not get in because there was a sniper on top of the hospital. So I remember working two and a half shifts, and finally, because I called my husband and I said, I'm coming home, I just, I'm tired. I just cannot stay here for 24 hours. So I do remember in Kansas City during that time, there was a lot of rioting, burning and those things, but that is the only time that I really experienced any of that. I graduated from high school in 1960, and it was an all black school, but our black school, we had, I think what happened, I'm not really sure, but this school was built for the black community. So we had a swimming pool. We had more at our school than some of the white schools there.

([18:32](#)):

When I was in high school, I think we had maybe one or two white students at our school. But I grew up going to all black school in grade school, junior high school, and high school. The first time I was in a class with say, at least more than 50% of black people was when I got out of high school when I went to

02/12/24)

Page 6 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

college. But I didn't experience, I've often said that I did not experience racism until we moved to Bowling Green. Well, we were getting ready to move to Bowling Green, and we went down to look for a house. And so we saw this house, and it wasn't nothing that I thought was special because it was a two

story colonial, which was what we had in St. Louis. So the guy, the family that owned the house, well, the guy, he had a used car business. And so we looked at the car, I mean the house one day. And the next day we went back to look at it again. So he said that his neighbor told him if he sold his house to a black family, he'd never sell another car in Bowling Green. Oh my God. So he said that what he told the guy, he told us, he said, nobody tells me who I can or cannot sell my house to. He said, but I want to let you know how he feels. Well, I was pissed.

[\(20:22\)](#):

So at the time, our son was, what, 10 years old? I think eight or nine or something like that. And so I told Sam, I said, well, if it were just you, and I said, we'd buy the house, but when people feel like that, then they tend to might do things to who you love rather than to you. So we chose not to. Well, the guy that owned the house, I mean that said that he lived next door and he owned a State Farm business there in Bowling Green State Farm Insurance. Well, I was so pissed. I got home and wrote this letter to State Farm and told him that, and we had State Farm Insurance, and I told him I was counseling my insurance and I was going to encourage all my friends to do the same. And I did get a letter back from him and he apologized and he said, unfortunately, those offices are independently owned. Oh, they buy them from State Farm. But that was my first really face-to-face encounter of racism. And I was almost 40 years old then. Yeah. Wow. But growing up, it was there, but I did not encounter it that I was aware of.

Lilly Boston [\(21:54\)](#):

Did you have any more experiences like that while you were in Bowling Green?

Hazel Robinson [\(21:59\)](#):

No. Well, yeah. I played golf and all the country clubs there were white and they did not have any black members. So I was playing at a tournament and this one lady was telling me that they were having a tournament in her club and invited me to play. So I said, okay. And I sent my application in. So at that time, we had just built our second house in Bowling Green, and then I found out that some of the people had come by our house, I guess, to see if I should come and play. And I played. Then after that, I was really just ticked off. And there was one club in, it was Bowling Green Country Club, which was the oldest club private club there. And at that time, they didn't want black folks to come out and play. And so then when they were needing more members and they were encouraging people to come and play, and I thought, no, I'm not going. You didn't want me three years ago. You don't want me today. So that's the way it is. But I had not encountered face-to-face like that. But I think that when people are prejudice in the south, when white people don't like black people, they don't try to hide it because that's the way it is. Whereas in the North, well, you're not supposed to be prejudiced because you're in the north. So you would get stabbed in the back by Northerner much quicker than you will somebody from the South. Cause the South lets you know, Hey, we don't like you. And that's it.

Lilly Boston [\(24:09\)](#):

That makes sense.

[\(24:12\)](#):

What has your experience been like in Crossville? I know that there's a quite small black community here. So what has your experience been like coming to Crossville and retiring here?

02/12/24)

Page 7 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed)

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Hazel Robinson ([24:28](#)):

Well, I think living in Fairfield, you're in a bubble.

Lilly Boston ([24:32](#)):

You really are in a bubble.

Hazel Robinson ([24:35](#)):

I'm in a bubble in Fairfield, and I have not experience any, I would say anything that was negative towards me because of the color of my skin. I said, it's probably because I live in Fairfield and I don't live in Crossville. True. One year, well, maybe five years ago, I decided I wanted to do income taxes. So I took the course at h and r Block to do taxes, and I worked at the h and r block in town, the office for three, four years. And so I did taxes, but I got the feeling, and they were like, sometimes people like from the lower income area resented me, but I never got a comment from them. But you can feel things. But that was it.

Lilly Boston ([25:47](#)):

Fantastic. So I'm going to move into my big topics that I'm wanting to talk to you about. So for my paper this semester, we kind of do, I did, last semester, I really focused on gynecology and I focused on the experimental medicine that was done by Dr. James Marion Sims. And that was my topic last semester. So now we're focusing on kind of, I think the time period for this course is 1877 to the present day. So we're focusing more recent news, and I'm focusing on the eugenics movement that happened mostly in the south. And I wanted to talk to you and see if as a nurse, if you had any experience with any of that or if you had ever encountered anything like that.

Hazel Robinson ([26:45](#)):

Specifically.

Lilly Boston ([26:47](#)):

Yeah.

Hazel Robinson ([26:48](#)):

No, and like I said, I worked on the gynecology ward when I worked at the hospital. So that was all I did. No, we had no experimental anything where I was working. It was during the time when with me working second shift. And so if people came in and they had a miscarriage or abortion, whatever one you want to use, well, they didn't have a intensive care unit, but that was the care that they got. There were sometimes when, no, there was no experimental medicine going on, and this was a medically indigent. It was not in the private situation, but no,

Lilly Boston ([27:53](#)):

Yeah, that's likely because you were in Kansas City and most of this, which was I found really interesting

or horrific, not something to mock. But this happened mainly in the South. And for my paper, I'm specifically focusing on North Carolina, they had an entire eugenics board, like dedicated, and they had legislation, all types of things that enforced this mentality. But I'm relieved to hear that you never had to experience that firsthand.

02/12/24)

Page 8 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed
Transcript by [Rev.com](#))

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Hazel Robinson ([28:32](#)):

I did not.

Lilly Boston ([28:32](#)):

That's very great to hear. So I'm going to move into some of my Black Lives Matter interview questions to kind of talk about the social, as soon as 2012, impact of your experience by that point, you were in Crossville, correct?

Hazel Robinson ([28:53](#)):

Right.

Lilly Boston ([28:54](#)):

Okay. So let's see here. What was your first encounter with the Black Lives Movement in general? What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of that?

Hazel Robinson ([29:14](#)):

Well, the first encounter, of course, was when Floyd was killed. So the only thing that I saw was what I saw on TV with everybody else. So I had no personal encounter relating to that. I guess nobody here, no white people here never asked me my opinion. I don't know if they didn't want to know it or if they were afraid to ask me. I'm a pretty outspoken person, so I probably said something about it. Nobody really would respond. I don't know. But no, no, the only thing that I guess I became more aware of, and this was when Trump became president, I noticed that I didn't see until he became president. I did not see any of the flags in the area until he became president. And I just got more aware of my surroundings, and I just became more careful when I went into town. However, there are people that live in Fairfield that support Trump. So just because they live here in Fairfield doesn't mean they don't.

Lilly Boston ([30:48](#)):

Absolutely.

Hazel Robinson ([30:48](#)):

But I did see a difference in that because it was just more outward after that it was. But no, like I say, I saw on TV experience that like everybody else, but nothing personally.

Lilly Boston ([31:11](#)):

Good. Good. So would you say it changed your community experience at all? Did it change? I know you've said that it changed how you went about your day-to-Day life a little bit. You were more cautious in the things you did or things like that. But what else may it have changed within your community, within the people you interact with?

Hazel Robinson ([31:35](#)):

Nothing. Like I say, when you're living in Fairfield, you're living in a bubble. True. Because it is just become safe in this community that people in a group don't discuss it. Okay. I have two or three friends that we discuss it among each other, but in a group, it's not discussed.

02/12/24)

Page 9 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston ([32:13](#)):

I know you have traveled quite a bit within the state or within the United States, but I kind of wanted to talk to you about your travel in general. Have you traveled abroad? What kind of trips do you go on? Where do you like to find yourself? Well,

Hazel Robinson ([32:32](#)):

I guess the only place outside the states we've gone is The Bahamas. That was fine. We've gone there maybe three or four times, and right now my husband decided he doesn't want to travel anymore.

When I travel, I have to travel without him. But in travel, no. I have not had any negative experiences. I guess maybe it's my, I don't know because I'm 80 years old

([33:07](#)):

And I just haven't experienced that. My friends and I, we talk about kids because I have two girlfriends that we've been friends since we were in fifth grade. That's a long time. And we discussed things that were going on and we thought, well, where we were, it didn't affect us and the TV and everything, it was not on TV as much as it is now. Whereas now with all the media, nothing is hidden. Everything is right out front. Well, we didn't have that, so there was a lot of things going on and we were just not aware of.

Lilly Boston ([33:57](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's definitely changed with the times, and I think that's why movement has become such a big deal in the media today because it's just upfront for us to see.

Hazel Robinson ([34:12](#)):

I think the one thing that I saw that when Floyd was killed, I think I saw people becoming more aware of racism a few years ago. Stuff like that would happen and people would be upset for one or two months, but not the way, the magnitude that happened and all the positive things that came from that with the Black Lives Matter, the Me Too movement, it seems like all of those things really came out of that. At

least it appears that way to me.

Lilly Boston ([35:02](#)):

Absolutely. I'm going to take a few steps back here and go back to what kind of inspired you to want to become a nurse. I feel like that's something really interesting to dive into.

Hazel Robinson ([35:13](#)):

I really, I often wonder what inspired me to become a nurse. I did not know not one person who was a nurse.

Lilly Boston ([35:23](#)):

Really.

Hazel Robinson ([35:25](#)):

When I got out of, well, during the high school, and I took this class, this course called Secretary Office practice. So I was going into business, I was not going into nursing. And I worked at this black insurance company there in Kansas City from the time I was a senior in high school. And up until after, I guess after I started nursing school. And so the president thought he was priming me to come in the business, and

02/12/24)

Page 10 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

he was totally upset with me when I went from business to nursing. I mean, he went and talked to my parents about it, but I don't know what it was. But then as I got older in life, and I'm the youngest of five, so I became a caretaker for my family. That is the only thing that I can think of because my sister, who, well, she was 12 years older than me, and she had a lot of health problems.

([36:45](#)):

She lived in, I mean, in California. And later on in life, I was going out there three, four times a year to take care of her. And my brother, who lived there in California too, lost his wife. And so then he moved in the house with her and her husband. So I was going out taking care of both of them because my brother didn't have any children, so I was like it for him. So I'm thinking maybe fate was that's what I was supposed to do. And my parents had me late in life. So my oldest brother was 22 years older than me. And then the next one oldest was 20. And then my sister was 12 years older. And the closest one to me in age was my brother who was 10 years older than me. So I was really late in life, and I used to tell my sisters and brothers, I know why mama had me so late. So y'all have somebody take care of you when you got old. But I cannot go back and put my finger on saying, this is why I became a nurse. I cannot

Lilly Boston ([38:02](#)):

Feels like kind of a fate thing. That's really amazing.

Hazel Robinson ([38:05](#)):

I think so, yeah. It was fate. Just something I was supposed to do, I guess.

Lilly Boston ([38:11](#)):

Do you feel like that made you closer with your siblings in later life?

Hazel Robinson ([38:16](#)):

When we all became mature adults, because I grew up an only child because everybody was gone when I was growing up. I was a spoil kid. I was the baby. And yeah, I remember I got really close to my sister who was 12 years older than me, and my sister, who was 20 years older than me, had no children. So I was like her baby too. So like I said, later on in life, yeah, it did.

Lilly Boston ([38:50](#)):

I love that. I kind of feel the same way because I'm the only girl out of, well, sort of three, because Dr. Gibbs' children are like my brothers. I have one biological brother, but I feel like that's made me want to pursue medicine a little bit more because I feel like I take care of them, and I've been conditioned to be.

Hazel Robinson ([39:13](#)):

Are you the oldest of them? Middle?

Lilly Boston ([39:15](#)):

I'm actually in the middle.

Hazel Robinson ([39:18](#)):

You're in the middle, okay.

02/12/24)

Page 11 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Lilly Boston ([39:21](#)):

But yeah, the little one, he turned 16 in August, and he is given us a run for our money. So

Hazel Robinson ([39:31](#)):

Is this your biological or

Lilly Boston ([39:33](#)):

No, this is Gibbs's youngest.

Hazel Robinson ([39:35](#)):

Gibbs's youngest, okay. Yeah,

Lilly Boston ([39:38](#)):

He's 16 and he is showing it out, so he cracks me up. Oh, wow. My biological brother is the oldest. He's 22 and he's graduating college this year, so he's

Hazel Robinson ([39:51](#)):

Excited.

Lilly Boston ([39:51](#)):

It's a big milestone.

Hazel Robinson ([39:52](#)):

Where did he go to school?

Lilly Boston ([39:54](#)):

He's at Tennessee Tech. So he's in Cookeville, not too far. He really

Hazel Robinson ([39:59](#)):

Loves it. What made you decide to go where you go? Sewanee?

Lilly Boston ([40:04](#)):

Yeah, Sewanee is, so a couple of my brother's friends, my oldest brother, stone, he had always talked about it, and two of them went there. And when I was looking into the college decision process, it was on my list. But my junior year I went to visit and one of his friends and his girlfriend met me up there, and we had lunch and they took me on a tour and I got to see it and see everything. But the biggest thing for me was just all the access I had to things. I feel like it's such an amazing school for resources.

([40:51](#)):

We have a writing laboratory where you can go and get help with all your papers if you ever need help, which I think is spectacular. And we have all these resources for students. And even postgraduate when you go to grad school, they have all these resources as far as, we have this club called the Hippocrates Society for People going into Medicine. And last week they took a whole group of people to sit in at a lecture in a medical school and see what it would be like. Just so prepare, which I just think as far as

02/12/24)

Page 12 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed
Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

preparing me for the next step, if I wanted to go further, I think it's been a really great choice for me. And it's beautiful. It's such a gorgeous campus, and it's small, so it reminds me of Crossville. There's not much going on there besides the school. So I just think

Hazel Robinson ([41:44](#)):

One year, the Tennessee Golf Association had a tournament up there. Is there a nine hole golf course

there?

Lilly Boston ([41:54](#)):

I'm not sure. I know we have a golf course, but I don't know how many holes,

Hazel Robinson ([41:58](#)):

I think, because I was surprised that they had the tournament at a nine hole course because usually 18 holes, but you play the nine holes two times, and then they were advertising lodging there that they had cottages to stay in while they were there, but I didn't go.

Lilly Boston ([42:23](#)):

Yeah, it's been an amazing choice. And as far as being active in my own community and the Sewanee community, it's been really great to give me, I don't know, just a deeper appreciation for people, if that makes sense. I just joined a sorority last week. Last week was we do a spring semester rush, and I'm really excited to get more involved in the Sewanee community because I've always been involved in Crossville where I'm from, and my parents are from here. So I don't know, it's just kind of been my home, but I'm excited to branch out and meet a whole new community of people.

Hazel Robinson ([43:06](#)):

How many African-American instructors do you have?

Lilly Boston ([43:12](#)):

Most of our, so Sewanee is, they don't have an African-American Studies major yet, but in the nineties, I believe they had a minor. But all of the instructors for that specific minor, except one I think are all African-American professors. And we have a mainly African-American group in the, what is it called? The Diversity, equity and Inclusion Center. So for resources...

Hazel Robinson ([43:46](#)):

There's a new diversity group here in Crossville. It is called the, we're members of that Upper Cumberland Diversity Group.

Lilly Boston ([43:55](#)):

And they take charge in things like just accessibility to things and scholarships and all those, which I think is really amazing. But Sewanee was actually, as I'm going through school here, they're trying to stay accountable for their past. So the School of Theology was founded during the Confederacy. It's called the University of the South, because it was created for the white Southerners to go to school, which is wild to me. Can you still see me? It's like,

Hazel Robinson ([44:38](#)):

02/12/24)

Page 13 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed
Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Yeah, I can.

Lilly Boston ([44:39](#)):

Okay, because okay, there you are. But it was created during the Confederacy for the whites obviously, to go to school and learn and all that kind of thing. And there were slaves held at Sewanee. So right now, the university itself is trying to just be accountable for everything that happened and reparations for the people who were affected. There was a beautiful art exhibit last semester that I saw that was in honor of all the people that were enslaved on Sewanee's land during the 1860s, 1850s.

([45:30](#)):

And when they did this art exhibit, and it was Cypress Knees, it was really an interesting thing. And each thing was individually made just to show the individuality of each of these people that all we had of them was an itemized list of who they were. So I thought that was a really interesting way to come about that. But other than that, it's been great because it's a very different experience from Crossville because I feel like here it's not something people talk about much, but I feel like in Sewanee, it's really great to have that accountability and have people talk about it. It's good to be desensitized to the conversation, if that makes sense, to just be,

Hazel Robinson ([46:16](#)):

It does. It does make sense because as you were talking, I was thinking of this diversity group, and I don't think there's anybody who belonged to that group that's originally from Crossville. Yeah.

Lilly Boston ([46:34](#)):

Yeah. I feel like it's just not something people are comfortable with yet. And I feel like,

Hazel Robinson ([46:38](#)):

Yeah, you're right.

Lilly Boston ([46:40](#)):

Given me a great opportunity to become comfortable. And because my grandmother was an immigrant from the Philippines, I've seen how people interact with her differently than with my dad, and I look like my father. So it's just a very interesting experience because of my background, I get to see all the different ways people interact, and I get to experience kind of an appreciation and exposure to conversations about how people are treated differently, firsthand, rather than people who just kind of shove it under the rug.

Hazel Robinson ([47:26](#)):

We have a diversity festival is, I want to say it's the third or fourth Saturday in August, and they have people of all nationalities there that actually are from Crossville. It is interesting because there are some Native Americans, there are some people I think from Hawaii. I'm trying to think of who else, because they do an exhibition thing. It is interesting. But I've gone to two of them and I've been negligent. I didn't go to the one this year.

Lilly Boston ([48:22](#)):

That's okay. Yeah.

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Hazel Robinson ([48:24](#)):

Yeah.

Lilly Boston ([48:25](#)):

It's hard to get everybody's schedules, lined up.

Hazel Robinson ([48:30](#)):

It is.

Lilly Boston ([48:32](#)):

Yeah. I think it's definitely an important conversation to have, especially in a place like Crossville where there's not really many of those resources. So I think that's great that there's something like that. Let's see. Okay, I'll

Hazel Robinson ([48:54](#)):

Just, the one thing that I get interact people from Crossville is when I go to the nail salon.

Lilly Boston ([49:02](#)):

Yeah.

Hazel Robinson ([49:07](#)):

Well, they do have nail salons where they're non-American people, but the ones I go to are people from Crossville, and I have had no problems. The lady that I go to now though, she just moved here from California, but prior to that, all the young ladies that did my nails, they were originally from Crossville and I had no problems.

Lilly Boston ([49:35](#)):

Yeah, I love that. That's so amazing to hear. I haven't really heard any negative stories of people about Crossville specifically, but it's really great to get your input on that, especially with you being in Fairfield. And I know that's kind of its own, its own place, but yeah, that's amazing. What about international cultures? Do you have any experience with, I don't know, besides the people that you've been around in Crossville? I know for me specifically, I'm familiar with the Filipino culture because that's what my mom really, really was raised in. So I just wanted to know what your experience was with different cultures.

Hazel Robinson ([50:28](#)):

Well, the only one time I have interaction is I said I played golf, and we have three or four ladies here who are from Korea. They're Koreans. And most recently we have a lady that has played with us and

she's from Ukraine.

Lilly Boston ([50:48](#)):

Oh, wow.

Hazel Robinson ([50:51](#)):

02/12/24)

Page 15 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

So I have not seen anybody, any negative reactions to any of those ladies. Most of, like I said, most of the people here received well, and everybody's retired. And I think the big difference is that everybody is from somewhere.

Lilly Boston ([51:14](#)):

Yes, absolutely.

Hazel Robinson ([51:16](#)):

And I found that, say for instance, when we moved to Michigan, we were there for two, I tell people two years too long, and I never got to know my neighbors until the year that we were moving, because when you move into a neighborhood and everybody is from there, you're an outsider, so you never really accepted. And so when you come to Fairfield, everybody's from somewhere, so you're not from this area. So that makes a big difference.

Lilly Boston ([51:51](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I was just thinking, do you feel like you've experienced lots of Southern hospitality? I feel like that's such a big thing, especially in Crossville. People are just so willing to help and just, I don't know, just that southern sense of comfort, if that makes sense. Have you noticed, versus living in Michigan, have you noticed Bowling Green and Crossville being more that way?

Hazel Robinson ([52:20](#)):

Big difference. Yeah. I always say that in Michigan, the weather was cold, and so were the people.

([52:30](#)):

But moving to Bowling Green, everybody that I encountered basically after we went through that housing fiasco, it was fine. But I found this was very, I happen to think of this when we moved to Michigan. And so our son was two, so he was accustomed to being around family and black people. Well, when we went to Michigan, he was not around any black people. So every time we would see somebody black at the store, he assumed that I knew them because they were the same color as us. And he would say, asking me, mom, who's that? And I said, well, I dunno. And he'd look at me real funny. Well, she's the same color as us. Why don't you know her? But that was just different. And I remember before we moved to Bowling Green and my husband worked there for, I don't know, until we bought a house. So he

was there maybe three months before we finally moved. And he said, everybody speaks whether they know you or not. Whereas in Michigan, where we came from, people didn't speak. So yeah, you see the southern hospitality there because you could be riding down the street and somebody would wave at you, and you didn't know them from Adam, but that was just the way they were.

(54:07):

Yeah, it is a big difference in the hospitality there. Even when I was telling you I went to California, it's a difference in the people there in the south because if you are too friendly in that area, they thought that you wanted something from them. Whereas in the south, it's just not like that.

Lilly Boston (54:33):

That's amazing. Do you feel like that played a big role in how you ended up finding a sense of community in the more southern regions versus those places?

02/12/24)

Page 16 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed

Transcript by [Rev.com](https://www.rev.com)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Hazel Robinson (54:44):

Probably, yeah, probably that along

Lilly Boston (54:49):

With the amount of time you got to be in those places. But yeah,

Hazel Robinson (54:52):

That had a lot to do with it because people that I have met here that are from Michigan, they loved it. And I thought, well, that's good. It's a good place for me to be from. But I think that being there that long and you just have more deeper relationships because you've had more time to grow them. Whereas in Michigan I did not. I worked at the health department, came home and that was it.

Lilly Boston (55:30):

That's amazing. Let's see here. I'm trying to think.

(55:38):

I feel like we've touched all the bases. Is there anything in particular you'd like to talk about or you'd like to touch base on? And if there's ever anything that you feel like you want cut out after this, you can always tell me, because this is between me and my professor until I get the transcript and everything done. So if you're ever like, I don't want that to be in there, I can absolutely just cut whatever out.

Hazel Robinson (56:06):

No, no, nothing is that personal in there that I have said. No, I think I'm good with that.

Lilly Boston ([56:15](#)):

Perfect. Let's see here.

([56:20](#)):

I have, let me see, I've got, what is it called, a consent form. That's what I have, and I can do a few things. I could either mail it to you, I don't have to have it due until the 19th, but it does have to be a physical signature. Just so I know I have your consent completely. They don't want us to type it in and

Hazel Robinson ([56:43](#)):

I understand

Lilly Boston ([56:44](#)):

Lie about it, which completely valid. So I could mail it to you or I could take it to my mom's office and have you come there, just whatever's easiest. But I really appreciate you talking to me today. This has been amazing. I'm glad I've got to see a nurse's perspective. This is not something that we've seen in my class. We're getting police officers and close family friends, but I'm really excited to kind of get the medical lens of this experience. So this has been really great. Even though your time as a nurse was short-lived as your son was diagnosed with cancer, I think that's still something really interesting and really something that we can pull from for this oral history. So thank you so much for your time, and I will be in touch with you about that consent form. Is there anything else?

02/12/24)

Page 17 of 18

Hazel Robinson Interview (Completed
Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Feb 13, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Hazel Robinson ([57:44](#)):

Okay. You can mail it to me and then I'll just drop it off at the office.

Lilly Boston ([57:50](#)):

That would be perfect. That would work perfectly. Thank you so much. And there's going to be a box on that consent form that says I consent to a follow-up interview. That does not mean that you have to do a follow-up interview or anything like that. It's just in the instance that you wanted to. You absolutely could. And other than that, I think all the bases are covered. Okay. Thank you so much again. You're

Hazel Robinson ([58:20](#)):

Welcome. I enjoyed it.

Lilly Boston ([58:23](#)):

It was so great to get to talk to you and hear where all you've been and all the things that you've done. So I'm excited. It

Hazel Robinson ([58:31](#)):

Was nice talking to you also. Yeah,

Lilly Boston ([58:34](#)):

Thank you so much and I hope you have a great rest of your weekend.

Hazel Robinson ([58:37](#)):

Thank you.

Lilly Boston ([58:37](#)):

I'll be in touch with you about getting that mailed to you.

Hazel Robinson ([58:42](#)):

Alright, that'd be fine.

Lilly Boston ([58:44](#)):

Thank you so much.

Hazel Robinson ([58:45](#)):

You're welcome. Okay, bye.

02/12/24)
Page 18 of 18