

**Transcript of an Oral History Interview in the collection of the  
BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922**

Roz Foster: December 11th, 2004, and today we're introducing Mrs. Lucy Mae Seigler of Mims, Florida. Good morning, Lucy.

Lucy Seigler: Good morning.

Roz Foster: And tell us why you're here today.

Lucy Seigler: Oh, I'm here to tell something about my family and about me in general in life, my [00:00:30] living. And I just want to just let you know about my family.

Roz Foster: Tell me something about your family and when they came here.

Lucy Seigler: Oh, my family came here in the Mims area in 1921. They came from Valdosta, Georgia and Jennings Florida. After they came here, they moved to Eugene Warren's home ... I'm sorry Eugene house, across [00:01:00] the street from Nevin's Fruit Company, which is located in Mims, Florida. From there, they moved to a place called LaGrange, which was later named Titusville. And we lived in a house, a two-story house right across the street from where old Jess Parrish Medical Center was. In later years they moved where Joy Restaurant on US1 [00:01:30]. And my father worked hard, he did citrus work. My mother washed and ironed clothes for people.

Roz Foster: Okay, and what were their names?

Lucy Seigler: My parent's name was Frank Bell and Mamie Bell.

Roz Foster: Okay. Did your father work in the citrus groves?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, he did for many years, and worked real hard. And besides citrus groves, he would plant his own garden [00:02:00] and raise his own vegetables and fruit, like strawberries and everything. So we didn't have to worry about too much. He raised hog; he killed hogs twice a year. And he only went to the store when it was very, I mean, necessary for the other items. But so far as our fruit, vegetables and everything he was a hard worker.

Roz Foster: Was there any grove in particular that he worked for?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, I would hear him say [00:02:30] Charlie Carlisle.

Roz Foster: Charlie Carlisle.

Lucy Seigler: Charlie Carlisle. Sometimes Mr. Peterson' grove, but mostly Charlie Carlisle.

Roz Foster: Okay. He worked with Mr. Henry Strickland. And tell us the story about the two gentlemen that Frank and Henry and how they worked the groves.

Lucy Seigler: Oh, yes. I was a young person in school and I would love to count my father's tickets from his grove work every [00:03:00] day. So he and Mr. Henry Strickland was very good friends. And when they felt like it, they agreed that, "Okay, now tomorrow when we come to work, I'm going to beat you picking fruit. I'm going to pick over 100 boxes." And my father would always say, "Well, if you can do it, I can too." So they would get in a contest together, and this brought joy to their heart to be able to see how many fruit they were going to pick. Believe it or not, [00:03:30] sure enough when they were in the contest, my father and Mr. Strickland would pick about 100 boxes of oranges a day and 50 boxes of grapefruit. And that was a lot of picking fruit along then. Yes, it was more money, but they were really concerned about that. They said it brought joy to them because they felt like if they said they were going to get in a contest, they can pick faster and get more money. So that was a neat way of doing it.

Roz Foster: So it brought joy to [00:04:00] drudgery and hard work from picking fruit.

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: And what did your mother do?

Lucy Seigler: Well, my mother, she was a housewife. She had to wash and iron clothes. And she would average about 15 bundles of clothes a week. And remind you, those days we didn't have nothing but pumps; we had to pump water. And when we come from school, [00:04:30] our job was to fill up three, 55 gallon drums of water so my mother wouldn't have to worry about starting up her washing the next day without water. And that was our chores every day after school. And sure enough, she would average about 15 bundles of clothes a week. And one lady in particular, I loved to see her come because as children, she would bring us candy.

Roz Foster: What was her name?

Lucy Seigler: Her name was Ethel Bells. And she and her husband drove [00:05:00] school bus also.

Roz Foster: And what was a typical wash day? Was this done on Mondays?

Lucy Seigler: It would sometime be Monday through Thursday, and sometime it would be Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. It all depends on how my mother felt about it.

Roz Foster: Describe to me how the washing was done.

Lucy Seigler: Okay. The washing was done ... We had a large block, kind of like from a pine tree, [00:05:30] and you called it a block. And she had a pot that she would boil clothes in. And when we'd take the clothes out the pot, we'd put it on this block. And we

had what you call a battling block—a battling stick. And it was mostly for the heavier things like pants, men pants. And especially when they dirty, and they would work in the oil and so forth, we would take them out the pot and try to battle the dirt out. When we'd [00:06:00] take them to the first tub, called tub number one ... We had tub number one, two and three, and full of water. So you have a rub board, and you would rub them. And when we got through with all those processes, and they had blue to go in the last water, something called bluing. That would be the last rinse. And believe it or not, those dirty clothes would look white.

Roz Foster: I believe the bluing was a rinse that made 'em look white.

Lucy Seigler: That's right. That's right. You could see whether they're clean or not.

Roz Foster: [00:06:30] Right. And then of course after doing that, they all had to be starched and ironed, correct?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, that's right.

Roz Foster: And did she use a flat iron?

Lucy Seigler: Oh, we had the heavy irons that you put on a coal pot.

Roz Foster: Oh my.

Lucy Seigler: Numbered one, two and three. Everything numbered one, two and three. So when they get hot, she had some wax called beeswax wrapped [00:07:00] in a cloth. You rub it on the iron and then you shared another like a towel where you can wipe the iron off, so you know when you start ironing you won't soil the clothes that she had sprinkled. That's the way we had to do. And that was hard work.

Roz Foster: That was hard work. A lot of the young people don't know what sprinkle clothes means.

Lucy Seigler: You could either have a bottle with water in it, you have holes in the top and you just [00:07:30] sprinkle them down, and you roll them and put them in a ... well, we didn't have plastic bags then, but you just put 'em in a basket, cover them up and as you get ready to iron a blouse or a skirt, you take that piece out. You put it on the ironing board and you have your irons right there where you can just keep on changing them. When iron get cool, you change and get another iron. So that's what sprinkling is.

Roz Foster: Okay. The reason that you had to sprinkle clothes back then is because [00:08:00] most of them were made out of cotton. We didn't have the luxury fabrics that we have today. And they would also be starched.

Lucy Seigler: That's right, thin starch.

Roz Foster: That's right.

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: And would they boil the starch in the pot and then dip the clothes in it?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, she had a large pot that she made her own starch. The name brand for the starch was Argo. And so she would make starch and then she had it in a special pot, so if it was a blouse [00:08:30] someone wanted starched, you just when it starts cool, you just dip it in there and squeeze it, put it on the line.

Roz Foster: So laundry day was a long, hard days of work then.

Lucy Seigler: No playing.

Roz Foster: Usually they had a day of washing, and a day of ironing?

Lucy Seigler: Right, and sometime washing and ironing in the same day, depends on the clothes you have.

Roz Foster: Let's get back to your family. How many brothers and sisters did [00:09:00] you have? And approximately when were they born?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. I had--There was 10 of us in all, six girls and four boys. And my oldest brother, Arthur, he's the oldest one living, but there's one that preceded him in death before he was born.

Roz Foster: When was Arthur born?

Lucy Seigler: Arthur was born in [00:09:30] 1915. He's 89 years old.

Roz Foster: Okay. And he was born in Georgia?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, he was born in some part of Georgia. It might've been Valdosta, Georgia. I'm not sure.

Roz Foster: Or, were they born in ... hold it. Tell me about when the children were born in Florida [00:10:00] first one born.

Lucy Seigler: Yeah. Arthur, he was born in Jennings, Florida. And after ... Lilly, Annie, Clara, they were one that came with my parents in 1921 to Mims.

Roz Foster: Okay. And the rest of the children were all born in the Mims area?

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: Okay. What were their names?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. Pearl, [00:10:30] Cora, Frank and myself.

Roz Foster: Okay. And how many are living today?

Lucy Seigler: There's five living today, one boy and four girls.

Roz Foster: Okay. And I understand that the first child was stillborn, and then the middle ... What happened to little Essie?

Lucy Seigler: Oh yes. Essie was in a tragic accident with fire. He got burned, and he swallowed too much fire, and he just couldn't live.

Roz Foster: Okay, [00:11:00] and he at the age of ... how old?

Lucy Seigler: At five years old.

Roz Foster: Five years?

Lucy Seigler: Five years old.

Roz Foster: Okay. And Arthur, what did Arthur do for a living?

Lucy Seigler: Okay, Arthur mostly helped with woodwork with a Paul Puckett. He would cut wood, and they would saw wood, you know. You had to use a long saw, and saw wood. He would sell wood, [00:11:30] Mr. Puckett did.

Roz Foster: Oh.

Lucy Seigler: And so, Arthur's experience with that is that one day he thought he could use an ax better than Mr. Puckett. So when Mr. Puckett went a distance away, Arthur said, "I know I could cut that wood, and I'm going to do it," so he took the ax and he was going to chop the wood and surprise Mr. Puckett before he come back. But in a little bit, he [00:12:00] found that the ax slipped and it cut his foot, so he had a terrible time until he got married, with his left foot.

Roz Foster: All of the children, and your parents, were very active in St. James Missionary Baptist Church, which is still in Mims area. What do you remember about Reverend Massey?

Lucy Seigler: [00:12:30] Oh, Reverend Massey was really my mentor, my role model in every way. I thought was no one like Reverend Massey. If he speak, you have to listen. And he loved children. He loved all the church, but he really dealt with the youth. And our parents could trust us to go anywhere with Reverend Massey and Ms. Massey because they'd know that we would be in good hands. And especially when we would go [00:13:00] as a delegate to conventions and stuff and things,

Reverend Massey would look out for us. He said, "Don't worry, they're in good hands," and my parents believed that. And we knew that they was someone we could trust. And that's what life was all about then.

Roz Foster: Evidently he was a great leader, spiritual leader because he was at St. James for many years, I believe it was 37 years.

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: And tell us about the [00:13:30] Youth Center that he and Mrs. Josie James organized.

Lucy Seigler: Yes, since the youth wanted to go to conventions and everything, Mrs. Josie Q. James and Reverend Massey got together and they decided they were going to build a Youth Center for the youth, so we can have somewhere to go. So they found this place in Palatka, Florida. It was talked about for a few years, and then after that they start building it. [00:14:00] And when they built it, we were able to go and instead of going to different churches, we would go to our Youth Center in Palatka and have our workshops and conventions and what not periodically, like three times a year. And today I'm not sure whether it's in use or not, but up until a few years ago, they was still going over there to attend the meetings.

Roz Foster: Was it in Palatka or Lake Helen?

Lucy Seigler: [00:14:30] It was really in Lake Helen.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Lucy Seigler: Yes, it was really in Lake Helen. I was thinking about the other Baptist convention. Lake Helen, Florida, that's right.

Roz Foster: Okay. Also, what were you involved in organizing at the church?

Lucy Seigler: Oh I--After singing in choir for many years and everything, and still even with singing in the choir, I founded [00:15:00] the first Women's Day at our church. Other places was having Women's Day and I thought that was something special to let women know that they were outstanding. And so, in 1961, I think it was in January of 1961, that's when I organized ... I planned the first Women's Day meeting at St. James Baptist Church.

Roz Foster: And what was that comprised of? What was a Women's Day ...

Lucy Seigler: Well, it's a special day set aside for us to have a program. [00:15:30] It was a way of raising money for the church. Whatever we did, you know, it was for the church. You find out how many speakers that you could have that can speak God's word and bring a message. So the first time, I didn't understand it as well as I did later on, I had three speakers that day and that was a lot of speaking. But people

did come, and they enjoyed it. But then after that, we said morning and evening. [00:16:00] We felt that the men should be involved with this, and so we asked some of the deacons if they would let us let them have it. And they said, "Well, yes if you could give us the morning." I said, "That's fine. We'll take the afternoon." So from then on, about three years after we started our Women's Day, the men joined us and we celebrated Men and Women's Day.

Roz Foster: Wonderful.

Lucy Seigler: That was from 1961- [00:16:30] 1978, when I really turned it loose.

Roz Foster: So there was many activities that the parishioners participated in at church.

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: Did you also have youth programs?

Lucy Seigler: Oh yes, we had a youth program, and that was from our Missionary Society, you know. I was over that for a long period of time also, missionary president. [00:17:00] We would have our Matron Society, and Red Circles, and Sunshine Band, all of that was a part of our program in the Missionary Society. And we'd go to conventions and they would participate in the different programs at the state convention, as well as the district.

Roz Foster: I see. Do you remember anything about the old church structure of St. James, where it was located [00:17:30] in the early days before they built the present church?

Lucy Seigler: It was a church right side of it. I wasn't there when Reverend Bernie, my mother's pastor and my father's pastor. I don't know about that, but in 1964 is when we built the St. James where we are now, but the old building was right beside it, the wooden [00:18:00] building.

Roz Foster: Do you remember the Abrams, or any of those people that were involved in the church at that time?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, the one I remember is like Mr. Eugene Abrams, who's deceased now. I remember George Abrams, Coritha Abrams. I remember all the Abrams of that, but the older Abrams, I didn't know them.

Roz Foster: Okay. And who were some of the other elders [00:18:30] in the church when you participated in it?

Lucy Seigler: Ezekiel Grant, now deceased, that's Fabia Warren's father. Mr. Henry Strickland, his father, I can't think of his name right now, but they called him Wash Ziegler. I knew them. And I knew Ms. Lucy Strickland, that's Henry Strickland's wife. It was [00:19:00] Minnie Grant. I remember a lot of older people. Mattie Mitchell, she

was a light to us in the community. And you'd get so much inspiration out of those older folks. And so, I'd always find myself asking questions with them, because they just would look you in the eye straight and tell you, "Well child, this is like this," you know, and I liked that because it's joy when you can have that confidence and assurance [00:19:30] in anybody.

Roz Foster: During your youth, do you remember where people were baptized at the church?

Lucy Seigler: They went to ... they called it Rock Pit.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Lucy Seigler: And it's over there where the water tower is in Mims. There's a little place, and I guess it's covered up now, but it was clear water. It was so clear you could just see an ant crawling at the bottom. That's where we were baptized because we didn't have [00:20:00] a church pool, or either they would go to the river.

Roz Foster: The Indian River?

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: And where about on the Indian River did they go?

Lucy Seigler: Probably where they putting those houses up, you know where they're building the condominiums in different places, but it was more near Titusville Pier, not far from that park.

Roz Foster: Not far from the park?

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Lucy Seigler: Somewhere in that nature.

Roz Foster: Tell me about [00:20:30] when you were a student. As I understand, Annie your sister, you would go with Harry T. Moore and recite poetry. Tell me about those days.

Lucy Seigler: Oh yes. I was young, but I was a good listener. I know Harry T. Moore would pick Annie up, and they would only notify them [00:21:00] about a month ahead of time, he wanting them to go ahead and speak. I know, Collettie Warren and Eugene Warren, Helen Strickland, Eric Bell Frazier then, Annie and then another lady named Louise ... Power I believe it was. And they all wouldn't go at one time, but he'll take so many this time, so many another time and they would speak. And I know my sister had a poem [00:21:30] called Noah Built the Ark by James Weldon Johnson. And it was about five or six type written pages long. And she

learned every bit of it. Even until her death in '92, she was still reciting poems as people really wanted her to come and say that particular poem. And it was a good spiritual poem. It was a very good poem. But I remember that because she was saying it all the time.

- Roz Foster: And she memorized [00:22:00] six pages?
- Lucy Seigler: Oh, memorized, that's right, memorized it.
- Roz Foster: Oh my.
- Lucy Seigler: Good memory.
- Roz Foster: And Mr. Moore would take the youth to different churches and they would do these orations?
- Lucy Seigler: Yes, I remember one time she had to go to ... I don't know it was Tampa or Clearwater or something, wherever he took her. Yes, he would take them around to different churches in the community too.
- Roz Foster: How wonderful.
- Lucy Seigler: Uh huh. He was really good.
- Roz Foster: [00:22:30] Tell me about yourself. Where did you go to high school ... school?
- Lucy Seigler: School, I started school ... I believe it was back in '36 at Titusville. It wasn't called Titusville high school then, but it was called Titusville Negro School, I believe it was. And those days, we couldn't ride the bus; we had to walk. We'd [00:23:00] get up early in the morning, we'd walk I guess about two and a half miles to school. And some days when my father couldn't work in the citrus grove, he would come and pick us up.
- Roz Foster: Oh my.
- Lucy Seigler: But it was sunshine and pretty, we just walked home. That was a lot of walking, but I guess I was fortunate more than my other sisters and brothers who used to have to travel from that point to Mims, where [inaudible 00:23:27] is now.
- Roz Foster: Oh.
- Lucy Seigler: [00:23:30] We wanted an education, and my mother was interested in us learning. So she said, "It'll be better after a while," and it was.
- Roz Foster: So, you went to elementary school in Titusville also?
- Lucy Seigler: From 12th grade, elementary to 12th.

Roz Foster: Okay, and then you went to high school in Titusville?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, yes.

Roz Foster: Okay, as I understand, you went on to college. Where did you attend college?

Lucy Seigler: I attended college at Florida Normal [00:24:00] College in St. Augustine, Florida.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Lucy Seigler: And I went there. Our church always give money for a student who want to go further, as a little scholarship, you know like \$200-\$300, that was a lot of money. So when we found out that our church really didn't have any money ... They thought they had money up there, but when I got up there St. Augustine, I found out they didn't [00:24:30] have any money, so I had to call my mother and let her know. And she said, "Well, you just stay there. It'll be a way made." So she went to see someone, and I was able to stay there. Then I was a person that I wanted to help my mother out, and help myself, so I asked the President was there anything that I could do that they could help me to help my mother for me to stay here. And so he said, "Sure," and so he gave me a job [00:25:00] like serving people. When they had a lot of people eating dinner, I was serving, then sometime I prepare a meal for him. And he just wanted to do something for me to help me out. He said, "If you that willing to want to stay in school, I'm going to help you." So that's how I stayed in college for a while, until mother, you know got on her feet.

Roz Foster: And then where did you go?

Lucy Seigler: After I left Florida Normal, they cut out home economics, [00:25:30] and that's what I wanted, so I went two years to Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia. After that, I found out they was going to take nine hours from me that I needed, so I found out Savannah State would give me my nine hours back, so I took off and end up in Savannah State College in Savannah, Georgia.

Roz Foster: Oh, so you had quite a experience, didn't you?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, yes I did.

Roz Foster: [00:26:00] When did you graduate?

Lucy Seigler: I graduated in 1952.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Lucy Seigler: When I graduated in 1952 I had this job waiting for me because they wanted me to teach on my experience from playing basketball.

Roz Foster: Oh, you played basketball in school?

Lucy Seigler: In high school. Mhmm.

Roz Foster: Where was your first job teaching?

Lucy Seigler: It was teaching at Monroe High School in Cocoa, Florida.

Roz Foster: Okay, and what did you teach?

Lucy Seigler: [00:26:30]Oh I taught elementary—I mean, I'm sorry, I didn't teach elementary at first, but it was just in general, basic subject. Part of it was elementary, because it's junior high, seventh grade. We had a situation where four teachers had to teach in one auditorium, so we just had to teach low enough not to disturb the other person, but it was a crowded [00:27:00] condition, but the children did learn. And from my experience, like I said, in basketball, they hired me as an extracurricular coordinator for teaching the children how to play basketball. And they didn't know anything about how to hold a ball or nothing like that. So after school, they would give me \$75 a month to train the children to play basketball. And I did that, and [00:27:30] believe it or not after three years, they won championship.

Roz Foster: Oh, I imagine the school is just as proud as they could be for you.

Lucy Seigler: Yes, they were proud. Then, they tried to ask me to go on and get physical ed on my certificate. I told them I didn't want that, I just wanted to play from the experience that I had in high school, and then if I can teach someone else how to hold a ball, that's what I want to do. And I [00:28:00] had a choice. After the first year they could see a lot of learning, and they said, "It's your opportunity now to go on and get it on your certificate and nobody could come in and take it, but I have to have hired people to be qualified." I said, "Yes, give them a chance." So all the person had to do is to come in and take over and take the students to the tournament. During that second [00:28:30] year, Evelyn Williams, who is now Evelyn Williams Bell, the same principal, when she came to Cocoa he'd ask for her to be my assistant in helping me, you know. We worked together. Everything was just great.

Roz Foster: Oh, that's wonderful. So the children were very proud to have those accomplishments in their school.

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: [00:29:00] And who was your principal at Monroe High School?

Lucy Seigler: Oh, B.A. Morris.

Roz Foster: Tell us about how good of a basketball player you were in high school.

Lucy Seigler: Oh, well really, when I felt like playing, I averaged about 20-22 points a game.

Roz Foster: That's fantastic. I understand you were quite a hot shot playing basketball.

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, I really could [00:29:30] leap during those days. I loved stealing the ball from somebody when they dribbled. When they think they have it, I have it and gone. And sometimes I stand to the center line when I know there's a second or two, and sometimes it's just straight net. And I said, "Well, that's was just experience." I love basketball. I really do.

Roz Foster: That's wonderful. And then you met the love of your life, and tell us when you got married. What was his name?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah. [00:30:00] I knew James all the time in high school. Well, he couldn't go to school like I did because he had to work for his parents and everything. I can understand that, but he was my special person all along. We never did act like we was serious about each other, but we both had a crush for each other. But he went to the service, and [00:30:30] he did all that before we got married and everything. So he would keep in touch with me, write me, want to know how I was doing and so forth. So after he got out of the service, that's when we really got connected. And I knew by then what I wanted to do. And so...

Roz Foster: When were you married?

Lucy Seigler: We was married in '54, I believe, June the 6th, 1954.

Roz Foster: Your sister Cora was quite a seamstress as I understand?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, I wanted to do something for Cora because [00:31:00] I had started teaching school, and I wanted to let her know I appreciate ... See because everybody in the family, they helped me with either spending change or something, you know, they would send to me. And I wanted to show my appreciation, so I asked her would she like to go to dressmaking, that's a course, you know. If she didn't want to go for anything else, just take up dressmaking, "Although you know how to sew, but you need it," and so she said, "Well, I can." And I said, "Well, [00:31:30] I want to do that for you." So two years I sent her to take dressmaking, and believe it or not she made my wedding dress. I mean, it was made well, with the scallops and the train sweeping and everything. And I wanted a rainbow wedding, so I married in very light pink. And the rest of the bridesmaids had on different colors like peach, and orange, and aqua [00:32:00] and purple, just rainbow color. At that time, all of them had a wide hat and a string of pearls. And they had a big sash that you could tie in the back and it would hang down to the end of the dress almost. It was beautiful. And everybody just had a good time. I enjoyed my own wedding, really. And the same principal, B.A. Morris, since my brother couldn't be in place, I asked [00:32:30] him to give me away and he proudly did.

Roz Foster: How wonderful. And what church were you married in?

Lucy Seigler: St. James Baptist, the new church.

Roz Foster: Okay. And who was the Reverend at the time? Do you remember?

Lucy Seigler: Reverend Massey. Reverend Massey still was the ... yes. Yes, he the one gave me away.

Roz Foster: Okay. And then you went on to ... after you were married you went on to [00:33:00] continue teaching, and then you went into ministry also?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, I continued to teach at Monroe High School.

Roz Foster: Where else did you teach, by the way? You taught at several schools.

Lucy Seigler: Oh, I went to Monroe High, Clearlake Junior High, and Rockledge High. Then [00:33:30] I taught night school you know, occasionally at Kennedy Junior High and Merritt Island High.

Roz Foster: So you just about covered all the schools, didn't you?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, that was teaching clothing and sewing you know, at night. That's what those were.

Roz Foster: Okay. Then when you went into the ministry to do evangelist work?

Lucy Seigler: Well it's more like a mission, but it's still a part [00:34:00] of that too, evangelist. But it was missions. I love missions, and I love going into nursing homes and cheering the people up, encouraging them.

Roz Foster: And what was the name of your ministry?

Lucy Seigler: Open Hand Outreach Ministry. That's what was organizing ... myself.

Roz Foster: It was called Outreach?

Lucy Seigler: Open Hand.

Roz Foster: Open Hand Outreach Ministry. Did you have a place [00:34:30] that you served-- did your work at a building?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, at first the Masonic Lodge took us in, said we can use their building.

Roz Foster: This is the one on Main Street--

Lucy Seigler: On Main Street, yes right. That was the first one. Yeah, Main Street. And later year, I think '94, when the Masons had to have their building for their own use, so we had to find another place, and [00:35:00] so I talked with Betty Parrish, and that's how we were able to get our building in Mims, up until 2002, I believe it was.

Roz Foster: Okay. And where was that located?

Lucy Seigler: That's located on Harry T. Moore and Main, I'm sorry, Harry T. Moore and Wiley Avenue in Mims. At the end of Harry T. Moore and across the street from Wiley.

Roz Foster: Now was that part of the migrant orange [00:35:30] picker camp?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, I understand years ago the Bahamians used to come over and work. And that's what they used because you could see a stove, how it was in the wall and everything. So they had beds and everything, but I never did see it per se, but my husband always would check out things. That's where they lived. And then I guess they went back after fruit picking so many years, they decided to go back home. [00:36:00] But that building was a strong building, but now it's just need to be demolished I guess in some way.

Roz Foster: I understand on Tuesday mornings you would go there and give out clothes and furniture to the community?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, Tuesday morning. It was hard to get the help you needed, but if I could get one or two people to go with me, meet me there, I'd always [00:36:30] be proud. And if nobody showed up then I would just sit in my car outside the fence and read my Bible, or Sunday School lesson, and stay a couple hours and go back home.

Roz Foster: Okay. You also worked, as part of your ministry, working with young ladies in parenting skills, or in-

Lucy Seigler: As a part of my class?

Roz Foster: [00:37:00] Yes.

Lucy Seigler: Yes.

Roz Foster: Did you work with them?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, I did. We had childcare, showed films of how children are born, to tenth grade through twelfth grade with parent's permission. They were happy about that because they thought that was very good for them to understand how a child is born. And believe it or not, some parents who had had three and four children, had never saw a film on that. And I would have them come in during my planning

[00:37:30] period, maybe once a week and show them the film. And they said they were highly educated because of this class.

Roz Foster: And that was good for the teenagers to combat the pregnancy problem, correct?

Lucy Seigler: And even nowadays I meet several students who tell me, say, "If it wasn't for that class, I don't know what I would've done when I had my child, or my children." So, it was rewarding.

Roz Foster: So what has [00:38:00] your life been like in the last few years, the changes that you've seen and your ministry work. What are you doing at the present time? And what's different now from when you used to do your ministry work in the early days?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. Now, I'm more relaxed now, you know, because I just be led by what God want me to do. When he says turn something loose, I turn it loose. When he [00:38:30] give me something, I just go for it, you know, and be obedient. But I can see change in students, if you're talking about children. I don't visit like I should back to the schools that I left, but I do know ... I get information from other students that it's much harder for them to cope with situations now more than it was then because they were at a point in life ... when [00:39:00] I was in school, you know, you had to be firm and positive, but children would listen then. But now, they come with their own agenda sometime, and they want to out-rule the teacher. And she says sometimes they can't comprehend like they want to because of different students that want to do their own thing. It makes it bad for the rest of them.

But out of all that, children will learn and they can learn. I don't care what the situation's like, they can learn. [00:39:30] But I hope it's better now. Like I say, I'm not there to see everything, but it's harder on the student now.

Roz Foster: And as I understand, your ministry work as a missionary, you go to the nursing homes quite often. And I know that you see a lot of the old timers that are now in nursing homes that you remember used to be very productive members of the Mims' community. [00:40:00] What is a typical week like for you, going to the nursing homes, et cetera?

Lucy Seigler: Well, it's at least twice a week I'm going to some kind of ... I have five in general right now that I really go and try to make myself as a part of their family, because some of them don't have families. And they encourage me I think as much as I encourage them, because when I [00:40:30] leave the nursing home I feel like I have done my part as God intends for me to do. And it's just good to go and talk with them. And they want you to talk. And some of them want you to pray. Whatever they want you to do, you don't push yourself off on anybody, but I just know I have to go. And just speaking kind words to them, some of them might want you to read the Bible, or just say a few verses. You don't have to just take the Bible out, but [00:41:00] you could just say a few words to them. And they're

happy when they see you. And they want to know, "Why you stayed away so long," and sometime I was just there last week, you know. But they want you to just hover longer. I think that's good.

At Titusville Rehab, not long ago, there's a lady I went to visit with her, and she just didn't want me to leave. And I was talking with her about 15 or 20 minutes, and that a good while when you have to go see someone else. And so she didn't want me to leave. I said, " [00:41:30] I tell you what, you are in your wheelchair, so why don't you follow me?" And she did just that, and enjoyed it. And she want to know now, "What day are you going to come back early enough so I can follow you to those rooms?" She wouldn't come inside the room, but she stayed on the outside till I got through. And I thought that was really rewarding to me to know that she really want to follow me.

Roz Foster:

Well, I know you bring a lot of joy and comfort in your visits to the elderly at the nursing homes. I know [00:42:00] they look forward to you coming. And it's a great service that you do to bring God's Word to them, and the comfort that you give ... not really the comfort, but the friendship that you give to them. And they look forward to your visits. I understand that also in all of your lifetime, you can bake up a storm and cook up a storm and [00:42:30] make all kinds of jams and jellies, and cakes and pies, and cookies, and all kinds of other things. And I'd like you to tell me about a very interesting story, and we call these God's intervention into some of our times, about the recent storm and [00:43:00] about God's gift to you and what came of that.

Lucy Seigler:

Oh, yes. We really had a season of storms. I think everybody aware of that. And after Storm Charlie, that was exciting to me to ... and God took us through all the storms, and I thank Him so much for it. But after Storm Charlie, I looked out my window and I wanted to know [00:43:30] where in the world did that bundle of hay come from? It just looked like hay from my distance. And so I couldn't get out there fast enough to see what it was. And previous weeks, I had been chopping up ... another lady been helping me pull out grapevines and throwing them in the trash and everything. But it was a patch of just plain vines that had connected itself with some plants that was thick, and I didn't want to bother the plants then. [00:44:00] So I said, "Well, we'll wait on that because there's no grapes out there nowhere, and they're wild. I don't want no wild grapes." And so...

During the night, the wind had pulled the grapevines out and rolled them up just like a bundle of hay. To my amazement, I looked and there was thousands and thousands of ripe grapes was in this hay-like stack. And where they was pulled, you could still see many, many more grapes left in [00:44:30] the same area. And I said, "Lord I just don't know how this happened. All these grapes in here," and it's just like every cluster was about three inches apart, wrapped up in all these vines. And I said, "Let me go get my pot." I got a large pot and took my clippers, and I clipped so many vines that had the grapes on it. And I picked them all in clusters. And I just picked [00:45:00] till I was just tired of picking.

And so--Then I heard it thunder, it was like three hours I was out there picking grapes. Then I went in the house and my job was to take each little grape off the cluster and put it ... I mean, I had a job. But it was interesting to know. And I said, "Well, what I'm going to do, I'm going to make some jelly." I said, "Been a long time, but I'm going to make me some jelly because I know that this has got [00:45:30] to be a gift from the Lord through this wind." And the Spirit spoke to me then and said, in Genesis 8:22 was saying that, "While the earth is plentiful, there will be seed time and harvest, summer and winter, night and day, but none will be wasted." And then the Lord said, "Look at Exodus 23:16," and [00:46:00] it said something about restoring your harvest. And then Leviticus 23:10 says something about harvesting, but that's the three that He gave me to look up.

And then the Spirit spoke to me and said, "I have sent you your harvest. I have sent you your harvest," and He know that if he send me anything and I could make jelly out of anything, but it wasn't about the jelly. I know it's something he's [00:46:30] maybe trying to tell me through this, just like, "I sent you this; I'll send you anything else." You know, I don't know details, and I'm not trying to figure it out, but I do know I wouldn't have known grapes was there. And I wouldn't have known if He hadn't of put it in that bundle there because I couldn't see nothing, and maybe they were growing all the time underneath. But all I know, I have the grapes, and I've made 52 jars of jelly and sent [00:47:00] it to friends different places. This is the jelly. And this is the jelly that I made. I bought jars this size, four ounces, eight ounces, and sent them off. And this was made August the 30th, when I made this jelly. And I named it Storm Charlie, Wild Grape Jelly. It is delicious.

Roz Foster: [00:47:30] And this is the jar that Lucy has brought to me, so I can have a taste of this divine gift. And I'm so happy that you've brought it to me, Lucy. Thank you so very much.

Lucy Seigler: You're welcome.

Roz Foster: That's a wonderful story of God's intervention at a time where we need something of comfort. I appreciate that. Thank you. [00:48:00] Is there anything else that you feel that we would like to tell us about your life, or God's work that you've done, or anything you can relate about your family?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. Well the work that he has given me now, I still have Open Hand Outreach Ministry, but I'm doing it mostly through prayer at my home [00:48:30] once a week. It's open to anybody who want to come. If they don't come, it's open to me because he gave it to me and I'm going to be obedient to what he wants me to do. But there're from two to three people that come weekly for prayer, and then he let me know not long ago when I was meditating that it's not about who come, he was going to send the ones that need to come at a certain time. [00:49:00] So maybe the time is not now, but I don't get hung up on numbers, but I do like for the righteous to be with me and impart the Word or pray together. That's what it's all about. It's about keeping your eyes focused on Jesus, and that's what I'm going to do whether it's me or two or three more, it doesn't matter.

Roz Foster: And what is your message to the youth of today? How do we capture the youth today [00:49:30] to try to get them to follow the right direction?

Lucy Seigler: Well, the ones I talk with all the time, I encourage them to just be patient and keep on coming to church and be among people who are of a righteous standard. Don't be with people that are not going to mean them any good. So, if they keep their eyes focused on the Lord, and be part of the fellowship with Christians, that know what's right, then [00:50:00] that'll be the answer to them more than anything else. But, to keep on reading the Word themselves and learn all you can because we're at situations now in churches that really pass the Word on, just like all our community churches do, but grab ahold of it and keep focused.

Roz Foster: That's a good message. The overview of what your family legacy is, [00:50:30] and what you would like to leave as the family legacy, what would that be, Lucy?

Lucy Seigler: Okay, to keep living and there's nowhere else to go, but just go to God when you want your answer because he is the answer to all our problem, be it great or small, we just have to serve God so [00:51:00] he can be a light for us all. And my legacy is to continue to leave a history behind. It's just like when I leave here, I want somebody to know something good I have done in the community. And you do it from your heart. It's a heart thing, helping someone along the way. I don't know.

Roz Foster: Okay. What would you like to say, or leave [00:51:30] as the legacy of the Bell family? What did they leave with you and the rest of the family?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. Well, they left me joy in my heart, joy in our hearts as we exemplify the role model that they played in our lives, and to love one another. If you love one another, you'll be able to help someone along the way. [00:52:00] They trusted God for everything, and they did not waver when it came to teaching us how to be good church leaders. And to me, I can remember them saying that "Follow your own mind. Don't follow nobody else's because if you don't know, you ask me and we'll direct you. But don't follow anybody else' mind but yours." So, they were just role models for us as they trusted God [00:52:30] for our upbringing and everything.

Roz Foster: Lucy, and you have followed that role model. And you are a wonderful spiritual leader of the community, and you've done so much good work in the community, and I'm so happy to have you as a friend. And let me ask you this. I know talking with you, we've talked several hours about many different subjects [00:53:00] related to God and the spiritual world. What are some of the poems that ... You are a wonderful poem writer. What are some of the poems that you have written that are spiritual? Do you have a short one that you'd like to share with us?

Lucy Seigler: Oh. I did write a lot of poems. And I can't [00:53:30] think of one right now, but I do know a poem.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Lucy Seigler: Actually, just a portion of it. It's called The Christian Way. And it goes like this: "You may wonder why I'm writing the things I have to say, but I can tell you now it's all about this Christian way. Some people seem to doubt it, and say it's not just right, and often talk about us when we are not in [00:54:00] sight. Sometime the devil tempts me and says it's all in vain to try to be a Christian and walk in Jesus' name. But Jesus softly whisper, "I'll take care of you," then I look up to Heaven with my hopes bright and new. I want to do the things that's just right, but to do these things, the devil we must fight. And sometimes the sky is cloudy, and I can't see my way, but then when the devil stop me I just have to kneel and [00:54:30] pray. Amen"

Roz Foster: That's wonderful. When did you learn that?

Lucy Seigler: Oh, learned that years ago when I was about 20 years old.

Roz Foster: Oh my goodness, and you remember it so well.

Lucy Seigler: Yeah.

Roz Foster: Oh. Go ahead.

Lucy Seigler: I was trying to think of a poem that I did about my mother, No More Complaining about my Dear Mother. After my mother passed, to bring comfort to my heart, God [00:55:00] gave me this poem. It said, "No more complaining about my dear mother. I cannot sit here and complain about my mother long ago, for God knows in Heaven I really loved her so. But as life journ's on, I can truly understand that God knows best for us all, for everything is in His hand. Jesus, please give me strength, faith in mind to serve you like my mother. She put you first in her [00:55:30] life, was always humble, nice and kind. It is good to be like my dear mother, for she was bought with a price. No more complaining ever on this earth about this other, other, for I know in my heart I want to live and to be like my dear mother." And music was also set to that.

Roz Foster: Oh, that's beautiful. That's absolutely beautiful. And I know while you wrote that from the heart and God's spirit the guidance. That's beautiful. [00:56:00] When we had talked about hymns, what are some of your favorite hymns, old-time hymns at church?

Lucy Seigler: Well, I like "Amazing Grace", and in the hymn book, "Precious Lord Take my Hand", "Just a Closer Walk With Thee." Just all of them" "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Roz Foster: "I Need Thee Every Hour" [00:56:30] is a beautiful song.

Lucy Seigler: It's beautiful. That's my favorite ones. Then, "Because He Lives I can Face Tomorrow." And I bet on that.

Roz Foster: Do you remember as you were a child, I know a lot of mothers as they did their housework or did their chores [00:57:00] they would hum spirituals or they would sing spirituals while they were doing ... along with doing their work. Do you remember your mom ever singing some of the spirituals as she did her work?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, I used to hear her sing "I'm Gonna Trust in the Lord til I Die." And that was one of her favorites. She would sing it over and over. I always enjoy in the background, listen to her sing. [00:57:30] It was several more I wrote down, but I can't think about that now, but that was one of her favorite. "I'm Gonna Trust in the Lord til I Die."

Roz Foster: Well, this has been a wonderful day talking with you, Lucy. Is there anything that you would just say in closing?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. In closing, I would just like to let everybody know just live your life where God can use you. [00:58:00] If you can be a help to someone along the way, your living will not be in vain. Therefore, I ask you to just keep me in prayer, and I'll keep you in prayer as God direct our lives. And love one another, that's the only way God going to receive you. Love has to be in your heart, not from the lips.

Roz Foster: As I recall, you and your mother also raised two additional children in the family. Would you please tell me [00:58:30] about that?

Lucy Seigler: Oh yes. Joann Moore now, it used to be Joanne Bell, that's Arthur Bell's daughter. At the age of five when her mother passed, we took her in and raised her until she got married. She was very alert around the house. She loved her grandmother. Anything she needed, I was starting [00:59:00] teaching school, I would help my mother with her. And she didn't have to want for anything. And we tried to teach her spiritual as well as give her what she needed, not what she wanted all the time. And after she got grown, then she decided she'll get married.

Roz Foster: Joanne's education was important also. When did she finish high school?

Lucy Seigler: Okay. She finished high school ... I can't [00:59:30] think of the year, but she did finish high school, complete high school and went to Jacksonville and worked a little while. And then came back home and she married the late Charles McCuller, that was her first husband. They had four children in the family.

Roz Foster: Do they all live in the area?

Lucy Seigler: Well, mostly like they're in Orlando, Sanford area.

Roz Foster: Okay. [01:00:00] Then she married ...

Lucy Seigler: In later years she married Horace Moore, the husband she has now.

Roz Foster: Okay. And they still live in the Mims area?

Lucy Seigler: Still live in the Mims area.

Roz Foster: Okay. What was the other little girl's name? In fact, she is in the photograph of Reverend Massey and the congregation?

Lucy Seigler: Oh, that's Martha Jean, well [Strawman-Allen 01:00:27] now. Martha Jean Strawman-Allen, she's [01:00:30] the one that we raised from four years old, same as Joanne, we raised her from five years old. She has children now and maybe adopted children as well. So she's doing great and she always was a lovable little girl growing. My mother taught her to ... always taught 'em truth and love. That was the key. You must tell the truth, and [01:01:00] you must love.

Roz Foster: And how did she come to live with the family?

Lucy Seigler: One day my mother was visiting my brother-in-law Champ [Hickman? 01:01:08] who is deceased now, sister. She said, "You have so many children, why don't you give me this one?" And that was Martha Jean. And she said, "You can have her," and mother thought it was just her saying something. She said, "No, I mean let me take her home and let her spend a week and bring her back." She said, "You can have her, do what you want [01:01:30] with her because I know she'll be in good hands." And so Mother took her at her word and she told her she didn't want to adopt her because it was too close home and one day she might want to ... she wouldn't want to take that much from her, but just let her keep her. So we kept her as long as she stayed with us, and that was 15 years. And so, she decided she wanted to get married, so we had to consult her mother. She said, "Let her do what you think is best." So we raised [01:02:00] Martha Jean till she got 15, so she got married then she moved away, stayed many years. So her husband just died last year, Horace. His name was Horace also. But she made quite a young lady out of herself, and we're proud of her.

Roz Foster: And she lives back in the area also?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, she live back in the area in Titusville.

Roz Foster: Okay. And also, Reverend Massey was an inspiration [01:02:30] to her upbringing also?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, yes that was her church also.

Roz Foster: Okay. And did she participate in any of the youth choirs or anything when she was young?

Lucy Seigler: I think she started out singing, but I don't believe she finished. She started out singing in the choir, as children you know, church.

Roz Foster: So you and your mother raised two more children in addition to the 10 children that your mother had.

Lucy Seigler: Yes, right, right.

Roz Foster: That's quite a household.

Lucy Seigler: Yes, it [01:03:00] was.

Roz Foster: Did everyone share in the chores? Was it--?

Lucy Seigler: Yes, oh yes. Joann and Martha had to share just like we did. It wasn't no distinction. Long as you had hands, you had to work, had to use them. So, they weren't lazy because you couldn't be.

Roz Foster: So, did you regard these two children that you helped raise as sisters?

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, sisters or your own children.

Roz Foster: [01:03:30] Your own children, okay.

Lucy Seigler: And we still have that relationship, close relationship.

Roz Foster: Well, that's wonderful. And you still visit and have a friendship together too.

Lucy Seigler: That's right, all the time. Mhmm.

Roz Foster: Well, is there anything else that you think of that you would like to add?

Lucy Seigler: No, except I know all of them respect me as a mother and if there's nothing but birthday and Christmas, they going to think about [01:04:00] me, not that I'm looking for anything, but they will recognize me and let me know that they love me. Mother's Day, you know, they think about me a whole lot.

Roz Foster: Well, that's wonderful. That's wonderful. I'm sure that you gave them a lot of motherly love and guidance through the years.

Lucy Seigler: Yes, because it says, "Give, and he'll give back to you". So, that's what my desire always has been, to help someone, not only family member, but anybody that's in [01:04:30] need.

Roz Foster: Well thank you and grace God be with you.

Lucy Seigler: Yeah, thank you.