

A STORYTELLING TRAINING GROUND: ORAL HISTORY IN THE JOURNALISM
CLASSROOM

by

ROXANNE FOSTER

Jacqui Banaszynski, Project Committee Chair
Mary Kay Blakely
Berkley Hudson

DECEMBER 2013

Acknowledgements

Thank you Jacqui Banaszynski, my committee chair and advisor, for truly caring about me as a person, for encouraging me to let my passion carve out a different path for me to travel upon and for continually pushing me to expand my limited view of journalism.

Thank you Mary Kay Blakely for your incredible generosity, for the many impromptu conversations that made me think deeper about my future work and for seeing the potential in my writing.

Thank you Dr. Berkley Hudson for asking big questions, for making me think about the larger possibilities and for offering feedback from your oral history experiences throughout the course of this project.

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Introduction

When I entered the University of Missouri's journalism master's program in the fall of 2011, all I knew was that I wanted to learn more about the art of storytelling. I'd just returned to the U.S. from South Africa after spending three years working with women and children whose lives were greatly impacted by abuse, neglect and the devastation of HIV. Many of the people I met had powerful stories to tell that spoke to the greater issues facing South Africa as a nation. Most felt it was pointless to share them because they were, after all, just one of many who had experienced injustice and were struggling to survive. Who would listen to them anyway? What difference would sharing their stories make? What would their communities think of them if they knew the truth?

I came into the program with a very limited idea of what journalism was and how it could help prepare me to share the stories of the people I meet in my travels and social justice work. All I knew was that I was interested in storytelling – especially the kind where you got to know the person intimately enough that you understood, to a certain degree, the essence of who they are and how their past experiences shaped them.

The News Reporting and Writing class during my first semester was my formal introduction to the world of journalism. I quickly learned that I didn't want to be a news journalist and wondered if I'd entered the wrong field of study. Stories had to be “newsworthy” or they weren't worth pursuing. Information was pushed out as fast as possible. Deadlines had quick turnarounds that always made me feel like I'd missed something vital. The pressure-cooker environment frequently stopped all of my thought

processes. I hated the inverted pyramid and couldn't write a decent lede. Daily news reporting just wasn't a good fit.

As I flirted with the idea of supplementing my business degree with a master's in Strategic Communications, my professors, peers and family encouraged me to pursue a path of exploration that moved me away from traditional news journalism and towards in-depth, creative nonfiction. The courses I selected represent a patchwork approach to learning what I feel are the more interesting aspects of journalistic storytelling. I chose writing classes that focused on immersion reporting and extensive interviewing in order to produce narratives around a particular topic. In the summer of 2012, I conducted research for Jacqui Banaszynski that focused on the art of interviewing to learn more how journalists draw out stories and information from interviewees. I took photojournalism and convergence classes to learn to think visually and aurally and to recognize when stories beg to be told in multiple mediums.

I was also introduced to the field of oral history. While working on a story for the *Columbia Missourian*, I attended a library event and witnessed how three older black women captivated the attention of an entire room of people with their stories of discrimination and distrust with medical professionals in Columbia during the 1960s. That led me to talk to my print editor, John Schneller, about doing some sort of long-term project centered on segregation and black Columbia. He suggested that I do an oral history-based story about the integration of public schools in the 1960s. At the time, the construction of Battle High School was high on the paper's agenda at the time due to issues regarding zoning, busing and scheduling. There was also some debate about the

name of the school, which was given in honor of Dr. Muriel Battle, a black educator whose own children integrated one of the local elementary schools. She and her husband, Eliot Battle, spent over 40 years working with Columbia Public Schools.

Not long after, I was introduced to Studs Terkel's work in Jacqui Banaszynski's Public Insight Network Reporting class. A couple of my grad school friends who'd written stories on Douglass High School for the *Missourian* then introduced me to the feisty group of women who were among the last class to graduate from the school before it closed in 1960. I realized that conducting an oral history of school integration for my journalism master's project could easily become a reality.

From May through August 2013, I interviewed 11 people who were students during the desegregation process in Columbia. My goal was to collect and preserve the memories of a diverse group of people – black and white – who experienced the city's endeavor to join two racially segregated communities in the wake of the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. I wanted to dig deep into the exploration of this moment in history and find out what stories lay there, untouched. I also wanted to experience and examine, first-hand, the intersection of journalism and oral history; to explore what aspects they have in common, how they differ and what could each potentially learn from the other?

To take things a little further, for the analysis portion of my master's project, I interviewed five professors from various programs around the country who use oral history in their curricula – either as an approach or end product. I wanted to understand

the value journalism professors who used oral history methods were placing upon the intersection of these two fields. My core research questions were:

- 1) How are university journalism educators using oral histories in their teaching curricula?
- 2) Why are university journalism educators using oral histories in their classrooms?

(I'm still amazed at the fact that I was able to do all of these things in the span of three months.)

In the future, I'd like to continue to fuse journalism and oral history. My journalism training has provided me with the necessary tools and foundation for crafting the stories. My reporting practice taught me to be unceasingly curious, to ask effective questions and to truly listen to what people are – and aren't – sharing. Studying and conducting an oral history project taught me to dig deep into people's understanding of their experiences and examine it against the backdrop of the past. Recording their stories provided an opportunity to see the value of simply preserving people's testimonies and allowing them to tell their stories, in their own words.

Regardless of where in the world I end up, I plan to use what I've learned here to empower others to tell their stories. If given the chance, I'd love to circle back to the women and children I met in South Africa and help them share their experiences with the wider world, if for no other reason than to empower them with the knowledge that their voices are important. I'm genuinely interested enough to sit and just listen. If those narratives were presented in an interesting way, I believe others would be too.

Project Overview

Since research is the backbone of any oral history project, this is where I began my journey. I spent my first two weeks reviewing information found on the Baylor University and Oral History Association websites about conducting oral history interviews and structuring projects. Once I had a working framework, the mechanics of the project were discussed with Jeff Corrigan, my project supervisor.

I also spent those first weeks at the State Historical Society of Missouri, where I conducted research that would provide context for the oral history interviews that were to follow. I browsed newspaper clippings, read historical manuscripts and combed through Douglass and Hickman High School yearbooks for possible interviewees.

Once I had a very basic grasp on the community's history during desegregation, I met with people in the community who have a keen interest in Columbia's black history. I met with professor Doug Hunt, the coordinator of the Historic Black Columbia coalition, and sought meetings with the gatekeepers of the black community, like Wynna Faye Elbert and Barbra Horrell in the hopes of uncovering issues that arose in Columbia during the time of desegregation that needed to be addressed in the interviews. In subsequent weeks, I requested meetings with people like Bill Clark, a columnist for the Columbia Tribune who frequently writes about black history, and Charley Blackmore, who runs a Hickman High School reunion webpage. Once I had a viable list of potential interviewees, I mailed invitation letters and project overviews to them all. As the weeks passed, I followed those invitation letters up with phone calls to set up interviews.

I began conducting oral history interviews in week three and completed all interviews by week 12. Each interview lasted between two and four hours. Most were conducted in one session but a few were conducted over several days. Once an interview was completed, a handwritten “Thank you” card was mailed to the interviewee.

Since much of my time was spent hunting down interviewees, asking for referrals and trying to set up interviews, creating audio logs of completed interviews filled my workweek in between the phone calls, emails and home visits. Audio logs are one step down from fully transcribed interviews. The process of creating them involves indexing interviews with time-stamps and summarizing key points of conversation. Poignant or important portions of facts, quotes or stories are transcribed verbatim.

During the last two weeks of the project, I focused on completing audio logs and editing audio files to be burned to CD. All audio files were delivered to the State Historical Society of Missouri by August 31. Audio logs and one-page highlight summaries of the interviews were completed, checked and filed by September 13. CDs were burned and copies mailed out to interviewees by mid-September. One copy will be archived at the State Historical Society of Missouri as part of a newly-created collection titled the “Missouri Desegregation and Civil Rights Oral History Project.”

Desegregation Oral History Project Paperwork

I believe being organized is the foundation of any successful project. The following descriptions provide a brief overview of the documents that were used for this project. Examples of the documents follow on the corresponding pages.

- “Wanted” poster (p.8):

I planned to plaster this “Wanted” poster on message boards at the local senior centers and send it to local nursing homes in order to find interviewees. In the end, they were emailed to people who were referred to me by other interviewees as a colorful way of introducing them to the project.

- Letter of invitation (p. 9):

In the field of oral history, the letter of invitation introduces potential interviewees to your project and opens the door for follow-up conversation. I used sample oral history letters from the Internet to draft the core of my letter. I then tailored the first paragraph to reflect how I stumbled across each potential interviewee – through a referral, their high school yearbook or other research. These letters were mailed each potential interviewee in a packet of information.

- Oral history project overview insert (p. 10):

In order to give potential interviewees an idea of why I was doing the project and what they could expect if they chose to participate, I created this project overview insert for my information packets. I thought it would be compelling for them to see and understand my mission statement, goals and why

it would be valuable to add their personal experiences about the desegregation process to the conversation.

- Oral history/sound recording consent form and gift agreement (p. 11):

This form, used with permission from the State Historical Society of Missouri, is required before any oral history interview is archived with the Society. It was mailed with the initial information packet and signatures were obtained before the interviews began.

- Participant Information Summary (p. 12):

I developed this form to make sure I captured all of the pertinent details and correct spelling of proper nouns that might be needed by future researchers to verify an interviewee's identity. The form was also used as guide for warming up my interviewee before asking them to talk about growing up during segregation.

- Interview questions (p.14):

This extensive list of questions was birthed through a fusion of my research on desegregation in Columbia and my own memories of high school. The general overview of their childhood and formative years provided context for the changes desegregation brought to the community. The list contains topics of discussion that were addressed with all students, as well as three sub-sets of questions that probed the experiences of the three subcategories of students I chose to interview: students who stayed at Douglass, students who transferred from Douglass to Hickman, and those who only attended Hickman.

Wanted: Oral History Project Participants



Topic: Desegregation of Columbia's Public Schools (1954-1961)

MU graduate student seeks oral history interviewees who were students or staff at Douglass High School or Hickman High School at any time between 1954 and 1961 to share their insights and perspective on the desegregation of Columbia's public schools.

Participants must:

- Have attended or worked at Douglass High School or Hickman High School between 1954 and 1961
- Live within 50 miles of Columbia
- Be available for interviews (of at least one hour in length) at some time between June 1 and August 1, 2013, and
- Be willing to be recorded for archival purposes (with the State Historical Society of Missouri)

To learn more, contact Roxanne Foster at rdfb8d@mail.missouri.edu or (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Roxanne Foster
1913 E. Walnut Street, #203
Columbia, MO 65201

June 1, 2013

[Address]

Dear [Name],

My name is Roxanne Foster and I am a journalism graduate student at the University of Missouri. I am writing to invite you to participate in a new oral history research project that will document the desegregation of Columbia's public schools. With the help of the State Historical Society of Missouri and members of the Historic Black Columbia coalition, you were identified as an individual who could give valuable insight into what life was like for high school students after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (from 1954 to 1961).

Interviews for the project will be conducted at the place of the interviewee's choosing. Arrangements can also be made for you to come to the public library or State Historical Society, if you prefer. The interviews will be recorded digitally and interviewees will be provided with paper copies of the final audio logged transcripts and a CD of the audio recording. In order to complete the project by August 16, I plan to schedule interviews during the months of June and July.

Transcripts and sound files will be archived with and made available to researchers through the State Historical Society of Missouri. As per Oral History Association guidelines, all interviewees retain the right to review and edit their interview transcript before the final version is deposited, and, if they wish, to place restrictions on the availability of the interview or to specify conditions under which it may be accessed.

I sincerely hope that you will consider participating in this important effort to document the history of the desegregation of Columbia's public schools. I will be contacting you via telephone or email in the near future to discuss your participation in the project. Please feel free to contact me as specified below with any questions. Additional information regarding the project is attached for your reference.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Foster
M.A. candidate, Journalism
University of Missouri
roxannedfoster@yahoo.com

Oral History Project: Desegregation of Columbia's public schools

Introduction

In the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, it affirmed that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal . . ." States were left to determine how the change from segregated facilities to integrated ones would be implemented. As news clips and textbooks show, the transition was smooth in some areas and violent in others.

It could be said that the transition to desegregated educational facilities in Columbia was a relatively smooth one. For this project, I plan to seek not only the perspective of those who embraced change and viewed integration as the way of the future, but also those who were apprehensive about the process and sought other solutions to Columbia's response to the Supreme Court's decision.

Mission statement:

Through collecting the oral testimonies of students, teachers and community members who experienced the integration of Columbia's high schools, I plan to use subject-oriented interviews to add to the existing historical documents about the city's endeavor to join two racially segregated communities. These interviews will preserve some of the commentary on the difficulties and victories of the task set forth by the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954).

Goals:

- Record the oral testimony of 10 people who experienced the process of desegregating Columbia's high schools by August 16, 2013.
- Collect copies of archival material surrounding the desegregation of Columbia's high schools for submission to the State Historical Society of Missouri.

Topical outline for interview:

1. Basic biographical information
2. Life in Columbia in the 1950s
3. Attending a racially segregated school
4. Hearing the news of desegregation
5. Decisions and transitions
6. The first day
7. Experiences at Hickman (if applicable)
8. Changes at Douglass (if applicable)
9. Quality of education
10. Impact on the community

The State Historical Society of Missouri

1020 Lowry Street, University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, MO 65201 (573) 882-7083

Oral History/Sound Recording Consent Form and Gift Agreement

I, _____ [interviewee], do hereby consent to the recording and preservation of all interviews recorded by _____ [interviewer] on the date(s) of _____.

In addition, above said interviewee and interviewer do hereby give to the Trustees of the State Historical Society of Missouri, for whatever scholarly or educational purposes may be determined, all contents of interviews recorded on the above mentioned date(s), along with such intellectual property rights and copyrights that any of them may possess in this or these recordings.

It is understood that the said recording(s) and transcript are to be kept as part of the Society's Manuscript Collection for as long as the Collection believes said material to be of scholarly or historical value.

Signed: _____ date
Interviewee

Signed: _____ date
Interviewer

Signed: _____ date
Executive Director

Conditions:

Participant Information Summary

Desegregation of Columbia (Missouri) Public Schools (1954-1961)

Interviewee: _____

Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

DOB: _____

Birthplace: _____

Parents: _____

Parent's Occupations:

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Siblings: _____

Your place in birth order: _____

School(s) and years attended:

What did you do after graduating from high school? (College, career, military service, marriage, travel, etc.) _____

Name(s) of spouse(s), if applicable:

Name(s) of children, if applicable:

Notes:

DESEGREGATION OF COLUMBIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This is Roxanne Foster, journalism master's student at the University of Missouri. I'm at _____ on _____ to interview _____ about his/her experience with the desegregation of Columbia's public high schools during the late 1950s and early 1960s for an oral history project that will be archived at the State Historical Society of Missouri.

1. What was it like to grow up in Columbia during the 1950s? (Topics to consider: where they lived, family dynamic, friends, chores, food, clubs, church, etc.) What was the community like?
2. What was a typical day like for you during the school year? (Walk me through a typical day, from sun-up to dun-down.)
3. How did you get to school each day?
4. What was the classroom like? (Describe the classroom, equipment, lessons, homework, breaks, etc. Ask how many were in each class, how seating was arranged, who sat where, etc.) How did you choose your classes?
5. What was your relationship like with the teachers? Principal? School Board? (Get names and ask for descriptions. Ask about teaching styles, favorites and feared.)
6. What was your parents' relationship like with your teachers? The principal? The School Board?
7. What was your relationship like with the other students? (Ask about clubs, sports, gym class, after-school activities, etc.) Where did you hang out after school?
8. What did you do for lunch? Bring a sack lunch? Go off campus? Where did you eat? With whom?

TRANSITION:

9. How did you hear about the plan to desegregate the public schools? (Ask about any conversations that were had with parents or other adults.)
10. What was your initial response to the decision?
11. What was the community's response to desegregation, from your perspective? Was there any difference between how the younger generation responded and the older? Boys and girls?

12. FOR STUDENTS WHO WERE ALREADY AT HICKMAN

- a) How did you feel going into school on your first day at an integrated school? Nervous? Scared?
- b) What were your interactions like with the other students at Hickman (black and white)? What were your interactions like with the other students at Hickman? Were there any comments made about blacks being there? Please give examples.
- c) What changes did you notice at Hickman after black students began transferring there? Were they immediate or gradual? (Ask about lunchroom, extracurricular activities, sports, traditions, etc.)
- d) How did the changes impact you personally?
- e) What conversation was there amongst students about the changes that were occurring? Did any action take place? Were there comments made? What were they?
- f) How did the adults (teachers, principals, counselors) respond to the changes that were occurring at the school? What did they say and do?
- g) Did your relationship change with your teachers or the administration at all? Did your parents' relationship with your teachers or the administration change? How so?

12. FOR STUDENTS WHO TRANSFERRED TO HICKMAN

- a) How did you make the decision to move to Hickman? Who were the people you talked to about it? What did they say? (Ask about parents if they don't bring them up.)
- b) How did you make your decision known?
- c) What was the response? (From parents, friends, teachers, coaches, neighbors in the community, etc.)
- d) How did the adults in your life (parents, teachers, pastors, counselors, etc.) prepare you for what was ahead? Who else played a part in preparing you for the transition?
- e) Walk me through that first day of classes at Hickman, from sunup to sundown. (How did you start the day? How did you get to school? What did you wear? Was there some sort of orientation? Did someone show you around?) How did you choose your classes?
- f) How did you feel going into school that day? Nervous? Scared?
- g) Describe the classrooms at Hickman. (Dimensions, décor, seating arrangement. Ask about books, equipment, teaching tools.)
- h) Tell me about your teachers at Hickman. What was their teaching style like? What was your relationship with them like?
- i) What was your parents' relationship like with your teachers?
- j) Who helped you with the transition once you were there (principal, teachers, counselors, parents, etc.)? How?
- k) What were your interactions like with the other students at Hickman? Were there any comments made about blacks being there? Please give examples.
- l) What did you do for lunch? Bring a sack lunch? Go off campus? Where did you eat? With whom?

- m) What was your involvement with extracurricular activities while at Hickman? Why?

12. FOR STUDENTS WHO STAYED AT DOUGLASS

- a) How did you make the decision to stay at Douglass? Who were the people you talked to about it? What did they say? (Ask about parents if they don't bring them up.)
- b) What were the main factors for why you chose the route that you chose?
- c) What was the response like from others regarding your decision? (Parents, friends, teachers, coaches, neighbors in the community, etc.)
- d) What changes did you see at Douglass after students began transferring to Hickman? Were they immediate or gradual? How did this impact you, personally?
- e) What conversation was there amongst students about the changes that were occurring? Did any action take place?
- f) How did the adults (teachers, principals, counselors) respond to the changes that were occurring at the school? What did they say and do?
- g) Did your parents' relationship with your teachers or the administration change?

TRANSITION

ALL (ctd.)

- 13. What changes in the community did you see or sense after the decision to desegregate schools? (Ask for specific examples.)
- 14. What was the relationship like between students who chose to stay at Douglass and those who transferred to Hickman?
- 15. Do you still keep in contact with people from high school? Have you attended any reunions? What was that like?

16. What are your thoughts on the quality of education you received at your school of choice? How well did it prepare you for the future?
17. In your opinion, what influence (if any) did making the decision to transfer to Hickman/stay at Douglass have on your life?
18. Are there any other stories from your experience with the desegregation of Columbia's schools in the 1950s that you would like to share or anything else you'd like to add?
19. What are your thoughts on how far desegregation and integration in Columbia has come over the last 60 years? What do you feel was gained? What was lost?

Thank you!

Field Notes - Week 1

Weekly recap:

Goals: get organized and come up with a list of prospective interviewees.

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Collected and made copies of all of the forms to be presented to interviewees.
- Read through the oral history resources on Baylor University's website.
- Spent blocks of time on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at the State Historical Society doing research. I looked through the Hickman High School yearbooks from 1953-1961 and accumulated a list of 25 names of black students who attended the school during that time frame. I also combed through collections of documents in the Boone County, Missouri Black Archives Collection and "vertical" (miscellaneous) files related to Hickman High School, Douglass High School or Black Columbia.
- Met with Doug Hunt, retired English professor and coordinator of the Historic Black Columbia initiative. He looked over my list of names, helped prioritize sources and suggested alternates.
- Created source notes and bios for the top five targeted interviewees.
- Listened to portions of oral history interviews that Jeff Corrigan pulled oral history interviews and transcripts for me to review.

Work assessment:

I have been blown away by the facts that have been unearthed during my background research. For example, the decision to desegregate Columbia's schools was

made five days after the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision was handed down. All of the black students who attended Hickman the following school year were female. Very few black male students attended Hickman during the time period I've chosen to examine. This fact makes me curious about the circumstances surrounding the disparity.

Before my conversation with Doug Hunt I'd planned to focus solely on students who attended Hickman High School between 1955 and 1960. After meeting with him and digging through the archives, however, I can see that not including members of the strong contingent of black students who stayed at Douglass High School until its closing would tell an incomplete story. Although there were those who felt integration was the way of the future and means of rising above being treated like a second-class citizen, there were also those who were equally as hesitant to dislodge from the school, community and legacy that their forefathers built and who felt that abandoning Douglass was like abandoning their roots. Expanding the scope of interviewees not only includes this different perspective on integration, but also increases the likelihood that I will be able to obtain interviews from 10 participants who reside in Columbia.

As I read through Baylor University's material on oral history interviewing, I was struck by the idea that honing in on a shared background or experience can be one way to develop rapport with interviewees. As I mulled over this project in my mind over the last five months, I have always thought that I would disclose my age and "outsider identity" (Caribbean-born, immigrant upbringing) as a means of encouraging people to teach me what living through that era was like. Now, with the increased scope of interviewees, I realize that the strategy will have to be fitted to each individual's experience. It will

definitely be a learning experience, since finding those areas of common ground will be more difficult with some than with others.

Professional analysis update:

I didn't put any effort into building professor bios or sending letters of introduction this week. Both of these tasks are on the agenda for next week.

Field Notes - Week 2

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue research
- Craft list of topics/questions
- Name and create mini-bios for top five prospective oral history interviewees
- Prepare professor bios and write letter of invitation

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Watched "Battle: Change from within" documentary
- Met with Jeff Corrigan to go over potential pitfalls of scheduling and interviewing, as well as to seek suggestions on effective interview set-up and equipment
- Read newspaper clippings from the late 50s about Columbia's integration of public schools
- Reviewed one-room schoolhouse oral history recordings and transcripts
- Wrote out project goals and list of topics/questions to be discussed
- Created professor bios and notes about their use of oral history in courses they teach and/or journalism projects they oversee
- Wrote rough drafts of letters to potential interviewees (for both oral history and professional analysis)

Work assessment:

I couldn't help thinking as I watched the "Battle" documentary that there was an entire side of the story that seemed to be missing. The tension in the black community with Eliot Battle's progressive stance on integration was briefly touched on, but I think fully exploring this topic was outside the scope of the film that centered on one man's effort to shepherd students and facilitate a smooth transition into life in a desegregated schools. Realizing that this information is out there but not fully documented made me all the more determined to include the testimony of students who resisted the change in this project.

The more I research, the more fascinated I become with the process of choosing to remain within the familiar boundaries of one's own community versus stepping out into a possibly hostile environment in the hope of a better future. It speaks to the universal theme of journeying outside of one's comfort zone to expand one's horizons. I wonder, though, how were these decisions made? What conversations took place in the midst of weighing the options? What happened when the decision was made but it didn't go as well as planned? Research repeatedly states that most parents wanted Douglass closed for good (based on a poll in which 95 percent of elementary school parents wanted their child to attend school elsewhere in the district), yet the sentiment that there were those who thought white students should transfer into the school in lieu of closing it still exists today. What were the foundational beliefs that fueled both sides of the debate?

Based on the texts I've read this week, one could say the fight for the civil rights of blacks and the push to desegregate schools began in Columbia long before the 1954

Brown decision. Evidence of the fight for equal rights in education can be found in the early 1930s. MU's first black students enrolled in various programs in 1950. Blacks were seeking gains in education long before the decision to integrate Hickman High School, in spite of the cost.

In "Douglass: Columbia's other high school," Ruth D. Wiggins, one of the first black teachers at Hickman who transferred from Douglass then the school closed in 1960, said, "Whenever you make a gain in any respect, you lose something. We lost the warmth between the teachers and the students, but the students gained a broader background." This cost-benefit equation should be an interesting one to probe and analyze during my interviews.

Regarding logistics, I have to say it's great to have a supervisor who is experienced with doing these types of projects. As I met with Jeff Corrigan this week, he shared about some of the pitfalls he's recently dealt with while interviewing in Southeast Missouri – namely how to work on people who are reluctant interviewees and how to shift gears after last-minute cancellations. Meeting with him to visualize an optimal interviewing space and practice interviewing techniques were really helpful. When I mentioned upgrading my microphone (I've used a wired, lapel-clip lavalier microphone with my H4N in the past), he tried to talk me out of it, stressing that there was no need to purchase a mic just for this project. "Use what you have and it should be fine," he said. Once I explained that the upgrade would be an investment for future projects and why I felt it would provide better sound quality and interference-free recordings, he suggested a few options.

Professional analysis update:

I plan to revise and send out the letters next week. I'd like to conduct the interviews with professors after I've done a couple oral history interviews so that I have the students' perspective on the exercise, so I'm shooting for mid-to-late June interviews with professors.

As I did research for the professor bios, clear evidence of using oral histories with students could be found with Joel Beeson, Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Jim Sheeler. No such evidence was found for Mark Feldstein or Kathleen Ryan. I will contact both to determine if they should even be included in the list of interviewees next week.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue research – reading news clips, books and government documents
- Establish contact with the top five potential oral history interviewees
- Set up meeting with Julie Middleton, who worked on the Battle documentary (at the suggestion of Mary Kay Blakely)
- Send letters requesting interviews to professors
- Revise list of topics and questions

Field Notes - Week 3

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue research – reading news clips, books and government documents
- Establish contact with the top five potential oral history interviewees
- Contacted Julie Middleton, who worked on the Battle documentary (at the suggestion of Mary Kay Blakely)
- Send letters requesting interviews to professors
- Revise list of topics and questions

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Clarified the stated goals and list of topics to be explored that was used in a project overview document that was sent out to prospective interviewees and contacts
- Submitted the list of questions and topics to be covered during interviews to Jeff Corrigan for review
- Continued reading original manuscripts documenting Missouri's desegregation process, progress reports and news clips on the 1954 *Brown* decision
- Sent emails, made phone calls and sent invitation letters to top 5 potential oral history interviewees
- Tested equipment to solve technical glitches before doing a test interview
- Scheduled a test oral history interview with Pamela Ingram, director of Granny's House in Columbia (who is African American and within the right age

demographic, but who did not attend a Columbia high school, so she cannot technically be an interview subject for this project)

- Revised research questions for university professors
- Wrote letters requesting an interview to Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, Jim Sheeler and Joel Beeson
- Sent emails to Mark Feldstein and Kathleen Ryan, seeking clarification of their use of oral histories in their teaching curricula
- Emailed Julie Middleton

Work assessment:

Now that the initial invitations have been sent and attempts to contact interviewees have been made, it feels as though the game of cat and mouse has begun. Even though the project overview that I sent out with the letters tells why the individual's perspective is so important to capture, I have a feeling that I will have to convince a few people to take two hours out of their schedule to do the interview. Jeff warned me about this already, so I'm well aware that I may need to "sell" the interview to some.

As I read through news clips and manuscripts this week, I was amazed at the measures taken by segregationists to defy the *Brown* decision. I read about districts that shuffled students, enacted legislation that supported segregated private schools or redrew district boundaries (gerrymandering). Other districts, however, forced desegregation by offering classes only at the white schools. While this worked to desegregate classrooms in some areas, black students in many states were barred from attending.

It could be argued that one reason for the resistance was that, at the time when desegregation was being ushered in through the school system, many knew that desegregation of schools was a precursor to desegregation everywhere. The change was inevitable, however, since students in Columbia began stirring up the winds of change in regards to desegregation as early as the 1940s, when white students would join black students during sit-ins in restaurants around town. Perhaps this is one reason the desegregation process in town was as non-confrontational and smooth as it was.

One thing the readings this week did was solidify the impression that I've had that "integration" of public schools is not the phrase that I should be using to explain my project. From my own experience I know that integration and desegregation are two different concepts and not interchangeable. To me, the former denotes a harmonious blending of two or more entities, while the latter denotes the removal of barriers so that two or more groups can coexist in the same space. I've had enough awkward experiences in places that were desegregated but not integrated to know there's a difference.

Regarding equipment and glitches, I'm glad I did a test run this week. I had to use Google to solve a few issues. The practice set-up and run-through was such an important step in guaranteeing that I'm not wasting anyone's time.

Professional analysis update:

I haven't received any response from Mark Feldstein or Kathleen Ryan. If I don't hear from them by Wednesday, I plan to call their office.

For a brief moment I thought about delaying sending the letter of invitation to the rest of the professors who have a proven track record of using oral histories in their

curricula until I had a better grip on what I wanted to ask them. In the end, I decided that I should try to initiate contact and get the ball rolling, just in case I need to hunt them down or navigate around scheduling conflicts. Although I didn't send the letters this past week, I plan to send them via email on Monday after one more revision.

Work planned for next week:

- Follow-up phone calls and visits to potential oral history interviewees
- Follow up with Julie Middleton
- Conduct a practice interview with Pamela Ingram
- Revise and send (via email) letters requesting interviews to professors Joel Beeson, Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Jim Sheeler
- Continue research

Field Notes - Week 4

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Follow-up phone calls and visits to potential oral history interviewees
- Follow up with Julie Middleton
- Conduct a practice interview with Pamela Ingram
- Revise and send (via email) letters requesting interviews to professors Joel Beeson, Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Jim Sheeler
- Continue research

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Sent letters requesting interviews to professors Joel Beeson, Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Jim Sheeler
- Made follow-up phone calls to potential oral history interviewees
- Contacted Bill Thompson (who works at the Armory and is well-connected in the community) in an effort to find more potential interviewees
- Reviewed contacts and background information received from Julie Middleton
- Created a marketing packet – informational flyer, generic letter, oral history information, project overview, business card – for canvassing

Work assessment:

Days before Berkley Hudson made the suggestion of requesting a 15-20-minute sit-down with potential interviewees, I'd been thinking that the mention of a two-hour oral history interview might prevent people from responding to my letter of invitation. I

always had it in mind to do a short, preliminary interview because it would provide a low-commitment way for them to get to know me and hear more about the project, while giving me an opportunity to “sell” participation in the project face-to-face. In my letters of invitation, however, I followed the letter templates I’d seen that gave the expected length of the formal interview instead of mentioning the informal one. Now that I’ve noted how busy this group of septuagenarians can be, I can see that mentioning the two-hour time investment may be an unnecessary obstacle.

Future letters that go out will state that I’d like to set up a preliminary meeting with the recipient instead of giving the two-hour time frame for the formal interview. In follow-up calls with those to whom letters that have already gone out, I’ve incorporated the preliminary face-to-face chat into the conversation. My battle now is to get the few who haven’t done so to return my calls.

Although I have been talking with people who went to high school here about the project, it feels like I’m wasting time with the waiting to gain access with my top five. I’d like to get at least one completed oral history interview under my belt by the end of next week, so I think it’s time to expand the possibilities. While talking about my project with a Hickman High graduate, I got the idea that I should canvas the parts of town where I know people in their seventies live and play. A few possibilities that came up were the senior center, the neighborhood near Douglass and senior care facilities. I made up a flyer to post on information boards and an information packet to give to administrators in an effort to find other people who might be interested in taking part in the project.

Professional analysis update:

I received word from Mark Feldstein that he really doesn't incorporate oral histories into his work. He does extensive interviewing and teaches his students to do the same, but the "Kissing Cousins" article published in the *Oral History Review* was the only time he focused on it as an information gathering method.

In his place, I've invited David K. Dunaway to participate in the study. He was one of the authors of *Oral History: An interdisciplinary anthology*, a book that I referenced in my literature review. He has worked mostly in radio, where he focuses on presenting folklore, literature and history to his listeners. He teaches radio and documentary studies at UC Berkley and dabbles in multimedia storytelling.

I haven't heard from the other professors, so I will be calling their offices next week.

Work planned for next week:

- Follow up with oral history contacts who requested a call back next week
- Meet with Julie Middleton on Friday
- Meet with Bill Clark to discuss potential interviewees
- Call Hickman and Douglass for referrals
- Reschedule mock interview with Pamela Ingram
- Canvas neighborhood and senior facilities for potential interviewees
- Call the office of professors I haven't heard from yet

Field Notes - Week 5

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Follow up with oral history contacts who requested a call back next week
- Meet with Julie Middleton on Friday
- Meet with Bill Clark to discuss potential interviewees
- Call Hickman and Douglass for referrals
- Reschedule mock interview with Pamela Ingram
- Canvas neighborhood and senior facilities for potential interviewees
- Call the office of professors I haven't heard from yet

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Followed up with oral history contacts
- Followed up with professors
- Set up preliminary informational meetings with two potential interviewees
- Started conducting interviews with two interviewees
- Contacted Charley Blackmore, who runs the Kewpie Alumni website
- Met with Julie Middleton
- Played phone tag with Bill Clark

Work assessment:

I've found that, in this town, it's hard for people in this town to wrap their minds around a journalism student conducting oral histories with no publication or story in mind. One of the first questions I receive from interviewees who have come in contact

with us in the past is usually, “So, what’s your story about?” or “Which publication is this going into?” When I tell them there is no story or that I have no agenda apart from archiving their thoughts and experiences for future researchers, they seem confused.

This week I found that the expectation of being interviewed for publication means that I will have to dig deeper and steer interviewees away from presenting short sound bites and anecdotal quotes. One interviewee tried to make connections between the past and present for me rather than going deep with the question at hand. I now know that in subsequent interviews I will need to explain up front that we’re going to go deep and focus first on experiences at Douglass, then the transition to Hickman. I’ll also have to be explicit in communicating that I want deep answers you may never see in publication.

In addition to conducting my first interviews, I made what I believe will be two fruitful alliances this week. One was with Wynna Faye Elbert, who is one of the gatekeepers of the black community. The other was with Charley Blackmore, a Hickman High class of ’63 graduate with ties to both the black and white community. Mr. Blackmore was more than willing to provide insight into racial dynamics from his point of view – as a white youth in Columbia who played sports with and befriended black youth, even if they didn’t go to school together. He spoke of the challenges some of his black friends had at Hickman (off the record) and shared about what he felt was lost at Hickman during desegregation.

Interestingly enough, about 30 minutes into my phone conversation with Mr. Blackmore I had to explain to him three times that I was not white. Once it sunk in that I was black, he assumed I shared a history and perspective with blacks in Columbia. This

is a common misconception about my race/ethnicity that I believe, in most cases, works in my favor. Some of the black people I've met assume I share some level of distrust of white people or solidarity with the black community. Most think my parents experienced the same sting of racism and the upheaval of desegregation. Many assume the black-white divide was as prevalent in my hometown.

Since I lack this shared history, there's a bit of uneasiness that rises up in me when my race/ethnicity becomes a topic of discussion with interviewees. I'm honest if someone asks about my background but if they don't, I allow the assumptions to prevail. I'm not sure if that's ethical but it's the way I've lived my life as a first-generation American for the last 30 years. In addition, I've been told the color of my skin will set black interviewees at ease and possibly enable them to provide information that would not normally be shared. I count it a privilege but I wonder what effect my ethnicity will have on white interviewees. I asked Julie Middleton about her experience with this and she believed that, because she interviewed educated individuals, it made no difference at all. It will be interesting to see if my experience is the same.

Since Wynna Faye Elbert and Charley Blackmore have 10 additional people that they will contact for me to interview, I decided not to canvas the area for interviewees. In addition to the five people I'm already working on, this is more than enough for me to handle at the moment.

Professional analysis update:

I've received word from Dr. Dunaway and Jim Sheeler that they are willing to be interviewed. Dr. Dunaway's interview is scheduled for Wednesday and Jim Sheeler's interview will be conducted within the next two weeks.

I'm still waiting to hear back from the other three.

Work planned for next week:

- Follow up with interviewees who requested a call back next week
- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log and transcribe interviews for review by interviewees
- Submit interview one and audio log to Jeff Corrigan for review
- Follow up on contacts given to me by Ms. Elbert and Mr. Blackmore
- Follow up with the other three professors

Field Notes - Week 6

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Follow up with interviewees who requested a call back next week
- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log and transcribe interviews for review by interviewees
- Submit interview one and audio log to Jeff Corrigan for review
- Follow up on contacts given to me by Ms. Elbert and Mr. Blackmore
- Follow up with the other three professors

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Followed up with oral history contacts
- Followed up with professors
- Set up and conducted preliminary informational meetings with potential interviewees
- Scheduled and conducted oral history interviews
- Began transcribing and audio logging interviews
- Submitted interview one and audio log to Jeff Corrigan for review
- Met with Bill Clark for referrals
- Interviewed Dr. David Dunaway for professional analysis

Work assessment:

After more than four hours of meeting and interviewing, I have my first complete set of interviews. This week, as I transcribed them so Jeff could review my work, I had to

admit that John C. Kelly was a brilliant first interviewee. He was prepared to tell stories from the get-go and made my introduction into the world of segregated Columbia a fascinating one.

As was expected, based on my oral history research, the sense of nostalgia and longing for the way things used to be was pretty strong with Kelly. As he told stories about a tight-knit community that was insulated from prejudice and harshness, it was no surprise to hear him say he feels that blacks lost a lot in the effort to merge the two races. Role models, places to belong and a sense of community were three concepts he mentioned were lost in the process.

During the interview I noticed that Kelly lit up when talking about his work as assistant principal at Hickman and his involvement with sports. When speaking about the challenges of frequently being the “only black person in the room,” his tone and demeanor became serious. He was in teaching mode. It made me wish I was doing video so that those facial expressions could be preserved for the next generation. Unfortunately, I still think it’s too complicated to attempt on a project like this.

Near the end of the interview, I had to ask him three times to explain how desegregation of public schools was responsible for the loss of role models and community. I’m not sure that that’s something an oral historian would do. A journalist? Definitely. If you’re going to draw a correlation, I want to know how you got there. On the second try he intimated that desegregation of schools was the ball that got urban renewal going. I’m not sure, at this point, that I buy the causal relationship. The two are forever linked in Kelly’s mind.

There's no way that I can fully understand all that he went through. At best, I can piece together his experiences to tell a fuller, more vivid account of his part in Columbia's history. I do feel, however, that learning about the past from him takes some of the romanticized shine that history books and films portray of the civil rights forerunners who paved the way for people like me to live and function in a multicultural society. I understand that he feels the strength and interconnectivity of the black community were lost in the process. Does this mean, though, that this strength and interconnectivity can only be regained if we separate ourselves from the rest of society once again?

Kelly's perspective on race in America – and Columbia – is one that I don't think I've read before. It'll be interesting to see how the other nine interviewees' stories compare to his retelling of history.

Jeff's critique of Kelly's interview was a positive one. It was nice to know that I'm on the right track where my questions, sound quality and technique are concerned. Thankfully, Jeff also told me, in no uncertain terms, that I was not to transcribe my interviews. Instead, he suggested I do audio logs, which are time stamped summaries of the conversation. It involves creating a searchable document that draws attention to proper nouns like names, places and events. It should give enough information so that a person would know to jump to minute 23:15 to hear about narrator X's experience in Mr. Z's class. It was a welcome suggestion, since transcribing Kelly's interview was tedious and time-consuming.

During our meeting we also talked through my frustration with not unveiling what I felt was new information during my interviews. Much of what is discussed can be found in newspaper clippings and manuscripts at the Society. Jeff explained that oral history isn't looking for the new angle or twist on experience. Instead, it seeks to corroborate and bring to life what exists in text and share about it from a personal perspective. Apparently, I needed to be reminded of that subtle difference between journalism and oral history.

Professional analysis update:

My interview with Dr. David Dunaway went well. He was far more theoretical and philosophical than I expected about his use of oral histories in the classroom but I gleaned a lot from listening to him speak on a topic about which he's obviously passionate. Once I transcribe his interview, he's requested that I send him a release form so that it can be archived with the university. He also suggested a few scholarly articles I hadn't come across that deal with educators' use of oral history in the classroom that might serve as a resource for my professional analysis.

Joel Beeson and Jim Sheeler are both on schedule for interviews in the next two weeks. I'm still waiting to hear back from the other two. I realize that at this point in my project timeline, having three out of five interviews arranged and conducted is good progress but at what point do I abandon hope of reaching these professors? If they're out of the office for the summer, I may have to find alternate means of reaching them (home, colleagues, etc.). For me, Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez is a must-have interview. Kathleen

Ryan is only a possibility. I may begin to look for another alternate in case she can't be reached.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Follow up with potential interviewees
- Audio-log and transcribe interviews for submission to the Society
- Schedule and conduct interviews with Joel Beeson and Jim Sheeler
- Follow up with the other two professors

Field Notes - Week 7

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log interviews for review by interviewees
- Schedule and conduct interviews with Joel Beeson and Jim Sheeler
- Follow up with Kathleen Ryan and Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Followed up with oral history contacts
- Followed up with professors
- Set up and conducted preliminary informational meetings with potential interviewees
- Scheduled and conducted oral history interviews
- Continued audio logging interviews
- Wrote out and mailed "Thank you" cards to interviewees with completed interviews
- Interviewed Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez for professional analysis

Work assessment:

My life came full circle this week. As I was setting up equipment to interview Jim Turner, a Douglass student who was forced to transfer to Hickman for his senior year when Douglass closed, his wife Sandra walked in. We looked at each other, knowing that we'd met before but couldn't place where. About 15 minutes after we gave up trying to

figure it out, Sandra's sister, Marva Jo Brown, one of first students to desegregate Hickman in 1954 walked into the house. She took one look at me and said, "I know you. You interviewed me at the library for a story on that book about Henrietta Lacks." Leave it to the oldest person in the room to remember a brief meeting and conversation that took place two years ago.

When I explained to her that she was the inspiration for this master's project, she beamed. I reminded her of the way she captivated the room that evening in 2011 with her stories of black folks' distrust of white doctors here in Columbia during the time of segregation. Like many others I've talked with about the project, she was glad that someone had taken an interest in preserving this portion of Columbia's history.

So, in addition to the importance of making a good and lasting impression on sources, this week has taught me a few things:

1. Always come prepared to record. After "visiting for a while" (a.k.a. building rapport), the people I meet with are usually ready to begin the oral history interview. The preliminary meeting was supposed to be a way to get in front of a potential interviewee and talk with them about the project. It really hasn't worked that way. I've come to the conclusion that a scheduled meeting of any kind means "don't make plans for at least 4 hours afterwards or you're going to regret it because you'll have to cut an interview short or be too drained to function."
2. People who say they're shy and may not have much to say can talk for hours about their childhood. Even those who don't consider themselves eloquent or

storytellers paint fabulous pictures with words that make growing up in a segregated Columbia during the 1950s sound magical.

3. The sentence, “I probably shouldn’t be telling you this,” is still my favorite phrase to hear during an interview.
4. There are some interesting shades of grey regarding one’s connection to and investment in the Black community. Where you live and where you went to school are two huge factors. To some, they’re more important than any contribution of money, time or energy you’ve made and are cause for your commitment to the community to be called into question.

The divide between blacks and whites (and even between blacks) in Columbia is still alive and well in the minds of those who lived through the era of desegregation. One interviewee this week talked about being the only black person at his 50th high school reunion. When he arrived, he found that people were friendly enough, but once the other alumni read his bio and took in the comments he made about perceived mistreatment during his senior year at Hickman, he said he received the cold shoulder from the group. He said he remembers thinking, “I’m 70 years old. I don’t have to take this.” He didn’t stay for the rest of the reunion.

Like many others I’ve talked to, he looks forward to Douglass’s Black & White Ball and has no plans to attend another Hickman reunion. After the interview, he showed me a letter of apology written to him by one of the white students who’d been at the reunion and read his bio. While he believed that the man’s heart was in the right place, he

didn't believe what he'd written. I found myself wondering if and how such a breach could ever be repaired.

Since reunions have come up with every interviewee, I decided to add the topic to my list of questions. I also now ask "What do you believe was gained with desegregation?" and "What do you feel was lost?" I always find it interesting when interviewees say that they feel that Columbia is still segregated but blacks had more freedom during segregation. While I'm very aware of the role that nostalgia plays in describing the Columbia of their youth, I'm beginning to understand what they mean. I also find myself wondering if that freedom is inextricably linked to youth.

Professional analysis update:

Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez responded to my emails and phone calls out of the blue this week. She requested that we do the interview on Wednesday and I was more than willing to oblige. I have to say that her interview was such a different experience than the one with Dr. Dunaway. She's just as passionate about her area of interest but offered more practical and hands-on information about how and why she uses oral history in the classroom. I'm beginning to wonder if and how being linked to a larger, long-term project provides an added layer of commitment to teaching oral history to journalism students. Since Joel Beeson is attached to a long-term project but Jim Sheeler is not, it will be interesting to see how their perspectives weigh against Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez's.

Dr. Kathleen Ryan replied to my inquiry and stated that she has not used oral history in her classes because the format at Colorado isn't conducive to doing them well. We exchanged a couple emails where I asked her to explain what she meant by "doing

them well,” which were very insightful. It’s unfortunate that she lacks the experience I need because I think she’d have a lot to contribute to the conversation.

I sent a preliminary email to a professor Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez suggested as a possibility – Mary Larson at Oklahoma State University. She’s the current president of the Oral History Association and although I can find no evidence of her being a journalist, she may know of a journalism professor I haven’t come across.

I’ve already contacted Joel Beeson and Jim Sheeler to set a firm date and time for their interviews in the next two weeks.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log and transcribe interviews for review by interviewees
- Schedule interviews with Joel Beeson and Jim Sheeler
- Follow up with Mary Larson

Field Notes - Week 8

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log and transcribe interviews for review by interviewees
- Schedule interviews with Joel Beeson and Jim Sheeler
- Follow up with Mary Larson

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Followed up with oral history contacts
- Followed up with professors, including Mary Larson and another referral, Mary Kay Quinlan
- Scheduled and conducted oral history interviews
- Continued audio logging interviews
- Wrote out and mailed "Thank you" cards to oral history interviewees

Work assessment:

This week I completed an interview with a couple (Raymond and Celestine Hayes) that attended Hickman High School. At Jeff's suggestion, I did their interview together. Although I think they felt more comfortable doing it this way, I'm not sure that I'll do that again. For starters, they weren't really on the same track academically – she moved to Columbia as a sophomore and never attended Douglass, while he grew up here and transferred to Hickman as a junior. This meant that I would focus on one narrator for an hour as they talked about their experience in school while the other just sat there and

listened (and usually made noise of some sort). There were also significant differences in their propensity to tell stories. He was more candid, whereas she was more reluctant to give details – especially names.

In the end, however, the interview format worked well because the husband followed his future wife to Hickman and credits her positive experience there, along with his being able to walk on to the football team (as the first black player in the school's history) as reasons why the transfer was a successful and smooth one. They both became educators, so they had much to say about the benefits and losses of their educational choices as well as the effects of desegregation on Columbia. Once again, Urban Renewal came up as an area of bitterness in the black community.

My interview on Friday was rife with technical issues. I was so happy I'd heeded the "Be prepared – always have a backup plan" counsel we've received over the last two years. As I was interviewing Marva Brown, one of the first students to transfer to Hickman in 1954, I happened to glance down and see that my recorder was claiming that the new 32GB memory card (with a capacity to record 50-hours of tape) was full – after 20 minutes. After trying to use it again with the same results, I went into problem-solving mode and pulled out one of my smaller (4GB) cards and quickly formatted it, all the while hoping that I wasn't losing any recordings that hadn't been downloaded to my laptop yet. Lesson learned – even when you test your equipment, sometimes malfunctions happen. Always have a clean card (or two) with you. I now know that in between interviews, I need to download and back up every file before walking into the next living room.

One of the things I have to be mindful of during these interviews is that I can make no assumptions regarding my audience. I can't assume that they know what a coal-burning stove, water pump or icebox is or how they work. Even though others have described it in previous interviews, I have to ask each interviewee to go through the same description process. Even though I'm looking for new details and descriptions during the interview, I'm also trying to corroborate stories and facts. If I go into an interview tired or distracted, it's easy to forget the importance of doing the latter.

It's been interesting to find that, with the unstructured nature of these interviews, the narrators oftentimes provide answers to subsequent questions. For instance, while describing what it was like growing up in Columbia, they usually talk about what they felt was lost in the desegregation process. When talking about teachers, classrooms and teaching styles, they usually share how those individuals did more than teach them math, science and social studies – they taught them how to navigate life in a segregated (and often hostile) world. One lesson that comes up repeatedly: in order to succeed in life, you have to be twice as smart, good and hard working as your white counterparts. It would be interesting to see if and how this message has been passed down to current generations.

Even though audio logging is so much easier than transcribing, it's still time-consuming. There's a slight possibility that I'm going into too much detail on my summaries but I just can't help it. The details and stories seem too important to gloss over. I admit that this is often where I get stuck when it's time to move from reporting to writing – I don't readily distinguish the "cream" from the milk when I'm faced with writing a story. The beautiful thing about this stage of my project is that I don't have to

do so and creating a detailed log of what has been said will be an asset for future researchers.

If I decide to write a story or pull together a multimedia piece, however, I will need those instincts to kick into gear.

Professional analysis update:

Jim Sheeler will be out of the country for the next two weeks, so we've scheduled an interview on the 19th. I'm still trying to nail down a date with Joel Beeson and Mary Larson.

I plan to transcribe Dr. Dunaway's interview next week.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Write out "Thank you" cards for completed interviews
- Audio-log interviews
- Schedule and possibly conduct interview with Joel Beeson
- Follow up with Mary Larson
- Transcribe Dunaway interview

Field Notes - Week 9

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Write out “Thank you” cards for completed interviews
- Audio-log interviews
- Schedule and possibly conduct interview with Joel Beeson
- Follow up with Mary Larson
- Transcribe Dunaway interview

In order to meet this week’s goals, I did the following:

- Followed up with oral history contacts
- Followed up with professors
- Scheduled and conducted oral history interviews
- Audio-logged interviews
- Write out and mailed “Thank you” cards for completed interviews
- Partially transcribed Dunaway interview

Work assessment:

In order to check the functionality of the replacement 32GB SD card I received, I decided to interview myself about my high school experience. It’s harder than I thought to remember significant details! I couldn’t even recall teacher’s names or subjects I took. Twenty minutes into it I decided that the card seemed to be working right because I’d run out of things to talk about. I doubt that would’ve been the case if I were sitting with a

friend who was asking about my senior year. The exercise not only raised my level of respect for my interviewees' ability to recall their experiences but also confirmed my suspicion that sharing your memories with an interested party – rather than a piece of hardware – yields better results.

It's important to note, though, that these results vary. I had what I believe was the toughest interview to date this week. She said she didn't receive the packet of information I sent about the project (almost a month ago), so I went into a little more depth about why the recording was important. At the onset, I gave my normal spiel about looking for details and story about their experience. I explained that the purpose of the interview was to have a living record on hand of what it was like to experience desegregation. I made a point of saying that I wasn't sure about what would be done with the interview, apart from archival with the Society.

When I asked her to paint a picture for me of what life was like in the 1950s and 60s, the results were quite interesting. Where others seemed to enjoy recollecting memories about their childhood, the things they did and the people they did it with, her descriptions were filled with phrases that lacked what I refer to as imaginative color – she lived in a “normal house,” had a “normal childhood” with “everything everyone else had.” When I asked her to elaborate and describe things to me, the result wasn't what I'd hoped. In fact, when I asked for confirmation about her having a washing machine when many others I've interviewed said they had to wash by hand, I sensed that she was a bit put off for my suggesting she didn't have something that “everybody else” had. She was much more colorful when the recorder was off.

So many times during this interview I tossed around the debate I've read in publications about correcting or calling a subject out in the middle of an interview. Some say that asking for clarification and producing facts that contradict a narrator's testimony is necessary in order to have an accurate retelling of history. Others say that the retelling is the narrators' own and should be respected. In the end, I stopped the tape and explained why I was asking clarifying questions and probing for details. As I reflect on it now, I wish I'd kept the tape running while I explained what I was looking for or why I was asking the questions I was asking.

For the record: audio logging takes forever! It's good to listen to the interviews again and critique myself. I can hear missed opportunities for asking follow-up questions and feel where I stuck too close to my "agenda" rather than flowing with the conversation and memories.

With each interview, students mention teachers who impacted their lives. If they were still living, I'd love to speak with Mrs. Ruth D. Wiggins. Every student – male or female – who went to Douglass mentions her as the ultimate role model. It's always two-fold. They talk about her sense of fashion, poise and femininity, then hone in on her education, command of the English language and ability to connect with students.

Conrad Stawski, who was from Poland, is the standout teacher at Hickman. Students repeatedly mention his name as the one white teacher who they connected with because he understood what it was like to be a minority and experience discrimination. Both are long gone but have left behind an amazing legacy.

I already have one interview scheduled and am trying to get two more on the calendar for next week. If I can do that, I'm technically finished with interviews. There's one more person who is mentioned at every turn in the black community that I'd like to interview – Jim Nunnely. He lives in Kansas City but will be in town for Douglass's Black & White Ball. Assuming that I can catch up with all of my audio logging and transcriptions, I will pursue him and a few others to add to the collection by August 16.

Professional analysis update:

I'm still waiting to hear back from Dr. Beeson on a firm date for our interview. He's already agreed and I know that I'm on his radar. I just need to catch him at his office at a moment when he's not on deadline.

I transcribed just over half of Dr. Dunaway's interview. It will be completed early this week, then I'll start on Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez's.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log interviews
- Submit audio logs for review by interviewees
- Write out and mail "Thank you" cards for completed interviews
- Finish transcription of Dunaway interview
- Transcribe Rivas-Rodriguez interview

Field Notes - Week 10

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue to schedule and conduct interviews
- Audio-log interviews
- Submit audio logs for review by interviewees
- Write out and mail “Thank you” cards for completed interviews
- Finish transcription of Dunaway interview
- Transcribe Rivas-Rodriguez interview

In order to meet this week’s goals, I did the following:

- Followed up with professors
- Scheduled and conducted oral history interviews
- Audio-logged interviews
- Wrote out and mailed “Thank you” cards for completed interviews
- Met with Jeff Corrigan to sit in on one of his interviews and discuss conducting interview during the Black & White Ball
- Completed transcription of Dunaway interview, began Rivas-Rodriguez interview

Work assessment:

I had the pleasure of (finally!) sitting in on one of Jeff’s interviews this week. It was interesting, to say the least. The gentleman Jeff was interviewing gave mostly monosyllabic responses to the questions asked. As the interview progressed, I noticed that Jeff’s questions were increasingly closed-ended or either-or suggestions that the

interviewee could choose from. While it was in progress, I was analyzing the conversation – and the sly smiles that crossed the gentleman’s face every once in a while when his wife nudged in him frustration over his lack of responsiveness. I couldn’t decide if this was just a personality quirk, if he was doing it to irk his wife or if his legal training kicked in and he was only providing just enough information to answer the question Jeff asked. In the end, I think it may have been all of the above.

Sitting in on Jeff’s interview taught me that:

- 1) Difficult interviews happen, even to people with a lot of experience. Problem-solving in the moment means that you have to figure out if it’s a waste of time and you need to stop the interview, if you need to adjust your approach or if there’s another option you haven’t considered.
- 2) I’m tougher on my interviewees than I thought. There were a few times during the interview that I wanted to jump in and have a go at “Mr. Twinkle-of-Mischief-in-His-Eyes.” Last week’s interview proved that I probably wouldn’t switch to closed-ended questions, but rather would continue to ask open-ended ones that don’t allow “yes,” “no” or monosyllabic answers. If the interview is not going to yield a lot of detail, it won’t be because I provided an out.
- 3) Sometimes you have to seize the opportunity that presents itself. In the end, Jeff interviewed the gentleman’s wife instead, who was eager to share her experiences with future generations. She even corrected her husband on a few things. It gave some insight into the dynamic of their relationship and also

prompted him to pipe up in the end about a few things that came to mind as she was talking about her experience.

The other topic of discussion that came up with Jeff was a phone call he received from Jim Nunnelly, the man who I'd planned to track down through John Kelly. Apparently, he heard about my project and proposed that Jeff conduct interviews with a group of 12 or so people that he will pull together the weekend of the Black & White Ball.

We're not sure why he called Jeff instead of me but, since it's apparent that Mr. Nunnelly is on board with the project, it's a win-win for me. Over the course of the weekend I'll take on an additional three or four interviewees and I won't have to travel to Kansas City to interview him. I've already sent Jeff my questions and participant summaries to look over in preparation for the series of 2-hour interviews. I'll have an advantage over him in the sense that I've become very familiar with the topic over the summer and can redirect interviewees using the last thing they said to obtain the information I still need. I also know enough to question when something that's said contradicts information I've received from others. Given Jeff's background in U.S. History, I don't think it'll be a huge problem.

I'm finding that one of the fascinating things about including white interviewees in the project is that it allows me to compare and contrast realities, perceptions and impacts of experience. This week was the first time an interviewee became emotional to the point of crying during an interview. He broke down in the middle of telling a story about being refused service in a downtown restaurant because the friend he sat down with

was black. Apparently, this experience was his first personal experience with blatant racism. Before this, he'd never viewed his friend as black and didn't consider what the barrier of segregation meant from his side of the color line. He also became teary at the retelling of the many haircuts he received from an old black barber who was a former slave who used to cut his hair as a child.

His response reaffirmed my thoughts about including at least one or two white students in the interviews for my project. Where most blacks point to the tremendous loss of the black community that came with desegregation, he saw the change in a positive light, saying that the barriers between black and whites needed to be removed. It confirmed my theory that it's impossible to remove personal experience from history.

As I produced audio logs for past interviews this week, it was great to listen in again and reevaluate points of conversation from the interview. In one interview, I was struck by the fact that there were poor white families that lived in Cemetery Hill – one of Columbia's black neighborhoods. When I asked my interviewee what his relationship was like with these kids, he said that their families were as much a part of the community as the black families. They played together, ran around town together and sat around at night burning rags to keep the mosquitos away while all the families visited together.

What must life have been like for these kids? What did they think when they left their majority black neighborhood to attend an all-white school? How were they treated by their peers?

I didn't think about it at the time because I had a set list of interviewees to pursue but I may circle back to determine if any of the white children from his neighborhood are still alive and in town. What a fascinating perspective they would be able to give, right?

Professional analysis update:

As I listened to and transcribed David Dunaway's interview, I realized that the reasons I felt the interview was flawed were:

- 1) I assumed he understood that I was seeking to understand his experience with teaching oral history to university undergraduate and graduate students, and
- 2) Rather than directly answering many of my questions, he provided philosophies, bibliographical information and listed his accomplishments. It was yet another example, I think, of people gravitating towards what they know best.

If I'd been more prepared for the interview I may have been able to redirect him and get more of the practical information that I was seeking. Once again, I'm seeing the value of listening to the interview again and critiquing my interview technique.

In spite of my perceived "flaws," some of the information he provided will be quite useful. He turned me on to "Field Reporting Oral Histories" and I've found that his desire to "enrich the historical mindedness of the American citizen" is a common goal of journalism professors I've spoken with so far.

This coming week, I'm interviewing Joel Beeson. The following week is Jim Sheeler. I've also requested a sit-down with Earnest Perry.

Work planned for next week:

- Conduct an oral history interview
- Write out and mail “Thank you” card for the completed interview
- Interview Joel Beeson
- Finish transcribing Rivas-Rodriguez interview
- Continue audio logging interviews

Field Notes - Week 11

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Conduct an oral history interview
- Write out and mail “Thank you” card for the completed interview
- Interview Joel Beeson
- Finish transcribing Rivas-Rodriguez interview
- Continue audio logging interviews

In order to meet this week’s goals, I did the following:

- Conducted an oral history interview with Sandra Turner
- Wrote out “Thank you” cards
- Interviewed Joel Beeson
- Continued to audio log oral history interviews

Work assessment:

Is it normal for people to think they are a “bad interviewee”? I’ve had several say this as an introduction, then proceed to talk for three hours about my topic of interest. It makes me wonder who has interviewed them in the past and why they feel that way.

When I ask why, their reasons usually center on a belief that they don’t have anything interesting to share or that they’re inarticulate and unable to say what they really want to say.

One reason I feel this project is going so well and yielding the information that’s being collected is because the interviewees have extensive experience with and were

deeply impacted by the subject matter. Each person I interview talks for approximately an hour about what it was like to grow up in Columbia. This week's interviewee needed very few prompts and covered all of the topics I usually ask about on her own. The more comfortable she became, the more animated her storytelling. She's yet another example of the fact that everyone has a story to tell and, if given a chance, can do so in an engaging way.

I also love how, during some interviews, the narrator gets so into telling their story that they forget that I wasn't there. This week's narrator started to ask, "You remember x, y and z?" When I shook my head, she followed that up with, "You don't remember that? Let me tell you about it." I chuckled on the inside because these storytellers generally are talking about something that occurred or was used long before I was even born. In this type of interviewing, for the narrator to become so comfortable during the interview that they include me in their history is a beautiful thing. It yields greater detail of the person's experience with history.

While I was in Memphis, TN, this week, I toured the National Civil Rights Museum. It was fascinating to overlay what was presented there with the information I've gleaned from my oral history project. The exhibits centered on Martin Luther King, Jr. and his impact on the movement. The overall message was one of "overcoming" and "equality." As I walked the grounds of the Lorraine Hotel and listened to key players share their experience with history through edited videos, I couldn't help wondering what these people felt was lost in our society as the Civil Rights Movement advanced. What correlations can they draw that might point to a cause-effect relationship? Are they as

puzzled as I am about how to recover it without regressing into oppressive territory?
Have they tried?

I think it's safe to say that studying oral history has forever ruined my enjoyment level of museums. I don't know that I'll ever be able to watch a documentary or read a summary without wondering if I can sit down with a group of people who can share their experiences and weigh that information against what was originally presented.

On the other hand, I doubt that the average citizen shares my interest in probing deeper. As I studied the museum's visitors, it was clear that people were more likely to sit and watch a video or look at photographs while listening to audio than reading large blocks of text. It confirmed the point that information must be made available to the public in engaging, bite-sized portions or it will be largely ignored.

Professional analysis update:

Even though my original interview did not occur when planned, I did manage to interview Joel Beeson later in the week. His perspective on the use of oral history in journalism was a slightly different one that focused mostly on community engagement. His students not only study and conduct oral history interviews but also teach members of the community to conduct them as well. He sees it as a method of empowering communities to tell their own stories while ensuring that his students learn the intricacies of oral history by teaching it to someone else. Interesting!

I have an interview with Jim Sheeler scheduled for Tuesday and a meeting with Earnest Perry on Monday, August 5.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue to follow up with oral history interviewees
- Conduct interviews at the Douglass Black & White Ball with Jeff Corrigan
- Audio-log oral history interviews
- Transcribe Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez's and Joel Beeson's interviews
- Interview Jim Sheeler on Tuesday

Field Notes - Week 12

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue to follow up with oral history interviewees
- Conduct interviews at the Douglass Black & White Ball with Jeff Corrigan
- Audio-log oral history interviews
- Transcribe Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez's and Joel Beeson's interviews
- Interview Jim Sheeler on Tuesday

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Interviewed Jim Sheeler
- Transcribed Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez's and partially transcribed Joel Beeson's interviews
- Met with Jeff Corrigan about conducting interviews during the Black & White Ball
- Conducted oral interviews
- Sent "Thank you" cards to this week's interviewees

Work assessment:

The early part of week 12 was spent transcribing interviews, transferring files and preparing for the weekend's work with the attendees of Douglass's Black & White Ball.

During my meeting with Jeff, we talked about my project and what I have yet to accomplish. He made it very clear that, after this weekend, I was not to do any more interviews. We talked about a couple people I wanted to follow up with who I've been

contacting throughout the summer but have never been able to connect with. He made it clear that I had to let them go. “No, you’re done,” he said. “Sometimes things just don’t work out. You have enough to finish before you leave.” So, it looks like I won’t be doing any more interviews – not even with the people I’ve been stalking. It’s a relief, given how much I still have to do but I guess I needed permission to allow myself to leave these people’s stories for someone else to capture.

The interviews that came through Jim Nunnelly’s contacts were a great way to end the project and provided a lot of food for thought. I had to laugh when my second interviewee came in and said that Nunnelly only told him that the interview was about the desegregation of schools and that it should only take 30 minutes or so. Lesson learned: don’t rely on a middleman to make arrangements for you. Seek to communicate directly with the interviewee. By the 2.5-hour mark the interviewee’s wife, who sat in the room and worked on her cell phone most of the time, had fed the meter twice, was antsy and kept looking at her watch.

During this interview, I also had my first incident with a person saying something on tape and wanting to remove it from the record when I asked a follow-up question. The interviewee mentioned that someone who was very prominent in Columbia’s political scene told them they felt that Urban Renewal – the removal of blacks from their homes in exchange for a lump sum that wasn’t enough to rebuild, refusing them loans and relocating them to the projects – was one of the worst decisions they’d made as a city leader. I had enough of a description of the person in question to figure out who made the comment but still asked for a name. After one was given to me, my interviewee said he

didn't want me to "put that in there" (in my interview notes). I told him that I didn't have to write it down but he'd already told me the story, on tape. I didn't offer to scratch it from the record. He didn't push the matter.

I was curious about what a historian would do in this situation since it seems, from my understanding of the oral history process and ethic, that some would – in the transcript approval phase – comply with the interviewee's request to remove that portion of the interview from the record. When I talked to Jeff about the interviewee's request, he said absolutely not. Since the information that was provided wasn't something that we couldn't figure out for ourselves, wasn't slander and was purely a matter of opinion, he said he would've made the same decision. Since the interviews are being audio logged and not transcribed, they're not reviewed by the interviewees before archival. As one of the interviews Jim Nunnally organized, the interviewee had not received the letter stating that he would be able to edit the transcript. I was just glad he'd acquiesced.

Jim Nunnally's interview was both the most challenging and the most interesting to date. I knew going into it that he had certain things he wanted to share, which meant that I would have to be more flexible than usual in regards to the topics I had in mind to discuss. I was right.

Overall, the interview seemed more journalistic in nature than historical, more philosophical than concrete. I attribute this to the fact that we moved up and down the ladder of abstraction the entire time, deviating from the script, weaving easily between the past and the present. Snippets of historical experience were interwoven with the collection of his reflections on this period in history. I collected details but they weren't

necessarily the focus of our time, as they have been in other interviews. “How do you know that?” and “Why do you think that was the case?” were asked more than once as a means of seeking substantiation for his opinions. It usually prompted an illustration of experience.

Nunnelly’s interview also yielded a different perspective than most I’ve conducted thus far. From the beginning of the interview, he felt prompted to share some of the personality quirks that make him a unique individual – specifically, a sense that he didn’t fit into the world around him while growing up and his propensity to self-protect. I dove into his offerings, expecting that those quirks factored into his way of seeing the world and responding to it. They did. As my brain was going into overdrive, drawing on all of the psychology books and articles I’ve read in the past to strategize how best to navigate the discussion and maximize his storytelling ability, I was thankful for those stored resources. It proved, once again, that nothing that I’ve learned in the past is wasted in this profession.

As I reflect on his interview, I can’t help thinking about the concept of ownership and authorship that have been the murky waters I’ve been wading in the last two weeks that seem to separate oral history and journalism. In oral history, the story, experience and record are the narrator’s own. The interviewer is a collaborator who helps to draw it out and preserve it. The amount of flexibility required in Nunnelly’s interview brought home the point that the story, experience and record are very much his. I simply helped draw it out and ensure that pertinent details and points of history were discussed. In a sense, it taught me that I may, at times, have to bridge the gap of expectation – or even

lay aside my own – in order to preserve someone’s personal experience with history. From a journalist’s perspective, I see it as coming in with the expectation of one story and walking out of the interview with a whole other one in mind.

Professional analysis update:

I think I’m going to strike the phrases “That’s awesome” and “That’s great” from my vocabulary. As I transcribed professor interviews, I learned that I use both phrases when I don’t feel as free to ask follow-up questions that may lead away from the topic at hand. The redundancy is ridiculous.

At any rate, as I transcribed Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez’s interview, I realized that, at various points of our conversation, it’s hard to distinguish between responses that pertain to her work with students and those that are specific to her work as director of the “Voces” oral history project. I wish I’d caught that at the time of the interview and asked her to make the distinction. I’ve noticed the blurred lines of separation with the two other professors who are attached to a larger project. Since students are seen as contributors, my guess is that it becomes harder to separate their involvement from the larger picture.

Although Jim Sheeler worked primarily with journalism students in Colorado, I found out during my interview with him that, at Case Western, he now teaches storytelling to students from all academic fields of study – nursing, biochemistry, English and journalism. I still think his input is valid for my professional analysis.

It’s interesting to note that Sheeler’s definition of oral history is the loosest of any professor I’ve spoken with to date but he still sends his students out to conduct oral history interviews (using the “StoryCorps” format, which intrigued me) as a means of

entering into the world of a group of people most would never have engaged with – the residents of an African American retirement home in one of the “rougher” neighborhoods of Cleveland. Common keywords like community engagement, interviewing and learning by doing came up repeatedly during our hour-long conversation.

Work planned for next week:

- Complete transcription of Joel Beeson’s and Jim Sheeler’s interviews
- Meet with Dr. Earnest Perry
- Audio-log oral history interviews
- Prepare electronic files for duplication on CD
- Begin writing a rough draft of my professional analysis

Field Notes - Week 13

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Complete transcription of Joel Beeson's and Jim Sheeler's interviews
- Meet with Dr. Earnest Perry
- Audio-log oral history interviews
- Prepare electronic files for duplication on CD
- Begin writing a rough draft of my professional analysis

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Met with and interviewed Dr. Earnest Perry
- Transcribed Joel Beeson's and Jim Sheeler's interviews
- Commissioned the transcription of Earnest Perry's interview
- Organized and backed up electronic files for duplication on CD
- Reviewed transcriptions of professor interviews

Work assessment:

Since I spent most of the week transcribing or preparing electronic files, I didn't spend much time on reflections. The one thought that has plagued me for the past few weeks, however, centers on the question, "What am I going to do with the stories I've collected?" The people I've interviewed have asked this question. Other journalists raise this question. Professors who hear about the project do the same.

Even in the first weeks of background research for this project, long before I started doing any interviews, this question was in the back of my mind. Now, as the end

of the 14-week work period draws near, I'm no closer to an answer than before. Many of the professors I've interviewed have talked about the interviewer's obligation to share what we've learned from these collections of memory. I don't have time to do the type of storytelling that draws out the different perspectives I've heard while putting all of this information into context. How do I honor the complexity of the perspectives that have been shared, provide context for an audience and complete my requirements for this master's project in the time that I have left?

One idea that I've had is to write up a "conclusion" section that includes an analysis of the overall project, including summaries of common themes and sentiments. Another option that Jeff mentioned is to create a one-page write-up announcing the oral history collection for the Missouri Historical Review (published by the State Historical Society of Missouri). A third option is to create summaries of interviews that introduce each individual narrator and their perspective. That last possibility strikes me as one that's begging for an audio sound-byte, though, which then raises questions about multimedia publication.

In addition to all of this, there's the question of photographs. I ran into David Rees at a function this week and the first thing he asked was whether or not I'd made photos of the interviewees. To be honest, with many of them, I had to work hard just to get them to commit to the interview. A photograph, I felt – especially in the case of some of the women – would've been pushing my luck. I also didn't want just a head-shot of these people. I wanted to take an environmental portrait of them in a place of special meaning, not at the library or in the State Historical Society's meeting room. Assuming

that my draft proposal doesn't need a complete rewrite, I plan to pursue setting up these photo opportunities with local interviewees.

Although this niggling sense of responsibility is ever present, I know that I can't allow my focus to be derailed. My first order of business is to finish audio logging interviews, create hard copies of the individual sessions for distribution and complete a rough draft of my professional analysis. As many have pointed out, just because I may not do anything spectacular with these memories before I complete my master's degree doesn't mean that I never will. For all I know, they may become part of a much bigger project in the future.

Professional analysis update:

This week, I figured out that I'm a slow transcriptionist. A PhD student friend of mine offered to transcribe one of my interviews for me. She did it in half the time that it normally takes me. I didn't dwell too much on my lack of efficiency. I was just happy that all five professor's interviews are completely transcribed.

I met with Dr. Perry early this week and he cringed more than a little during the first portion of my meeting with him as we talked about why I chose to do a project instead of a thesis. He kept taking off his glasses, and rubbing his eyes and head. We had a good chat about why he thought I was a good candidate for the PhD program. I countered with why I didn't think I belonged in academia. In the end, he let me know that the lines of communication were always open if I changed my mind but that I need to be okay with a PhD student stumbling across my work on this collection and using it for publication. I am.

My interview with him was probably the best of the professor interviews that I've conducted. In addition to the benefit of having a face-to-face conversation, we started the interview by talking about the intersection between oral history and journalism, then worked the nuance of his History of Mass Media and research methods class back into the conversation. He gave a lot of information from a journalism educator's perspective, colored with the passion of a historian. I had no idea that he was a Civil Rights historian. Had I known that, I would've contacted him long ago.

One of the things he mentioned that I haven't heard any professor say to date had to do with the amount of research that must go into oral histories in order to be able to transport interviewees back in time to speak about life and experience with history in that context. He drew lines of distinction between having someone relive their experience versus having someone retell their experience. He also talked about how developing historical context allows journalists to tell stories from the other person's perspective, rather than fitting their experience into our own narrative.

Work planned for next week:

- Continue to audio log oral history interviews
- Make copies of .wav files and burn to CD for archival and distribution to interviewees
- Create presentation cases for CDs
- Outline and write rough draft of professional analysis

Field Notes - Week 14

Weekly recap:

Goals:

- Continue to audio log oral history interviews
- Make copies of .wav files and burn to CD for archival and distribution
- Create presentation cases for CDs
- Outline and write rough draft of professional analysis

In order to meet this week's goals, I did the following:

- Continued to audio log oral history interviews
- Organized and started to break oral history interviews down into segments no larger than 650MB
- Created mailer packets for CDs that will be sent to interviewees
- Transferred all paper files to Jeff Corrigan at the State Historical Society
- Worked on outline and rough draft of professional analysis

Work assessment:

As I audio logged the interviews from the Black & White Ball attendees, I found that they lacked the usual depth and detail of my previous interviews. There's much more "telling" and far too little "showing."

I've been trying to think of things that contributed to this shortfall. One factor could be that I didn't set these interviews up myself, so the people had very little information about the project or what I was hoping to learn from them. One interviewee came in with a set of interview parameters that were set during his brief conversation

with Jim Nunnelly about doing the interview. I don't think I ever managed to deconstruct that framework and replace it with the one I normally use.

Second, I believe the limited timeframe prevented us from going deep or reaching into the more intimate areas of memory. I was focused on the interviewee but also had my eye on the clock. I don't multitask well, so I think that the diversion and sense of urgency contributed to my inability to see, in the moment, that I wasn't going deep enough with my questions. In addition, the interviewees were mindful of the time because they had the weekend's events to attend.

Third, I have to consider my location. In the J-school, we've been told repeatedly that interviewing people in a place where they're familiar and comfortable yields better results. The surroundings at the Society were the exact opposite – for both of us.

This is not to say that we didn't glean anything from the interviews during that weekend. I learned about a section of town that most people don't include in their description of black Columbia. We have, on record, the perspective of a businessman who feels that the connections he established as one of the first black students on the Hickman track team set him up for a successful entry into one of Columbia's largest companies. Another provided an example of those in Columbia who simply went with the flow and expected things to work out – eventually.

It definitely wasn't a waste of time. After my discussion with Dr. Perry, I can see that I was unable, in these last interviews, especially, to get my narrators to relive their memories rather than retell them. It just means that their recollections are more colored with impressions from the present than I'd prefer.

On a more technical note, I realized a little too late that I'm going to have to go back and cut my audio files down to 650MB or less in order to fit them onto CDs. This also means, of course, that I'm going to have to go over each completed audio log and redo the time stamps to match the new track numbers. Neither Jeff nor I had thought of this during this whole process. It was only when I started preparing to move the files to CD that I thought about the fact that 1-or-2GB files can't be stored on a disc. I've made a mental note for the next time I do any recordings to start a new audio file every 60 minutes!

As I sat in Jeff's office, transferring all of the paperwork to him and putting together mailing packets for the discs that will be sent to the interviewees, it dawned on me that my project is really nearing the finish line. It feels like I've just begun. In many ways, I think I have.

Professional analysis update:

It took a few days but I finally drafted a workable outline that made sense of the information I've received from the professors I interviewed. The rough draft is coming along a little slower than I would like but such is life. I'll be working on it all week, so I shouldn't have a problem meeting the deadline Jacqui and I set in order to be ready for my defense on Sept. 23.

I told Jeff that I would do no work on the audio files this week in order to focus on writing the analysis. Since he's in no rush and will be busy trying to recover from his last two weeks of travel, we agreed that I would have all materials to him for submission by August 31.

Work planned for the next month:

- Complete rough draft of professional analysis
- Revise audio logs with new time stamps so that all electronic files can be cataloged and copied onto the State Historical Society's hard drive by Aug. 31
- Duplicate and mail copies of interviews on CD to interviewees the first week of September
- Write a one-page maximum summary for each oral history interview

Evaluation and Conclusion

My primary goal for this project was to add to the existing historical documents about Columbia's efforts to desegregate its public schools in the 1950s. I wanted to record the oral testimony of ten people who experienced the process first-hand. I also wanted my work to provide an opportunity for listeners to take a prolonged glimpse into the lives of a part of the community that is largely unexplored in Columbia. It is definitely one that I, as a first-generation, Caribbean-born American have neither understood nor engaged with on any deep level but one that fascinated me to no end.

I truly believe my project was a success. Personal accounts of Columbia's history were preserved and my perspective was enlarged as I used my journalism foundation to relive history through someone else's life story. The following are a few of the lessons I've taken away from conducting this particular oral history project as a journalist:

Sometimes, membership has its privileges.

If I were to be completely honest, I'd admit that going into this project, I was a little sensitive about if and how the common misconceptions about my race and ethnicity – namely, that I share a history and solidarity with the African American community – should be addressed with my interviewees. I wrestled with the ethics of using those assumptions to my advantage when reporting on racially charged subjects as a journalist and researcher. People I talked to in the community were sure that the color of my skin would be an asset as I navigated this portion of history as an outsider looking in. Sometimes it was; sometimes it wasn't. I personally believe that some of my interviewees – who were mostly African American – felt comfortable to share with me details,

thoughts and feelings that they may not have shared if I wasn't black. Conversely, there were times when I sensed that being black caused some minor discomfort, like when I asked white interviewees to expand on the negative things they heard in the community about black students attending Hickman. In the end, while the hue of my skin might have opened doors and made it easier for some to share and harder for some, I don't think my cultural identity trumped their perception of me as a journalist who was curious about their experiences and perspectives – which is as it should be.

You learn by doing.

Conducting oral histories as a journalist provided an opportunity to take what I've learned in the journalism school and practice those skills in an arena where time limitations were expanded and the pursuit of the next story became a lesser priority. All of my energy went into helping the narrator in front of me tell his or her own version of history. I repeatedly saw the value of keeping my mouth shut and making the most of silence. I had the freedom to let my curiosity run a bit wild and ask frivolous questions, like what kind of refrigerator the interviewee's family had. Sometimes, I put interviewees to work, asking them if they could draw a diagram of their house and walk me through it or if they could demonstrate how they washed their clothes with a hand-crank machine. As I listened to my interviews and audio logged them, I heard missed opportunities for asking follow-up questions and felt where I stuck too close to my agenda instead of flowing with the memories that were being shared. I learned in the process and was able to tweak my approach with the next interviewee who agreed to share his or her experiences with me.

You still have to “sell” the interview.

As journalists, we can sometimes become frustrated when story sources evade or ignore us if we're on deadline, we have to admit that there's a certain value that people place on being included in a published story. I found that being a journalism student whose focus was archival rather than story publication confused people. It meant that I had to strategize to “sell” the importance of preserving history and archiving personal experience. I had to be more proactive about digging deeper with my questions and steer interviewees who had come in contact with journalism students in the past away from short sound bites and anecdotal quotes. It also meant that I had to explain to the interviewee up front that I wanted to go deep and that I was looking for stories, examples and details about their past experiences that they might never see in publication. Most of the time, they obliged.

Everyone has a story to tell.

Interestingly enough, once I'd gone through the rigmarole required to obtain a face-to-face meeting with someone, their biggest anxiety tended to be that they would have nothing of value to share or that they'd not be a very good interviewee. By the end of a 2- or 3-hour recorded conversation about their childhood, what life was like in the 50s and how the desegregation of schools impacted them personally, they'd realize that they actually had quite a bit to share and, with the help of an engaged listener who was interested in reliving those days with them, they can do so in an engaging way. For me as an interviewer, there was nothing better than watching their faces light up as they told me about the pride they had when they marched down Broadway with their high school band

or when they got so into their storytelling that they asked if I remembered something everybody did in the 1950s.

Consider your limitations and prioritize.

In addition to exploring and expanding upon the things I'd learned in the journalism school in a seemingly unlimited amount of time, my project challenged me to consider my priorities and limitations. I had to remember that there's never going to be enough time to do all that I want to do. Oral histories, by nature, are long-term projects. I tried to fit a model that's designed for expansion over several years into the span of a few months. Everything – from research to development to interviews to archival – had to be condensed. By the end of the summer, I had a list of things I didn't get to do, like producing a set of stories based on the oral histories or tacking on a few additional interviews I wanted to do. My supervisor, Jeff Corrigan, pointed out that I'd done quite a bit and it was okay to leave these stories for someone else to collect.

Use your guide.

As is the case in journalism, it's always a good idea to have someone who's more experienced than you are who can be a sounding board for ideas, frustrations and inspiration. I was thankful that, in those moments when I started to get stuck in the sometimes-murky waters where journalism and oral history practices meet, he was the voice of reason. For instance, when I became frustrated because I felt that the information I was gleaning wasn't new or fresh, Corrigan reminded me that oral history isn't looking for the new angle or twist on experience. Instead, it seeks to corroborate and bring to life

what exists in text and share about it from a personal perspective. Apparently, I needed the reminder.



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

1020 Lowry Street
Columbia, Missouri 65201-7298

September 12, 2013

Dear Members of the Committee,

I have had the privilege of supervising Roxanne Foster this summer on her oral history project as she completes her graduate degree in journalism. The historical society is home to the largest oral history collection in Missouri, and Roxanne's interviews are a wonderful addition to the over 4,500 interviews we have covering a wide array of topics documenting Missouri history. Roxanne has had a very busy summer organizing, researching, conducting, and audio logging eleven interviews for her project, which was no simple task. Many of her interviews lasted several hours in length, which is an excellent sign that Roxanne not only took her time and did not rush her interviewees, but that she also gained their trust and confidence for them to be so forthcoming, candid, and to share their life experiences with her.

Roxanne is a very reliable and engaged individual, who took her work seriously. She asked appropriate questions, was very proactive, and was always prompt in responding to me via e-mail or with any appointment that we had scheduled.

I am pleased to tell you that Roxanne has started a wonderful project on a very important topic, and I did not want to see it end with her graduation, so I have decided to keep this collection open and continue her work as one of my own collecting areas here at the Society, so that I can continue to add interviews to it regarding Douglass High School or any Missouri school. The collection is being called: **Missouri Desegregation & Civil Rights Oral History Project, Records, 2013- (C4116)**.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like any additional information regarding Roxanne. Only if knowledge and memories like the ones she collected are preserved and made accessible can Missouri's history be properly studied and represented.

Sincerely,

Jeff D. Corrigan
Oral Historian

Charles Allen – Hickman High School Class of 1961

Charles Allen has no doubt that the quality of education he received at Douglass School was a good one. He explains that the teachers poured every bit of their knowledge and experience of the world into their students. The black community was tight-knit back then and teachers lived among them.

“You were never too far away from ’em, either at church or in the community at the grocery store,” he says. “So, you got to know them, they got to know you to a great deal and as a result, they almost felt responsible, to some degree, for your success or for you doing something.”

With the great foundation he was given at Douglass, Allen decided to transfer to Hickman for his junior year. He believed he needed a more diverse set of classes – which Douglass didn’t offer – to give him the extra bit of preparation he needed to succeed when he eventually attended the University of Missouri.

Allen had friends who’d already made a successful transition to Hickman - John Kelly, Raymond Hayes and others in the community. With two more years of high school ahead of him, he thought, “Well, if I’m going to go I may as well go now and get used to the system and become part [it]. I’ve always been one that believes in the system. You can’t go into an educational system your senior year and expect to do a lot, to get a lot out of it. That’s just a maintenance-type thing, then. And I knew, being from Columbia, [that] if I ever decided to stay in Columbia, I had to get better acquainted with the system here. The only way I could do that is spend more time with ’em, which ended up working out to my benefit. Plus, I just didn’t want to be forced into doing something my senior year.”

Far from considering himself a forerunner in the civil rights movement, Allen says he wasn’t “trying to set the world on fire,” but rather was just looking out for his best interests. The plan worked. At Hickman, he says there was a “He’s an okay guy” vibe that shrouded him during the two years he was there. He said he followed the “understood” rules of the desegregation process: “Don’t go out there being a clown. Don’t go out there dressing too wild. Don’t go out there chasing them white girls.” The acceptance he found on Hickman’s track team and the connections he made at school led him to obtain a scholarship to MU, where he studied business administration. When the opportunity to intern at Shelter Insurance came up, he believes being part of the Kewpie network opened the door for him there as well. He went on to become part of the top tiers of leadership during his 43 years with the company.

For a while, Allen says the relationship between those who transferred and those who stayed at Douglass was “pretty cold” because they were viewed as people who “left the group.” Allen maintains that people knew that students were leaving for a more diverse set of opportunities but some were not happy with their choices and viewed it as abandonment.

“So now, I think we see that there was more than one way to gain success and the fact that you chose this side and I chose the other side, didn’t mean that one side was degrading the other one,” he says.

**Audio Log of interview with Charles Allen
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project**

Track 1 (37:47)

INTRO: 0:00-0:27

Name: Charles A. Allen

Date of birth: August 7, 1943

Birthplace: Columbia, MO

Parents' names: Mrs. Felice Allen, father [unnamed] deceased

Parent's occupation: maid at Stephens College for 30 years

Sibling(s): Venetia, 10 years older, now deceased

Spouse: Carolyn Allen. They were married in 1969.

Children: Chris and Chanel. They have one granddaughter, Aliyana.

0:02:30 Allen talks about his mother working as a maid at Stephens College, which was an all-girls finishing school here in Columbia. Being a maid at a school or university was a stable job that many African American women held during that time. In addition to earning a "decent" wage, they were also able to bring home items like clothing, furniture and food that the students wanted to get rid of before leaving for the summer.

0:05:35 Allen's schooling started at Nora Stewart Nursery School. He attended Douglass High School, then transferred to Hickman high school during his junior year (1959). He graduated from Hickman in 1961, then went on to study Business Administration at the University of Missouri.

Since he was studying at the university, he was able to defer being drafted until he finished his degree. At MU, the ROTC program was mandatory at MU during those years. Although people tried to convince him to complete the four-year Army officer's training program since he had a degree, he chose to go in as a "regular." After graduating from college, he

was drafted for two years as a personnel specialist and was stationed in Seoul, Korea for 2 years.

0:08:52 After Korea, Allen was returned to work at Shelter Insurance (where he worked during college).

0:09:51 Allen talks about getting involved with the sporting program (track & field) at Hickman after voluntarily transferring in 1959. Douglass didn't have a formalized track program.

"As a result of getting on the track team at Hickman, I was fortunate and blessed enough to be very good at it. As a result of that, and the fact that my track coach happened to be Don Faurot's brother, I don't know if you're aware of Don Faurot was a number one coach here and administrator at Hickman - I mean, at MU - anything about sports, and goes back a few years, the name Don Faurot came up. He was an athletic director and everything else. His brother Fred was my high school coach. So, as a result of him being my high school coach, I was kinda leaning, or persuaded to go to MU and I got a track scholarship at MU. As a result of that, I ended up actually going on full scholarship - well, partial scholarship, they didn't have full scholarships for track people in those days. But anyway, everything was pretty well paid and, that gave me the connection with MU then it just goes from there."

Another thing was that while I was at Hickman, it gave me the opportunity to get acquainted with some of the structure of Columbia, uh, so I became friends and acquaintances, so to speak, with some of the, uh, network of Columbia and that, in the long run, gave me the opportunity to know some of the kids of the executives at Shelter. So, during that particular time frame in Columbia, in order to get anywhere or do anything, you kinda had to know somebody in the structure. So, since I knew some of the kids of the executives and I applied for the job through MU and all that, I'm sure somebody put in a good word - "Well, Charlie's okay." You know? [Laughs] "Go ahead, he's all right. He's not gonna burn the place down or anything, you know." [Laughs] So, as a result of that, it led into a lot of great opportunities for me. [13:07]

0:13:15 Allen talks about his mother instilled the importance of a college education in him, from an early age. Even his mother's siblings' kids went to college.

- 0:14:36 The Allen family had an extra bedroom that they would rent out to African American students who were attending university from out of town had to live off-campus. Allen says many African American families would rent out space in their homes and generate income from room & board.
- The three or four students who lived in Allen's home told him stories about attending MU at an early age.
- 0:16:44 Allen walks through the timeline of his 43 years of employment at Shelter Insurance, from his time as a summer intern during his undergraduate years (1964/1965) to underwriter to manager to Director of Compensation and Personnel Administration.
- 0:20:10 Allen talks about meeting his wife, Carolyn, at the Heidelberg on campus. The couple has two kids - a son and a daughter - and one granddaughter.
- 0:21:34 Allen shares how his track scholarship came about. At the time, MU had few African American track athletes and Allen's connection to the Faurot family helped bring him to the fore as a possible recruit. The university didn't want just one African American on the team, though, so they recruited another from Kansas City - Russell Nesbitt. The duo did most of their training together and became good friends over time.
- Due to the financing structure of athletic program, most track athletes only received partial scholarships. (They weren't the sports that brought in big revenue.) Since he was local and stayed at home during college, Allen still didn't have to pay anything for his college education. Books, tuition, fees, etc. were all covered.
- 0:25:01 Allen talks about growing up in Columbia, in a restricted area without a hierarchy of socialites. Most of the professionals in his neighborhood were teachers. Ministers held a second-tier-type of position as a profession. Males who had good jobs held head maintenance positions - janitors and things like that.
- 0:26:35 Columbia was divided into four basic neighborhoods: Cemetery Hill (near Walgreens on Broadway), Douglass, across the highway (near McDonald's on Business Loop 70) and Railroad (near Columbia College where there used to be an old railroad station). People in the various areas would all congregate at church. Allen says that people would never look at one another and think they were poor but when compared to the general population (whites included) they could see disparities. They didn't grow

up feeling inferior but just believed that they lived differently, based on the color of their skin.

[Aside: Allen insisted that the areas weren't divided based on economics but his wife challenged this notion when the recorder was off. She said that some who lived in more developed areas would make fun of those who lived in the poorer areas without running water or indoor plumbing.]

0:30:18 Community relationships were solid. The church you went to and your parent's involvement in Douglass School.

"Everyone was struggling and everyone was trying to get ahead. And being a university town, those folks that had exposure to education - not necessarily being involved in the educational system - but just exposure to education, they tended to press their children more on going into, uh, professions that required education. Or, they saw the benefits through just working every day and seeing people that was there were educated or their kids were trying to get educated, they realized that if their kids want to get somewhere in this society or how the system works, their kids had to also make the sacrifice to try to get to these colleges."

0:32:33 Friends in the neighborhood lived within two or three blocks from Allen's house. When he started going to Nora Stewart Nursing School - the minority daycare center - he developed a wider range of friends. They included Mary Bush, Jim Nunnely, John Kelly and numerous others.

Allen talks about the disconnect that exists between students who went on to higher education and success and those who pursued different opportunities.

0:34:46 The unifying factor of the black community was Douglass School. Allen says that the school forced members of the community to become codependent on one another to some degree. All of the organizations that people participated in went through Douglass - parties, YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts.

People would have "backyard dances" in the community. They didn't have the funds to rent out a room - and companies wouldn't rent to them anyway - for parties, so they had them in the community.

Doctors and teachers tried to give them exposure to things that weren't a natural part of the community that they were exposed to in different areas

of the U.S. They sought to let them know that there was a world outside of Columbia.

Track 2 (32:22)

0:00:15 Allen talks about things he and friends would do for fun - private parties, movies, roller skating at the rink, the fair, church activities.

0:01:34 Through the school system and neighborhood teams, kids played football and basketball. There was a "town rivalry" in baseball and basketball that went on between the four areas of black Columbia. Allen played baseball with the Parks and Recreation/area service organization (like Kiwanis and the police department) teams as well as the informal neighborhood teams. Some organizations would fund inner city teams and recruit from there to the larger, citywide teams.

0:03:10 "The YMCA was not a "minority YMCA." It was kind of one that was associated with the University of Missouri and some other organizations and they came into the neighborhood as a project to try to enlighten the people who were in the neighborhood that needed some guidance."
[Laughs]

Allen describes that "guidance" as activities and meetings that were meant to expose black people to the world outside of the black neighborhood.

"It was just something for them to help, they think, help those who was less fortunate and didn't have the exposure to do something. So they were going to come down and pull you along a little bit and enlighten you."

0:04:58 Allen talks about his involvement with St. Luke United Methodist Church (Ash Street). He talks about a black Methodist Church and a white Methodist Church but now, there's a United Methodist Church, which is a combined congregation. Allen contends that the minority leaders - not the pastors - from the black Methodist Church that joined the white hierarchy eventually lost their positions.

0:08:21 Religion was a unifying factor for African Americans - educated and uneducated - in the small town of Columbia. The church accepted you as you are, regardless of your position in society.

0:10:08 "The church was the thing that held communities together."

- 0:10:19 Allen was involved in Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts. The clubs were segregated. Scoutmasters, leaders and sponsors were all black and came out of the church. Overnight and one-day camps were trips to the farm of some member of the community where you'd pitch a tent, play games and build relationships. They weren't as lavish as summer camps of today.
- In areas where there were more people – like St. Louis – Allen believes the camp experience might've been different. He says that Columbia is the “hub” of African Americans in Central Missouri and one of the most liberal areas of the state. If integration on that front was going to happen, though, Allen reasons that it would happen here since this is the most liberal part of the state.
- 0:13:04 Allen talks about going to church with his mom and sister. There was no option about going to church back then. His sister, who was 10 years older, As the youngest, he was just guided around and told what to do. His upbringing was pretty conservative. He didn't really have a lot of freedom (or money) to just do what he wanted.
- Allen had uncles, cousins and other extended family nearby but his family was pretty insular and isolated. One of his cousins was one of the first African Americans to graduate from MU's business school.
- 0:16:33 The house that Allen grew up in was a 3-bedroom, middle class home - for the black community.
- "We didn't know how much we were lacking, so to speak, but, uh, we really didn't ever feel that we were deprived of anything. We never, you know, missed a meal or missed a outfit for church or outfit for school or anything like that. You know, so, overall, we were comfortable."
- 0:18:05 Allen describes his house. They had a couch, a couple chairs, end tables and eventually a TV in the carpeted living room. He had his own bedroom with a chest of drawers, wardrobe and desk. The kitchen had a gas stove, refrigerator, cabinets (Allen says they never had a wood- or coal-burning stove.) There was linoleum on the floor.
- 0:20:25 For laundry, the Allens had a Maytag wringer washing machine in their kitchen. He describes how the machine worked. The family hung their clothes up on the clothesline out back to dry. When he was in high school, the family would take their clothes to the laundromat where, for a quarter, they could get loads washed and dried.

0:22:12 The family's neighbors got along well because the families all had kids around the same age who went to Douglass. Allen says that the community was different from what we think of as community today. People watched out for one another's property, everyone was invited to community picnics, the neighbors knew all of the kids and expected that they would act like their own. Everyone parented everyone else's kids and then would pass word on to your mother.

0:24:07 Allen lived on Garth Street, from where he would walk down unpaved streets in groups with other students to school. Kids from the neighborhood attended classes together, spent recess together, do classwork together. The bonds in each class were strong.

"It was kind of a group gathering for a educational experience."

Bonds were also very strong with one's homeroom teacher. These teachers were like counselors who provided academic and social guidance to their pupils.

"I felt, after I got, later in life, was that, that homeroom teacher was key, in some degree to your success. In the sense that he or she would recognize your shortcoming or your, how you excelled and some thing and see that you at least attempted to reach to the height that you were capable of reaching to. Because your homeroom teacher was basically in you, was with you for three years. It wasn't just a one-year assignment. So, when you started in high school, that one man or woman would be your homeroom teacher and guidance instructor your whole career in high school.

Allen's homeroom teacher was Eliot Battle. They became good friends after graduation and continued their friendship throughout Allen's adult life. When Allen was in school, Mr. Battle lived three or four blocks from his home, so they would see each other not only at school but also in the community. This was the case with all the teachers from Douglass.

"You were never too far away from 'em, either at church or in the community at the grocery store. So, you got to know them, they got to know you to a great deal - a lot - and as a result they almost felt responsible, to some degree, for your success or for you doing something. It wasn't just, 'I have this person and if you get your homework, okay. If you don't get your homework, okay. Because they would also see your

parents in the church setting and that would put extra pressure on them as well as your parents for, 'Hey, how's Johnny doing?' They couldn't come out with, 'Well, I don't know.' It's one of those deals where they had an obligation after four or five o'clock, whenever school was out, to be able to come in contact with your family - maybe not on a daily basis but at least once or twice a week."

0:29:24 Other teachers that stand out to Allen include Ruth Wiggins, Edith Williams, George Belcher, George Brooks. Allen says they were outstanding teachers and communicators with an educational background who would "give you the benefit of what they had experienced in life."

0:30:03 Allen remembers an assembly during which George Brooks showed photos (slides) from his family vacation to Oklahoma (?) and he and his three kids were each standing in a spot where each member of the family was physically in a different state.

Edith Williams was from Florida and shared her experiences going to school there with the students - especially about segregation and how to get ahead in spite of the racial systems that were in place. Ruth Wiggins spent time in France and her husband was a doctor. All of these teachers expanded the worldview of their students through their personal experiences.

0:31:52 "We've had some excellent teachers at Douglass at the time, but from a Columbia Public School system, and the school being small, comparatively small, they didn't have the, they didn't have the funds to do all that they could do with it. Years ago, say 40 years ago, when there was a bigger minority population, they had French, they had Latin, they had Chemistry - all the different courses. Well, as time went on, as the community got smaller or the funds that was given to the community school system - Douglass - was, budgets were reduced, they couldn't support all these different courses. So, and then with the segregation situation being '54, '55, well, that was a good excuse to not fund it fully and provide all the, uh, courses that they had over the years. But, at one time, Douglass was definitely a top-notch facility and they had a direct pipeline to Lincoln University, which was a predominantly African American school at the time. They used to call it the 'Little Harvard of the Midwest'.

Well, with those students that graduated - that was in the course of graduating and doing internships and teaching and things - well what a

better place to go than Columbia? 'Cause you, you go to Florida, it's not that many people, Sedalia, all these other places. Well, they came here and as they graduated from Lincoln, a lot of them came back to Douglass and taught a few years before they went on to St. Louis or Kansas City or wherever they ended up going to but this was a good stepping stone, training for teachers and Douglass had the benefit of having that steady group of young educators there to share it."

- 0:34:28 There were probably 25-30 students in a classroom.
- 0:34:56 Homework was straight out of the textbook, group study and individual study. Teachers didn't provide room for shortcuts and pushed students to their limit. Teachers assessed each student's individual ability and pushed students to reach, if not surpass it.
- 0:36:45 Teachers taught from the perspective of, "Hey, I know how difficult life is going to be 'cause I've lived it - as an education of a young person. They weren't always teachers, you know, they went through the system like everybody else, although the system they went through was a all-black system. But they knew that there was a world outside of the black community and the more education they got the better chance they had to do extremely well in the black system but also with the opportunity to do really well in the non-black system."
- 0:37:34 Although Allen's relationship with the other students were good, he was used to being alone (as the only child at home once his older sister was grown and out of the house). He says he wasn't really a member of their "grouping" and was sort of a loner. There were no "friends by association" that frequently comes from having siblings in the same school.
- "I was a member of the group but not necessarily a 'groupie'."

Track 3 (37:56)

- 0:00:05 Allen wasn't part of the band but knew Mr. Boone from music class. Being a musician wasn't something that was on his radar and he had no siblings who had taken part in the band. He says he had no reason to naturally gravitate towards the band.
- 0:00:50 Allen played intramural football and basketball at Douglass during his freshman and sophomore years. He describes his experience as a member of the team - not a start athlete that coaches took notice of, but rather just

another male student who was expected to take part in the school's athletic program.

0:02:22 After school, Allen usually just came home. He eventually worked a series of part-time jobs - throwing newspapers, and worked in a bowling alley as a "pin setter" (the person who sat in the pit of the alley and reset the pins after each person throws a bowling ball). He also worked at a restaurant as a bus boy (Harris Cafe) and was a runner for a woman's boutique.

"I guess I was always a little particular about what I did so I normally had the cleaner, nicer jobs." [Laughs]

0:04:18 Socializing in the neighborhood included house parties. There was not much else to do, according to Allen.

0:04:39 The plan to desegregate schools came through TV and individual teachers hinted at the change and let students know, "Hey, they're gonna close this place. It's not gonna be here forever and you'll probably be affected by it."

Allen says they "got out the 'big stick'" and told students: "When they close this place, you're going over to Hickman and you gone be the best. You're not going to be going over there acting a fool, acting like you don't know anything. You can communicate with people. You're not gone make us look bad. You're not going to make the community look bad. You goin' over there first class."

Teachers were highly educated and told them that although classes and resources were limited, students were taught the basics well.

0:07:12 Allen says his egotistical response at the time was probably, "Hey, I can do it. No big deal."

He says he had to have that attitude at Douglass because of the academic hierarchy that was in place - the honor roll people, the Honor Society people, etc. There was an understanding that the requirements for honors was the same across the board, so students who excelled at Douglass should not feel that they couldn't do the same at Hickman or that they were inferior.

0:08:56 Allen saw other friends who'd already made a successful transition to Hickman - John Kelly, Raymond Hayes and others in the community - as examples. With two more years of high school ahead of him, he said,

"Well, if I'm going to go I may as well go now and get used to the system and become part of the, of the system. I've always been one that believes in the system. You can't go into, like, an educational system your senior year and expect to do a lot, to get a lot out of it. That's just a maintenance-type thing, then. And I knew, being from Columbia, and if I ever decided to stay in Columbia, I had to get better acquainted with the, the system here in Columbia. And, the only way I could do that is spend more time with'em, which ended up working out to my benefit. Plus, I just didn't want to be forced into doing something my senior year. I say, 'I'll go now.'"

0:10:14 Mr. Battle encouraged Allen to make the transition. He says he was a good enough student who possessed the mentality and calmness necessary to flourish in that system.

"I wasn't trying to set the world on fire. I was, maybe I was just selfish, trying to do my thing to make sure I was successful."

0:11:03 Allen's mom was supportive of his decision. She's always been a great encourager. The decision made sense considering his future goals, he said.

"Living in Columbia, you gotta understand the system - either you're in or you're out. And, in order to make some of the progress that I was desirous of making, I had to get further into - or at least be exposed to - the system. Otherwise you just - not that, saying that other people didn't prosper but, it made, a lot easier to know the system and you know the network and how it works to live in it. Not that you have to agree with it or anything else but some things you can only work with and change from inside to some degree."

0:12:15 The adults in his life didn't really prepare him for the transition. It was just like, "Hey, you're just going to another school."

There were certain things that were "understood" - "Don't go out there being a clown. Don't go out there dressing too wild. Don't go out there chasing them white girls." Basic survival skills for young black boys at the time, going into that type of environment.

0:13:16 Allen's feelings on that first day of his junior year:

"I felt somewhat apprehensive, not knowing exactly what to expect. Uh, you know, is it gone to be all open arms, is it gonna be some snobbishness,

is it gonna be some resentment? Are you going to be welcome? How are they gonna treat you or those type of, uh, things where you just don't know exactly what you're getting into but whatever it is, I'm, I'ma make it."

Allen says the reality was a novel experience for both sides. At that time, he was the only black person in their class and the only black student that a particular teacher had ever taught.

-- "It made it easier for me in life because everywhere I've been ever since I've been the only one for most things." --

The guys, since he was involved in sports, were pretty receptive. As long as you went to class and weren't disruptive, teachers were all right with you as well. Allen believes that most were on their best behavior to make integration work.

Since there were only 10 or so black students in the whole school, he believes it was easy for everyone to deal with because the numbers weren't threatening to the status quo.

0:15:50 Allen gives an example from the sports arena, if you had one or two black athletes that do well, it's good. But if you have many more, what about the other groups that support athletics (like the booster club, which is supported by parents)? The program's funds could dwindle if black students take a white student's position on the football team.

Within the various clubs, if you're in a position of social standing in the community, there's an expectation that your child will be in certain clubs. If a few blacks join, it's not too bad. But if a lot join, there might be a problem.

0:17:20 At Hickman, there were probably about the same amount of students per class as there were at Douglass (30). There were many more classes, though, which made a big difference.

0:17:39 Allen walked to Hickman as well. He would walk down the street to John Kelly's house and walk to school with him. Most kids at that time didn't have cars. The walk to school was a social time.

0:18:47 Classes were chosen the semester before with Mr. Battle, who also provided information regarding the system of Hickman to Allen before he

arrived on his first day. The most challenging part of his first day of classes was finding the physical location of his classes.

Other first-time students and the map the school provided helped Allen find where he was going. "You stand around looking lost, somebody would be gracious enough to say, 'Hey, can I help you find something?'" Allen says teachers were also "went out of their way to make sure that it was a positive experience."

0:20:19

The teachers that stand out to Allen at Hickman:

Helen Williams, voice teacher - taught English and the "voice choir." "She was an elderly lady that was very inclusive. She just grabbed you, hugged you, 'Come, here we're gone do this, we're gone do that.' You felt like, even though your skill level was not that good, she made you feel like you contributed."

Margaret McTurnin, English - was older, wealthy and sitting down to help students in order to help them understand was a normal thing for her. "Even though you were in high school, she had that personal, one-on-one type of, uh, teaching style."

Mr. Trimble, psychology - was a no-nonsense type of guy but he was fair. Relationship continued after Allen went to MU. He encouraged Allen a lot.

0:23:03

Allen talks about getting onto the track team.

"I was a sophomore going into junior year and all of my instructors at Douglass and other places said, 'You have to get involved in something. You just can't go out there, turn your book, slam your book, and go home. You gotta - well, since I was involved with some sports at Douglass, they said, 'Well, you're pretty fast. Why don't you try to maybe make the track team?' That turned out to be the best advice I've ever gotten."

As a result, Allen made a lot of friends and connections.

Allen tried out for the team and made it. Sports administrators didn't know who he was or what he was capable of, so they didn't seek him out.

"They know, there's a small school called Douglass School down here on Providence Road. A lot of those folks have some sports skills. But, since I

don't know them or anything like that I don't go out and seek them. Well, see, if I went to another one of the, uh, public elementary schools or middle schools, whatever they call them these days, then they probably would have known the coach at that school and the coach at that school would say, 'Hey, you know, Charlie's coming over, maybe coming over. Check him out, seek him out, ask him to join the team,' or something like that. But them not having that strong a professional relationship with the coaches at, uh, Douglass, it was necessary that those who ended up going there and getting involved in sports had to make the first step themselves."

0:25:39 The response from other members of the track team was positive. "If you can beat me and you're better than I am, hey, you all right."

0:26:10 Interactions with the other students at Hickman were positive and average. There were layers of academic achievement in the school and Allen claims he was in none of the top groups. From an academic standpoint, his relationship with the other students and teachers really centered on his being "okay." "Maybe some of the things I've heard about some of 'those' folks aren't true. You know, they just like everybody else - they hustlin' trying to get they grades and sometimes they hit the top, sometimes they don't."

0:27:30 Relationally, he was "that black dude who's good on the track team. He's all right." He was okay to invite to out for pizza or to invite to be on the Homecoming Decorating Committee. "He's safe."

The cliques were formed around who your folks are and since Allen's folks weren't prominent in the community, associating with those groups was out of the question unless sports was involved.

0:28:49 Allen says he didn't really have any negative experiences.

"If you're highly educated or if you're in sports or if you're in something else, you basically - they let you slide."

If there were those who had an issue with him being at Hickman, those people generally just ignored him.

0:30:14 Speaking on the changes he saw in Columbia after the desegregation of schools:

"Although the schools and things became open and not segregated, for a while things became more polarized in the sense that just because it's open doesn't mean that the doors are literally open to you. You know, where most people say 'Aww, everything is great,' you know, 'They can go to school and do all this,' but you can go to school but if you're not really accepted in a wholehearted fashion or if the young ladies in your class still aren't really considered cheerleader squad type people or girls, or the guys, 'Well, maybe he's all right' but one or two maybe they can, I don't think we want one of them for homecoming queen - male or female." And, in the black community, especially, they had not been exposed, or we had not been exposed to a lot of the things that were open and, as a sense, didn't go and take advantage of it."

Allen gives the example of being in high school and the only time blacks could go was during the bowling class. Blacks couldn't just walk in, grab a pair of shoes and bowl. Even after schools were desegregated, it was still that way.

"You weren't invited in. If you happened to come in, well, we have to, so we'll let you come in." Allen said that for a long period of time this tension existed but eventually broke down as people became more aggressive about doing what they want to do rather than settling for what they were allowed to do.

The biggest change Allen has seen has been in regards to employment opportunities. "Folks realized, hey, they have some green money. And, for me to make my profit the way I want to, I have to accommodate a few of them."

Allen thinks the city has changed but it's not completely free. People may not blatantly do things to you but the system that's in place doesn't encourage you either.

0:33:30 People who were opposed to integration still exist. Family still comes first and those making top-down decisions still continue to look out for theirs. People still want to protect their own.

0:34:50 Allen believes the black community is more aggressive about their opportunities. There's more of a focus on achieving a certain lifestyle and doing what it takes to get there. He thinks young people see the connection between getting an education and moving into nicer neighborhoods, creating more opportunities for their children and the freedom to do things

like go on vacations. In order to reap the benefits of the "good life" they know that they have to do certain things. Allen believes more blacks see this as "the only way out."

0:37:05 A lot of the people he knows who are doing well and achieving their goals have moved on from Columbia. He thinks that the newspaper, TV and general media don't shine the light on these people but, instead, choose to focus on the other side.

Track 4 (24:50)

0:00:10 For a while, the relationship between those who transferred and those who stayed at Douglass was "pretty cold" because they were viewed as people who "left the group." Allen maintains that people knew that students were leaving for a more diverse set of opportunities but some were not happy with their choices and viewed it as abandonment.

In addition, you didn't see the same people as often and, Allen says, and "you didn't see them in the same way." Unless you went to the same church, you didn't hang out much with friends from Douglass because the schools had different scheduled events and socials and had different "partying spots."

"Through physical separation there became a sense of coolness to some degree."

0:03:05 Over the years, the coolness has been resolved. The factor that made the difference was that those who stayed and went on to universities still prospered. The ones who went to Hickman and university also prospered.

"So now, I think we see that there was more than one way to gain success and the fact that you chose this side and I chose the other side, didn't mean that one side was degrading the other one."

He says that the students who've gone through Douglass read like a "Who's who" list. The 60s were a different time.

0:04:23 Allen talks about the black business community in Columbia that included night clubs, restaurants, shoe shops, cleaners and a taxi company. Even in this small community, people were enterprising and built small businesses to survive.

"When you are by yourself, you learn to become self-sufficient."

"People in Columbia prospered but to a limited degree," because of their smaller numbers than in larger cities.

0:05:37 Urban development destroyed that whole system of entrepreneurship and ownership. He maintains that during that time, if a person owned a house that wasn't the best looking, urban renewal took it and gave homeowners less than what the value of the home and moved them into the project because they couldn't get a loan to make up the difference. This not only destroys the house but the financial ecosystem around it - the income, restaurants, service stations and other businesses around it.

0:06:30 Allen says that an ex-mayor in Columbia (Howard Lang) who was, at one time, president of Shelter Insurance, confided in Allen and said that was the worst mistake he'd ever made. All the city planners saw was that people lived in a beat down house that needed to be removed.

Allen believes urban renewal took away sense of ownership and economically corralled blacks.

0:08:33 Allen believes Columbia is a town, like many others, that is run by a handful of families. These families, through their connections, can know that an area has potential 10 years from now of becoming a profitable business area, they can buy now for nothing and their family can sell at a profit.

0:10:11 Allen's time at Hickman allowed him to be exposed to people who were influential in town and enabled him to become accepted to "the network" that exists in Columbia. Once he was in, everything fell into place for him. His relationship with the track team at Hickman led to the scholarship to MU. That led to his becoming acquainted with the relatives of one of the major insurance companies in Columbia. He was accepted to work with them and things snowballed from there.

Allen believes that had he not made that move, he never would've made those connections or had the opportunities he had.

0:11:30 The education he received at Douglass was a good one.

"The only reason I left Douglass was not the quality of education, it was the, maybe the lack of quantity. Being in a small school like that, no way

you could get a, uh, chemistry teacher or Calculus teacher - all those type of things. Whereas, at Hickman, they were available - whether you take'em or not, they were available. And with me planning to go to MU, I wanted to take some of the courses. The courses I had was very good. Was just, it wasn't the next step up."

0:12:30

Allen has never attended a Hickman reunion because he doesn't have the closeness with the school that he has with the Douglass people. "I went to Hickman not to develop a friendship or become something else. I went there strictly for the opportunity to get more courses. I was there my junior and senior years but if you look back over your lifespan, most of that time in my developing years were somewhere else. I was just there for two years."

"My desire and my aim was not to become a member of the Hickman group, so to speak."

The years at Hickman were about looking for a good education. Lifelong friends and strong relationships were built elsewhere.

0:15:30

Desegregation in Columbia has come a long way, on the surface. It's not like it was when he was in school where there were certain restaurants you couldn't go to, if you went to the movies you had to sit upstairs, if you went shopping you couldn't try on clothing, etc.

"It has progressed to the point to where you can do a lot of the open things, meaning you can go to any restaurant you want if you've got the money or go anywhere in a movie or go to the concert at MU - you name it. But what seems still to be the challenge to me - or for my folks, as a group, African Americans - is there is still a certain amount of subtlety in that it still gets back to my group versus your group." "Every group is out for itself, to a certain degree."

Allen believes that the reception you get depends on who's at the table.

"What I call it is, no matter how good you are at your job, what academics you have, you have to have one person to stand up and nominate you - especially if you're a minority." You can't be just average and succeed. Someone has to pull you up and draw you into higher places. He calls this the "herd mentality."

“Until we get to the point where more people are nominated, then I think we still have a long way to go.”

0:20:00

Things that were gained with desegregation: employment opportunities, exposure and the willingness to, at least, get you in a position that you can afford to do some things.

Allen said that not too long ago, it was easier to get a \$75,000 loan for a car than a \$30,000 loan for your house. [This makes no sense.] Now, people are rejecting the loan for the car in favor of the loan for the house so they can “move out there where you are.” Mobility is also something that has been gained.

0:22:35

Things that were lost: the tight bond that puts you together because you can't be apart. Because people have the ability to do what they want, there is a lack of interdependence on one another. Jealousy, envy, etc. is something that people in the black community struggle with now whereas, in the past, everyone was proud of people who succeeded.

"Power has a tendency to destroy sometimes."

Charley Blackmore – Hickman High School Class of 1963

Blackmore grew up in a house just west of Columbia's city limits and bicycled to Jefferson Junior High when it was newly opened. He remembers walking to the drive-in theater as a kid, ice skating with friends on Doc Hulen's lake and spending his summer days at the playground at West Boulevard playing baseball until he got hungry enough to head home.

For Blackmore, high school was about having a good time. By then he'd graduated from mowing lawns for spending money to working part-time as a service station attendant so he could afford to indulge in the two things he loved at the time: his black and white, two-door, 1957 Chevrolet and girls. (He freely admits that he's been girl-crazy since he was 11 years old, when he had a wedding ceremony with his first girlfriend, Spring Jenkins.)

"My brother played cards in high school. I dated. It's just that simple," he says.

Between work and girls, Blackmore had little time for involvement in extra-curricular activities or sports. A knee injury during a scrimmage before his sophomore year ended any football aspirations. Instead, he went to dances and socialized. He tested the school's lunch time limit by driving to Booneville with friends for the break. When he had to keep it local, he went to McDonald's or the Playboy Drive-In restaurant.

In spite of all the fun loving, Blackmore did manage to find time for classes. He says he never skipped class with his favorite teacher in high school, Helen Williams, who taught speech (verse choir) at Hickman for 30 years. For half of the year, her students focused on parliamentary procedures (debate). The second half focused on drama and elocution. Her students performed at state conventions and events at universities. Blackmore was vice president of the verse choir his senior year and, years later, put "The Book for Verse Speaking Choir" on his kewpie.net reunion webpage. He discovered that a good number of the poets Williams chose for her classes were black. He was baffled.

"What was in her mind, that - she was teaching you drama and how to read a poem and read it in the way that an old black person would'a read it back in the 20s or the early days of black people in this country. She was an interesting person and I would say that there's not anybody that ever taught at that high school that was liked as much."

Regarding the desegregation of Hickman, Blackmore says, "It had no impact on my education or my being there at all." In fact, he believes that black students had the freedom to attend whichever school they wanted for many years before the ruling but had chosen to attend Douglass and live near the school because that's the way things had always been done. He says he's been going to school with black kids since his Jefferson Junior High days. At the time, he says he thought nothing of it.

"Actually, when I went to Hickman I never even at the time realized that it was a big deal. Except it was, because if you had gone to school, particularly for those people that graduated the first year they had to come to Hickman, they'd been to Douglass for 11 years and they probably wanted to say, 'Well, I graduated from Douglass because my brother, my sister, my mother, my father, whatever, graduated from there.'"

**Audio Log of interview with Charley Blackmore
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project**

Track 1: (37:39)

INTRO: 0:28

Name: Charles Taylor Blackmore

Date of birth: May 12, 1945

Birthplace: Mexico, Missouri; Audrain County Hospital. His parents lived in Martinsburg, Missouri at the time.

Parents' names: Taylor Benson (aka Ben or T.B.) and Clela Elizabeth

Parent's occupation: Mom was a stay-at-home mom when her sons were growing up. She worked for the county clerk when they graduated from high school. Dad traveled with Missouri Farmers Association (MFA) as an exchange manager.

Sibling(s): younger brother, Gary Hayes (G.B.) Blackmore; retired from the postal service

The family moved to Columbia when he was 10.

Attended grade school in Shelbina, Mo. then spent 4th grade in Louisiana, Mo. Went to West Blvd Elementary (when it was brand new) after moving to Columbia. His family lived outside of the city limits and had to pay tuition for his first year.

He went to the old Jefferson Junior High School, then Hickman in 1960. He graduated in 1963.

He served six months active duty in the military, then started at the University of Missouri in January 1964. He attended for one year, quit school, then worked at the post office. He worked there for 36 years.

Married: Susan Blackmore, Gay Burton (March 23, 1991-January 1997), Karen James Blackmore

He was engaged two other times in between marriages. One was a woman he met through his job at the post office (Deborah Burkes-Smith). She passed away after battling from breast cancer.

Children: Robert Shane Blackmore, Melissa Jane (with Susan Blackmore)

0:05:24 When he was with the postal service, his (now ex-) wife was a beautician. She couldn't work during pregnancy. Blackmore took a second job as a newspaper motor route operator for the Columbia Tribune. In those days, the deliverymen did their own billing. His customer base went up to over 550 homes. It was almost a second fulltime job. This lasted until he had a heart attack on New Year's Eve 1996.

“I would certainly, not even guess, I would say most certainly, uh, I had the longest career as a motor route operator in the history of the Columbia Daily Tribune. It was 29 years and four months. I'm sure that's a record.”

At the same time as being a postal employee and newspaper deliveryman, Blackmore also worked as a DJ. He purchased his own equipment around 1977/1978. He still does this on the side. He's been dj'ing for close to 36 years.

0:07:00 Blackmore shares about his first DJ experience. He sent a letter to all the schools, fraternities and sororities within a 50-mile radius of Columbia. He'd do the AA conventions and school dances.

In Columbia, his clients repeat clients were car shows (Old Wheels Car Club and Mopar Fest), the “Seniors for Seniors” Prom. He's also done events for the university, State Farm, school parties and house parties.

He also had a radio show at KOPN. He started in November 1977. A local friend and neighbor, Terry Farmer, was a record collector. He knew Dave Taylor, who had a radio show on Saturday nights called “All Things Must Happen” and suggested that Blackmore go with him as a guest on the show and take a few old records in.

In those days, you had to take a written test to be on the radio and obtain an FCC license. Blackmore took the test in Kansas City, a slot at the radio station opened up in November 1977. He was on Monday nights when there wasn't a city council meeting. (The meetings were broadcast at that time.) His show was called “Crazy Charley's Monday Night Live.”

He programmed his own shows and played his own music on vinyl.

0:12:40 Blackmore talks about becoming friends with Walter Anderson (aka, “The Sugarman”), who had a show on Saturday afternoon called “Soul Street” and Kenny Skruggs (aka, “Cousin Ken”) who had a show on Monday afternoons called “Back in the Saddle” that played country music. When he left for commercial radio, Blackmore started doing a country music show on Monday nights called “The Redneck Roundup” until they got another country show on. He then went back to Rock’n’Roll and R&B.

His career at KOPN ended in October 1984. He was there a total of 7 years. His son did a show called “In the Middle” in middle school and “Rock and Roll High School” in high school.

0:14:00 Blackmore talks about his children, wives and fiancées.

0:17:00 Blackmore’s fiancée (Deborah Burkes-Smith) who passed away from breast cancer taught him about bucket lists and was one of the factors for him finally starting his Hickman reunion webpage, kewpie.net, which he’s had for 15 years. She was also a Hickman graduate (class of 1969).

The first year they were together (1997) he had a reunion coming up (1998). Blackmore would be working on his computer, contacting people for the reunion while sitting in bed. She made the comment that he should be spending time with her instead of with his computer. In the course of conversation, she said something like, “Why don’t you see if you can’t find everybody that went to that *blinkin’* high school.” Blackmore said, “Well, maybe I should do that.”

He’d been operating a web page for his graduating class since 1997. After she passed away, he was trying to find way to draw people to the website. He thought of the “Kewpie of the Month.” She was recognized as the first to be recognized.

0:21:57 The history of the kewpie doll:

They were the prizes given away at fairs. Perry Como sang a song called Kewpie doll. They’re collectibles that were created in 1909 by Rose O’Neal, a children’s book author, who was looking for a character for her stories. She combined an angel and a cupid and called it a “kewpie.” The character was always a little mischievous and back then, dolls didn’t have clothes, so they were naked. The originals used to be made of porcelain.

0:24:54 The story on how Hickman's mascot became the Kewpie:

Legend had it that the football team was "smiling like a bunch of kewpies" after being beaten to shreds in a football game where they were outmanned and outsized by their opponents.

After Blackmore started the webpage, he received a letter from a lady named Lucy Church who gave a different story. She said that her great-uncle, Sam Church, graduated from Hickman in 1914. He was a basketball player. She says the story she was told about how the Kewpie became the mascot wasn't the same as what was on the website. In the 1914 Cresset, there's a picture of the basketball team. On the front row is the captain of the team, Sam Church, and between Sam's feet is a kewpie doll.

Apparently, the secretary of the school had a thing for the dolls and a crush on the basketball coach. She took the doll from her desk to one of the first games of the season and set it on the floor. The doll survived the game and the team won. They went on to be undefeated. The thought is that the doll brought them luck that first year.

An article on the front page of the yearbook dedicates the publication to the undefeated basketball team of 1936 (?), who were smiling like kewpies or something like that. Ever since, every yearbook after that has kewpies in it. Blackmore says that he's never met anyone who was there or heard the sports announcer making this comment.

The first Cresset was published in 1912. There's no mention of the Kewpie in the 1912 or 1913 yearbook.

0:30:10 Blackmore shares that Hickman was "Columbia High School" in 1914. When they moved the high school to where it is today (1928), it changed the name but kept the mascot.

0:31:00 His address growing up was 1205 West Broadway (1955). It was the third house west of Clinkscapes Road. Clinkscapes was the road where the fairgrounds were in Columbia. Anything west of Clinkscapes was outside of Columbia city limits in 1955. When they re-did the street numbering, they became 1609 Broadway.

They were the last house before you got to the Broadway Drive-In Theater, which is now the Broadway Shopping Center. He could walk to the drive-in, where there was a patio you could sit on to watch a movie.

Sometimes you had to pay to get in, sometimes you could just walk in. Some people had flat-roofed homes and they would sit in lawn chairs up there and watch movies.

0:32:30 That area was country roads where he'd go riding his bike and fish in little ponds on Fairview. He could from his house to Hulen's Lake and only see a few houses. The only house on Hulen's Lake was Doc Hulen's house, the veterinarian. Hulen's son was friends with the older brother of one of Blackmore's friends, so the four of them would ice skate on Hulen's Lake.

Hulen Lake is now a large subdivision.

0:33:10 The first growth spurt of Columbia was to the west of town. The fairground and drive-in were the only landmarks at that time. There was also a tavern on Clinkscapes called "The Saddle Club." They'd have a big Christmas party to keep the neighbors happy after a year of parking issues, loud noise and parties.

0:33:51 His house was a two-bedroom house on a crawlspace. The third bedroom was the family room. There was a dining room, kitchen and living room. There was only one bathroom. It had a one-car garage. When both kids were grown, his parents turned the garage into a family room and the family room into an office. They installed a driveway and carport at the back of the house. His parents would sit out back.

0:34:52 The yard was small. His mother loved flowers and was something of a green thumb. Her mother was long-standing president of the Wellsville garden club and grew all kinds of flowers. She would make arrangements to sell to people who wanted to put flowers on loved ones' graves for Memorial Day from her own beds. Blackmore's mother loved gardening as well. She loved to mow her own yard until she was past 80 and then he took over.

She even had a little vegetable garden where she grew tomatoes, radishes, onions, lettuce, cantaloupe and cucumbers.

They didn't have a swing or anything in the yard growing up.

0:36:40 The whole block was friendly with one another. There were 8 ladies who started playing bridge together in 1958. His mother died in 2001 and the last thing she said, "Now, you need to call Winnie Jones and tell her that

I'm probably gonna be in the hospital on Monday and I won't be able to play bridge."

When she died, six of the original ladies still lived in Columbia and still played bridge together.

Track 2: (34:10)

0:00:00 Blackmore's father was a workaholic. He loved to work. He had no hobbies and didn't do anything apart from work. He retired in his mid-60s and lived 10 or 15 years after. "When he quit work, he was pretty much done so he didn't live a long time after that."

He also smoked all his life.

They lived 10 years together before Blackmore was born, so they did a lot of social things in the places where they moved. They didn't really establish close-knit friends until they moved to Columbia.

0:02:13 The kids in the neighborhood played ball together in the yard.

"I can remember getting on my bicycle, uh, you know, within a year after we moved to Columbia and you'd ride your bicycle anywhere you want to in town. There wasn't any fear.

We would go to the playground at West Boulevard in the summertime, early in the morning with a bat and ball and baseball glove and maybe stay there 'til lunch and come home and go back and stay 'til supper, you know. And that's all you did. I mean, your entertainment in the summer, if you didn't play baseball, I don't know what you did. Because that's what my brother and I did every day in the summer. If we were playing baseball on a ball field somewhere, we were out in the yard playing catch. That's what kids did.

And we had teams, you know. We had Corey League Baseball instead of what they call Little League and other stuff now, City League Baseball and stuff. We both played softball and baseball when we were kids. And, we were neither one the swimming pool type. You know, we didn't go to the pool in the summertime and all that other just to take swimming lessons when we were little kids that first moved to Columbia, when we were 8 and 10 but that was basically what the summer consisted of 'til I think - I think when I was 12 or 13 I started mowing lawns."

- 0:03:27 Blackmore started out with one or two lawns and that evolved into five or six. One of the lawns he mowed was a neighbor (Dwayne Sudley) who owned a service station and wrecker service. (His wife, Gail, played bridge with Blackmore's mother.)
- "So, I told him, I said, 'Now whenever you think I'm old enough I want a job at your gas station.'" Blackmore went to work for him when he was 15. He worked for him in high school, after school and on the weekends. He worked full-time in the summer. He worked part-time for him after being in the service, while he was at university. He even worked for him part-time while he was at the post office. He held a job there for 5+ years.
- 0:04:48 Sudley had two daughters who Blackmore's been friends with since then. One time, when he was 17 or so, his boss asked him if he wanted to come out to the lake to help teach Linda and a group of her girlfriends to water ski.
- "Well, you know, it's a tough job but somebody had to do it, right?" Those ladies still tease him about it.
- 0:05:45 The gas station was Warden Suttle. In 1960, it was "the" wrecker service of Columbia. Long before CB radios became standard use, they had them in their trucks. They were well respected and AAA, so they did service calls and other services. They had a fleet of five trucks.
- There were only five or six guys who worked there - the two owners, plus a few other guys. Some were high schoolers who went to school at Hickman.
- "That was the job I had so I could afford to drive a nice car and buy more clothes and whenever I had a date, in those days, unlike today, when I had a date it was a date. No woman ever got in my car ever had to pay for anything. When I took a lady somewhere it was on me."
- Blackmore bought a 1957 Chevrolet in 1961. "That was the car to have, back in those days. So, I was a lucky man back in those days." It was a black and white 2-door hardtop '57 Chevrolet.
- When he got ready to join the service and start at the university, he traded it in on a 1960 Plymouth Valiant with push-button drive because it was "more economical." "Biggest mistake of my life!" [Laughs].

Blackmore says it was easier to park when he went to class and took him back and forth between Fort Leonard Wood in St. Louis and Columbia while he was on active duty with the Army National Guard. It wasn't his favorite car.

0:08:55 Blackmore talks about fishing. He started fishing as a kid with his grandmother at the Wellsville Lake. Blackmore tells the story of fishing with his grandparents in 1967, the year after he got married, when he hooked an almost 7-pound bass. When his grandfather, who was sitting on the back of a truck bed, smoking Camel cigarettes saw the bass come out of the water, he hopped down and said, "What you got on there boy?"

The bass is mounted on his office wall. He had the fish mounted by a Reinhold Diminski, a German guy living in Columbia.

0:11:32 Blackmore says he was girl crazy from the time he was about 11 years old. He had a wedding ceremony with his first girlfriend, Spring Jenkins (Walton), in fifth grade. She was the daughter of Thornton Jenkins, who moved here assuming he'd be the next head basketball coach. He ended up being the coach to officiate a historical NCAA tournament game between Texas Western and Kentucky in which the Texas coach started 5 black players. The Texas team won the tournament. It was made into a movie called Glory Road.

Spring married a man named Charley. When Blackmore gets an email from her, she sends it to "first Charley."

"My brother played cards in high school. I dated. It's just that simple."

0:15:30 Blackmore explains that in the 50s and 60s, dating somebody wasn't like "going steady." You went on a date. His senior year, he was in a relationship with a girl who was a year older than him and in her first year of college at Stephens College.

"We still saw each other but we still dated other people. She dated people at the university and I dated people in my class. So, I can't even imagine how many people I might've dated my senior year of high school. And I always had a girlfriend since the fifth grade. I never didn't have a girlfriend from the time I was 10 years old, period."

0:16:25 On dates, dad would drive you to pick up your girl and you'd go to a movie or party or whatever. Dad would come and pick you back up.

Blackmore says he dated two girls who were on the outer perimeters of Columbia. He remembers his dad saying, "Can't you find a girlfriend that lives in town?" when he had to drive 15 miles to go pick up one of his son's dates.

Blackmore tells the story of being a sophomore in high school and going to the junior jam with a girl who was a year ahead - a girl he dated for 4 years who was the "first real love of his life." It was going to be embarrassing to have his dad drive him there. She had a license but he didn't want her driving either. He had his tux and flower for his girlfriend. His dad just threw him the car keys and said, "Be careful."

Blackmore thought it was cool of his dad to do that since he didn't have a license.

0:18:57 A typical day in high school:

Blackmore doesn't remember how he got to high school until he started driving. When he was in junior high school, they'd walk downtown and hop on a city bus to come home. He guesses that his parents must've taken him to school. Mom had a car that her parents gave her - this was Blackmore's first car that he drove.

0:19:55 Blackmore's best memories are from his senior year of high school. Until recently, high school was only three years. As a sophomore, you didn't really interact with seniors. He remembers getting thrown out of school and some of the teachers.

After every home football and basketball game, everyone went from the gym or football field into the cafeteria and had a dance. Blackmore used to take his records to the dance and played them on an old 45 record changer, which was in the school office. You'd put a stack of 45s on the changer and they'd play through the sound system in the cafeteria for the dance.

Blackmore says that one of the most talented musicians who attended Hickman (in his opinion) was Frankie Williams. He was a black guy who might've come from Douglass. He could play any instrument. He married Janice Lindsey and was killed in a car accident coming back from a gig. The song that was popular when he was a senior and Blackmore was a junior was called "The Booty Green" and Williams would put his hands in

his back pockets and pull his pockets when the lyrics said, "Put your hands on your hips and let your backbone slip. Come on, do the Booty Green."

Williams is one of the most asked-about Hickman alumni on the site.

Janice is now married to James Nunnelly, aka "Doodle Bug."

0:24:33 They probably ate something before going to school but doesn't remember what. "I know we probably ate something before we went to school. I don't remember. I know we didn't, I know it wasn't an egg McMuffin [laughs] or a Jimmy Dean biscuit in the microwave like you do today. It was probably something like some oatmeal or a couple eggs or some biscuits and gravy 'cause my parents were, you know, they themselves weren't country but their roots were country.

My dad and mom both, you know, my dad grew up on a farm all of his life until he moved, until, up til the time before a few years before he and my mother were married. My mother grew up, uh, you know, out in uh, in uh, uhh I guess you'd say in Oklahoma around Lawton, Oklahoma where she was a kid and then they moved to Wellsville. And Wellsville is a farm community. So, you know, we were pretty modest as far as, you know, we didn't eat fancy stuff. It was, you know, meat and potatoes type food that we grew up on."

0:25:47 Blackmore remembers that he would stay up late at night. His mother would drag him out of bed, even after he graduated, went into the service and was working at the post office. (He lived at home until he married at 21.)

He manufactured a device to wake him up in the mornings. There was a chest of drawers in his room between his and his brother's twin beds. He took a yardstick, put it on top of the dresser and placed a dictionary on the end of it. He put a cup of water on the end of the yardstick, with a piece of string tied to an alarm clock. When the alarm went off, it'd drop the cup of water on the bed and wake him up.

0:27:24 His mother said she always knew he'd be organized because before he went to bed, he'd write down all the stuff he needed to get done the next day on a little notepad. He still does that.

0:28:06 He doesn't remember when he had to be at school. He guesses between 8:30 and 9 am. They got out by 3 pm, as he remembers. They had 6 hours

of classes and 30 minutes for lunch. As a junior and senior, he was so busy working and involved in party type activities, doing something every night (dates, etc.). He doesn't remember hardly being home during those years.

0:29:35 For lunch, they ate in the cafeteria in his sophomore year. He was out for football and remembers going into the cafeteria, going for two plate lunches that were 30 cents each. They'd drink four half-pints of milk at 2 cents a half-pint.

"So, for 68 cents, you could drink four milks and eat two lunches at school."

There was a Playboy drive-in restaurant on the other side of Hickman, within walking distance, where students ate lunch off campus. Most ate at McDonald's. There was nowhere to sit and eat. They stood inside this glassed in area to get your food and there was tile on the outside of the building and benches. People sat out there and ate. He'd get three hamburgers, three french fries and a milkshake for 97 cents.

They'd have hamburger-eating contests. Blackmore says he won a bicycle once in a hamburger-eating contest - 15 1/2 in 20 minutes. He ate a dozen at McDonald's one night, so he wasn't surprised he could do it.

0:31:53 He ate with his buddies or girlfriend, if she had the same lunch period. When he was a sophomore, he had a friend who had a car who'd throw Blackmore his car keys if he wanted to go off-campus for lunch. (He didn't have a license or a car.)

0:32:24 Even though they didn't have a lot of time for lunch, one time, a bunch of friends jumped into his car and drove to a drive-in restaurant in Booneville for lunch.

0:32:50 They had three classes before and three after lunch. They lasted around 50 minutes to an hour with 5-minute breaks in between. A bell rang just before the hour and after the hour.

0:33:50 Blackmore remembers the worst and best teachers he had. The ones in the middle were just there.

Track 3: (36:15)

0:00:00 Blackmore talks about Helen D. Williams, the drama teacher at Hickman. He credits her with inspiring him to do the webpage and most things he's done in life.

"She had some really good friends with some really good people that went to Hickman High School but I like to think that I was one of her best friends because we had a relationship in high school, we had an unusual relationship in high school and her relationship and mine went clear up 'til the time she died. We never, never stopped communicating up until right before she died because she died and I didn't know about it during a time when I was in the midst of a divorce and getting remarried and my life was in slight turmoil."

He dedicated some stuff in her memory at Hickman.

She began teaching at Hickman in the late 20s and was assistant principal at one time. She started the verse choir in the early 30s, which evolved from her teaching debate club. She taught Sam Walton in verse choir in 1936. She retired in 1963 and died in the early 90s.

"She taught an unusual class at Hickman. It was called speech class. You had one semester of parliamentary procedure and one semester of basic acting or drama. And, she was the person that put together all of the plays and stuff like that at school. And, one of the first things I did on my webpage, we always had a book called, it was "The Book for Verse Speaking Choir." We called it the speech book. And, her verse choirs that she started forming back in the 30s, by the early 50s and stuff she was taking those groups to colleges and universities. They did an eastern tour one year, in the summer, and went to, like, several different eastern colleges and stuff and performed.

When I was in her verse choir, for the last two years, we performed at state teachers conventions and stuff at the university and stuff. And, I was vice president of the verse choir and my friend Bill was president. And, she was one of the most sought-after people to attend reunions as guest, so when I started dj'ing in the 70s and going to a lot of reunions, we'd always run into each other and she'd always introduce me when we'd be talking to people as the last president of her verse choir the year she retired and I'd always say - her name was Helen DeVault Williams - and I'd always, we called her 'Helen D'. I'd say, 'Helen D, I wasn't president. I was vice

president.' She'd say, 'I know but you should've been.' And then, you'd ask Bill and he'd say, 'She's right! You did all the work.'

One of the things he did in tribute to her was retype all of the poems that she selected for the last edition of the verse choir book. (Blackmore says the original was typed up, mimeographed and stapled together.)

"Now, this was prior to 1963. The most interesting thing about the material that she selected to put in that book was when I put it on the webpage, naturally webpages are like, link this to that, link this to that and link this back to that. Well, so I thought, okay, I'll put all these - I'm gonna do the index like is in the book. And in the index lists all these poets. Not, it's not the majority, but it's uncanny the amount of poets that she selected writings from for verse choir to use back in the 50s and 60s that were black authors and poets. Strange, you know? Why she would've selected those. What was in her mind, that - she was teaching you drama and how to, how to read a poem and read it in the way that an back in the 20s or the early days of black people in this country. So, it was interesting. She was an interesting person and she was probably - I would say that there's not anybody that every taught at that high school that was, was liked as much as she was by as many as she was.

Except one math teacher, was borderline. Nellie Kitchens. And that, she was there at the same timeframe and they were buddies."

0:06:00 Blackmore talks about introducing her at a function and saying that one of the best ways to measure the effectiveness of a teacher was how much students wanted to attend their class. He said, "I great up in a day of going to high school when people cut school all the time. I wasn't about to cut classes on a day if I was gonna miss coming to her class. Now, how much simpler can make it than that, that people wouldn't cut school 'cause they didn't want to miss that class?"

The parliamentary procedure was a serious courtroom.

0:07:10 The main thing students learned in these classes was to get up and talk in front of people. "There were a lot of people that, until they got in that class, they couldn't stand up in front of anybody and read a poem or talk to anybody. I don't know what it was about her. She just had a knack of bringing out the best in people.

But the other thing about her - as much as I love the person - I was the only person in thirty-something years she was at that high school that she ever threw out of her class."

She took him to the principal's office (James R. Chevalier, who they called "Chevy"). Blackmore says he doesn't know what he did but they let him back in class. He was vice president of the verse choir the next year. Blackmore says that to the day she died, she couldn't say why she did it. He never figured it out.

0:08:41 Blackmore recalls "Casey at the Bat" (by Ernest Thayer). It's a long poem that ends with explicit details about Casey's swing and Casey striking out. In high school, MAD comic did a parody of the poem with "Beatniks." Line for line, it matches up to the original poem. For Williams's class, you had to choose a poem to recite at the end of the semester. Blackmore chose this version. Mrs. Williams loved it and asked him to do it in every class.

0:10:20 Alden Nash, Lou Serrat (?) are two that Blackmore recalls being on the list. "The Congo" and "Go down, death" were two that were used in that class.

0:11:27 The shop teacher (Mr. Sweeney) backhanded him across the mouth once in junior high. His senior English teacher (Khaki Lang Westerfield) gives him credit for "breaking her in." She graduated from Hickman in 1958 and Blackmore's senior year was her first year teaching.

Blackmore was inducted into the Hall of Leaders but wasn't there to get his award (he was at the World Series in St. Louis with his friend Bill).

She knew him from speech class. Land stopped him in the hall before going into third-hour English before lunch one day and asked him to help her get a reaction out of her students in class. She asked him to watch the clock and five minutes before class is out, stand up and announce that you're fed up and leaving. She'd come out and get him afterward and get the reaction of the class. Blackmore did it five minutes after class started and kept on walking to Playboy Drive-in for lunch.

"She did not rat me out. She just said, 'You got me. I ain't trying that anymore.'" [Laughs] Blackmore concedes that as an English teacher, she probably didn't say "ain't."

- 0:14:24 Blackmore remembers the principal better than anything. Nellie Kitchens was his homeroom teacher. He was president of homeroom.
- His fourth grade teacher told him he had such beautiful handwriting. When he got his license, he went on a road trip and visited Mrs. Norvell.
- 0:15:35 Blackmore remembers the bookkeeping class (he has a photo of it that was given to him by a friend). Mr. Thomas was the bookkeeping teacher. His daughter was in the class and his wife was a substitute teacher. The classroom had chairs that you could move around and students got to work on things together. Most classrooms had chairs all in a row and you had a little desk that you didn't move.
- The classroom for verse choir was tiered in rows, like in a theater.
- 0:17:52 There were about 25-30 students in a normal class. Verse choir, which was an elective for juniors and seniors, had 50 or 60 people in it.
- Blackmore doesn't remember any equipment at all at school except for books, tablets, notebooks, paper and pencils. He stopped taking math after his sophomore year. Biology was a drag, his sophomore year. He remembers the teacher but the class didn't interest him. Some people had a slide rule. He didn't know what they were for.
- 0:20:21 They had guidance counselors who helped students pick their classes. He thinks Mrs. Nelson was his guidance counselor. Blackmore says he could've probably quit school after his junior year. He had enough credits.
- "I just wanted to go back to school my senior year to have a good time. And that's exactly what I did. I had a great time. Much more so than I think - well, I was lucky. Everybody doesn't have memories of high school like I have. I mean, let's say not just memories - everybody has memories of high school. But don't have, uh, as memories of having such a great time in high school as I did."
- Blackmore says a lot of people don't come to reunions because they didn't have a good time in high school. They may have been there just for the education. Blackmore says he was there, primarily, for the people. Learning was secondary because he "already knew everything."
- "It was different back then because when you were 16 years old, maybe you didn't know everything but you could'a took off and got a job and

been fine. You know? As long as you knew how to handle your money. People back in those days, you learned how to tell time, you learned how to count money. I mean, after you learned your ABCs and learned the hands, numbers on a clock and how to tell time, the next thing you learned was how to take a dollar bill and make change for something that was 73 cents or 18 cents and how to count change back. And those were fundamental things that you needed to know. You didn't need to know that 'x plus y equals z,' you know?"

Blackmore says he liked English and got good grades in writing and composition, even in university. He wasn't interested in all of the 'ology classes he was supposed to take.

He has a lot of friends from Hickman. He's become good friends with a lot of people who went to Hickman through the reunion webpage, even though they weren't in school with him.

Some classes have closer-knit groups who stuck together through the years and meet up on a regular basis, Blackmore says.

0:24:52 Blackmore's parents' only communicated with his teachers only if they needed to do so. In grade school, Blackmore's mom was involved in PTA but when he got older, they weren't involved. He remembers maybe having a party in grade school where parents brought refreshments. In high school, they didn't participate in any way unless he was in a play or something. His claim to fame was his appearance at talent night. His parents also attended his graduation.

0:26:27 His parents had to come to school a couple times to get him back into school. In junior high school, the principal was a man his parents knew before they moved to Columbia. In grade school, the principal was a man his mother had dated a couple times when she was younger.

0:26:52 Blackmore and his friend, Ed Sutton, got thrown out of school within the first two weeks. He had a few fireworks (Roman candles) left over from a weekend out that they set off in the second-floor bathroom at some girls who were smoking on the steps below. They thought they'd gotten away with it until they got called into the principal's office in second hour. They spent the rest of the day at the pool hall before going home. They were required to bring their parents the next day to get back in school.

0:28:00 He told a joke at talent night that got him pulled as MC for the talent night. The president of the PTA was the mother of a friend of his who defended him to the principal. They let him continue only after reading his script.

"It was almost like it had been choreographed. I mean, people thought that I'd rigged a deal with the principal of the high school to do it. It came off so perfectly."

When Blackmore was in high school, the seniors were the only people who could sit in the balcony. It was called "senior heaven." At every Friday assembly that all were required to attend, the seniors sat upstairs and nobody. When the school got big, they couldn't do it anymore.

0:29:44 Blackmore talks about the assemblies that the school had on Fridays. There were three people who usually competed for each area of the talent show. There were three masters of ceremonies.

At every assembly, the principal would be on the plateau of the auditorium, on the east side. "Everybody knew that's where Chevy was for every assembly." The closer Blackmore got to the punchline of his joke, the closer he got to the stage. He walked up on the stage, went behind the curtain and simultaneously with the punchline, his hand grabs Blackmore by the back of the neck and pulls him through the curtain. Blackmore says he immediately stepped out from behind the curtain and apologized to the faculty, guests, parents and students for his off-color joke and improper behavior.

The joke came from The Celebrity Club in St. Louis. A Jewish comedian ran the place named Davy Bold. You could buy his party records. Blackmore owned two of them. It was told by a Jewish comedian with a piano accompaniment.

The joke: "It's story hour at The Celebrity Club. There once was a king who lived in a castle. He had three daughters. He had blonde - one of his daughters was a blonde, one was a redhead and one was a brunette. One day, he told his daughters that one of them was going to have to marry the handsome young prince in a neighboring castle ... So, one day, the handsome young prince from the neighboring castle rides into the king's pal - in the king's castle. He looks at the blonde, he looks at the redhead, he looks at the brunette. He doesn't marry the blonde. He doesn't marry the

redhead. He doesn't marry the brunette. He marries the king. This is a fairy story."

Blackmore says that the principal had to have heard the joke otherwise he wouldn't know what was coming. Maybe he suspected that the outcome wasn't going to be quite right because back then, when you told a joke about the king and his three daughters, it was usually going to be a filthy joke.

0:33:20 His good friend, James McDonald, who happens to be a black guy who lives in California and visits Columbia for the Black & White ball. Years ago, this friend used to work at the old Columbia Country Club as banquet manager. When Blackmore walked in to DJ a wedding reception, they kept looking at one another. When the event was over, they realized how they knew each other and McDonald said, "Oh my! You're the guy that told that joke in assembly! I've told that joke to people for years." Blackmore said he thought it was his one shot at fame. Afterwards, he thought he was getting thrown out of school again. His parents were there and he was afraid to go home.

0:35:00 Blackmore's parents didn't beat him. He says his father beat his brother pretty bad, but only spanked him. His father would tell his brother, "One more peep outta you and I'm gonna spank you," and his brother would say "Peep, peep, peep."

He'd get talked to. He says he learned to play the psych card every once in a while.

Track 4: (38:56)

0:00:00 The psych card: Blackmore says his father told a story about his brother, Charles, who didn't want to get back behind the wheel after flipping the car he was driving. His dad said, "Charles, now you're gonna drive that car. You get in there and drive that car."

One night, at around 16 or 17, Blackmore was driving his car and ran it off the road while running from the police in a bad rainstorm. He and his buddy left the car in the ditch and ran to hide in the park. They eventually made their way to a buddy's house from the service station who had access to a wrecker. Some guy saw the car go off the road, called the police and the policeman on the desk knew it was Blackmore by the car's description.

He said Blackmore probably went to Walters house to get his car out of the ditch. The police met them at Walter's.

The police went to his parents' home and when Blackmore's dad came to get him at the jail, he said they needed to go get the car. Blackmore told him, "I don't think I can drive. I just don't know if I can do it." His dad said, "You get in and drive that car." Okay! He played the psych card on his dad.

It was his '57 Chevy, so he estimates that it was late in his junior year or early in his senior year. There was a bottle of bourbon laying under a blanket in the back seat.

Blackmore thinks the cops were chasing him because he passed someone on the shoulder. He was also speeding or "driving at an excessively high rate of speed" as it was in the paper the next day. It was estimated that he was going 95 mph.

His friend who was with him in the car was more scared than he was. He told him, "Yeah, we gotta report this thing as stolen."

0:04:35 Blackmore didn't do much homework. He remembers writing a few papers but didn't really do homework until college. There was regular homework in grade school and junior high but he didn't even carry books in high school. The speech book was the only one he carried because they were always memorizing things out of that.

0:05:34 After school, he went to work. As a sophomore, he'd go downtown to the record store, the soda fountain or the pool hall (which they weren't supposed to do). His parents didn't demand that he come home right after school.

When he got his license and car, he went to work three days a week at 4pm. He wore a uniform to go to work, so he'd go home, change clothes and go to work until 10pm. His boss was a neighbor and friend, so if he needed time off on weekends he was able to work that out.

He also always had a girlfriend, so at 10pm, he'd have a date. They'd go out and "park" or go out to the drive-in restaurant. His parents were always in bed when he got home. It was no big deal, except the nights when he'd stumble in because he'd been drinking and woke up his dad. Everybody drank beer - "somebody would buy you some beer."

Blackmore says it was more acceptable for teens then than it is now because everybody did it.

0:08:04 A service station was a full-service station in those days. They'd pull and tell the attendant how much gas they wanted. Blackmore would wait on every car that came through the driveway, putting in however much gas they said they wanted, taking their money, credit card (there were very few credit cards back then; he'd have to run inside and check the numbers against the numbers on a list inside the station) or charging the gas to their personal account. He also did minor mechanical work like repairing a flat tire with a hand machine. It wasn't a full-service repair shop. They did lube and oil and replaced minor parts.

At night, he'd be there by himself until 6 until 10pm. He'd clean the restroom, wash down the floors, lock all the doors, bag the money, turn off the lights off and go home. One of the last things he usually did was wash his car (by hand) before heading home.

0:10:57 It was a Gulf Service Station, so his uniform was a blue pair of pants, a lighter blue shirt with an orange stripe. The Gulf Oil Emblem was on one pocket and Blackmore's name was over the other.

Blackmore says his dad worked at a gas station during the depression and wore a bowtie and white dress shirt to work.

His shoes were called a Knapp shoe with an oil-resistant sole. There were shoe dealers who would come around selling them or you could order them from certain places. They were lace-up oxford-type shoes. Some had steel-toes.

0:12:43 Blackmore wasn't involved in extra-curricular activities at school, other than the plays he was in. The only sport he played was football during his sophomore year. He hurt his knee in the first sophomore scrimmage before the season ever started. He never took the field in high school. He quit sports after that.

He wasn't interested in basketball and couldn't run, so baseball and track were out. He pitched in Corey League Baseball.

0:13:45 He says that one of the funniest stories he can tell about one of his black friends came from this league. He hit the same guy three times in one game. The third time he hit him, the whole black crowd just emptied

where they were sitting and came to the bench where he walked off the field. John Washington was the friend. Blackmore was pitching “kinda wild” that night and he hit him twice at the bat; the third time was on base.

He beaned him on the head as he was getting back to base. Washington fell out. His brother, whose nickname was "Bus" because he was a big guy, and all of his brothers' friends came over to where Blackmore was coming off the field.

0:15:07 Blackmore tells the story of lighting Bus's furnace the last time he saw him before he died. Bus didn't turn the thermostat off before Blackmore went into his basement to light it. When he put the match to the pilot, it whooshed out at them.

"That's the fastest Bus ever probably moved that late in his life."

Blackmore said the crowd who surrounded the area where he was exiting the field was kind of a threatening situation but it dispersed without incident.

"They all knew me and I knew all them, so it wasn't like it was - like I said, you know, it's like, they were black, I was white. But they knew me and I knew them, so it just, the color thing didn't have anything to do with it. They were a colored team, they were an all-black team but we had, there were black guys that played on my team. So, it wasn't like it was white against black or black against white or anything like'at. Just happened that their team was all - and, you know, that was good.

I thought, like now, when they, when they reestablish school districts and stuff, they say, 'Well, we gotta get the right number of black people and the right number of white people. So, we're gonna bus these people. I don't think that's right. I think, if they drew those boundaries and said, 'Okay, if you live here, you go to this school because you're closest to that school. And if you live over there, you go to that school 'cause you're closer. And then you've got neighborhoods going to school together and black or white or Asian or whatever they are, if they live there, they go to that school. And they bond together because they go to that school together."

0:18:34 Blackmore remembers playing on baseball or softball teams during the summer that had black kids that played on those teams. A group of parents took the kids to a ball game in St. Louis. Some of those kids were black who went to the games.

"In 1960, there wasn't any place for the black kids to go to high school anymore. But anytime prior to that, uh, the schools were not, I guess you would say, segregated. I mean, if you were black and you wanted to go to Hickman, or if you were black and you wanted to go to West Boulevard or whatever, you could do that. It's just that, that I think that the people that were black lived in the part of town where the black people lived. I don't think anybody forced them to do that. That was what they wanted to do or that was just early on, it wasn't, black people weren't accepted in those other parts of town. Whether or not, I don't think anybody ever, you know, they were might, let's say maybe they were afraid of what would happen if they lived in that part of town - not because of the white people there but because of what the black people would think of them if they moved away from where the others lived - the other people lived that were black.

But we had, I can remember, when I first went to Jeff Junior, there were black kids at Jeff Junior. So, some of the black kids that were in my class were already there since the seventh grade, since the eighth grade or ninth grade. They just didn't come to Hickman in my sophomore year because they had to. They came before that. And, uh, I don't know where that - I can remember where that. When I went to West Boulevard for the fifth and the sixth grade, which would've been '55-'56, '56-'57 school year, I guess that was probably the only elementary school in town that had special education classes. And there were a couple black kids as I remember in special education classes at West Boulevard. That was an exception. But, it seems to me that when I went to the seventh grade at Jeff Junior, I can remember black kids coming there.

And, you know, at the time I thought nothing about it? I thought, well Jeff Junior is close to the area in Columbia where most of the black people live, so what school they went to - what does it matter? I knew there weren't white kids that went to Douglass. But I didn't think anything about there being black kids at Jeff Junior. I just never thought anything about it.

And, actually, when I went to Hickman, I never even at the time, never even realized that it was a big deal - except it was because, if you had gone to school particularly for those people that graduated the first year they had to come to Hickman - they'd been to Douglass for 11 years and they probably wanted to say, 'Well, I graduated from Douglass because my brother, my sister, my mother, my father, whatever, graduated from there.' Same as I like to say now, 'Well, my kids went to Hickman. I wish my grandkids could go to Hickman, whatnot.' Well, they were disrupted

not because they were black but because the school closed, you know? They didn't teach high school there in that building anymore. So, they didn't have a choice.

And I can see how that would'a, I mean, I can imagine - the only way I can relate to that is I can relate to that the way that I related to when my dad, after I spent four years in Louisiana, Missouri, going to school with them same kids for four years. I learned how to play baseball with'em, I went through Cub Scouts with'em and we were together all the time riding our bikes and doing stuff. And in the fourth grade my dad said, 'We're moving to Columbia.' I said, 'What? I ain't moving to Columbia. I am not moving to Columbia.' No choice.

Same thing happened to them."

The difference is the kids who had to go to what was known as "the white school" didn't have parents who moved for a job.

"It had no impact on my education or my being there at all."

0:23:20 Blackmore remembers the first time he got in a fight with a black kid. He didn't think about race. They had a fight and that was the end of it. Phillip Robinson, nickname, "Boot tar." Blackmore doesn't even remember what the fight was about.

0:24:33 The main interaction Blackmore had with black students was in class. When they had dances in the cafeteria, there wasn't a huge number of black students who came to those but there were a few (Frankie Williams was one). He doesn't remember guys like Frank Gardiner, Philip Robinson, Jackie Gross or John Washington, Roy Lee Clayburn or any of the guys in his class came, Blackmore can't recall. Frankie Williams stands out because of his dancing.

In the summertime, they were still playing baseball together. Roy Lee Clayburn and "Skull" (Frank Robinson) might've jumped into his car to grab a drink at the drive-in after a game. Blackmore didn't really have black friends that he hung out with. Most of the friends he had were friends he'd had since the fifth grade.

The main thing that took him away from his old friends was having a car and working. Most of his friends he hung around with in high school

didn't work. They didn't have to or didn't want to. Some were in the COE program, though.

0:26:55 "Some of the black friends that I have today, if I'd know'em better back then and had the opportunity to know'em since I was in grade school, I'd probably be better friends with'em today, maybe. But I'm still pretty good friends with several of my black friends today, well, like, for example, "Fuzzy" and "Piggy" that come to visit me. I mean, we're really good friends but I didn't even run around with them in high school. They were a year younger than me. We didn't even, we didn't do anything at all together in those days."

Blackmore says that he's worked with people in the black community through DJ'ing and working at the post office that the black friends that he has know that he can be their friend - "that color don't matter to either of us as far as us getting together and doing things."

Fuzzy - James McDonald, who has no hair. Blackmore's wife struggles to call him by this nickname for that reason.

Piggy - Bill Rogers

0:28:42 Friends in high school: Melvin Burnett (deceased), Pete McDermott (deceased), John Alman (deceased), James Spangler. Pete had a '57 Plymouth painted the same color as Blackmore's Chevy. It was a typical Plymouth gold when he got it. He dated one of the cheerleaders. They'd park beside each other at the drive-in on weekends. Pete and Melvin were his best friends.

Blackmore was also good friends with Richard Wilson, who moved to Columbia for junior high. Allen Fuget was another who he knew since fifth grade.

Blackmore wasn't friends with Bill Griffin in high school but they're friends now. They actually fought in high school. Blackmore challenged him three times and he whipped him three times. He's 6'6" with long arms. "It wasn't much of a fight."

"We always tell people, 'If we can be friends and come to a reunion, anybody can.'" [Laughs]

0:32:45 Blackmore doesn't remember how or if he heard about Brown v. Board. He knew it happened but wasn't aware of any local issues. He didn't think about it that much.

He knew about Little Rock from the news but doesn't remember hearing about it. He remembers it happening. "I don't remember it being any big, 'Oh, Douglass is closing! The black kids are coming to Hickman! Oh my God!' It wasn't anything like that."

"I thought it was cool. I thought, and a lot of people in retrospect think, gosh, they wish that, you know that Douglass, that the kids at Douglass had come to Hickman a long time before they did because some of the greatest athletes who were at Douglass High School could've been part of history at Hickman, playing for Hickman instead of Douglass, you know? 'Cause if you mixed the two together you'da had even that greater a team, you know.

And then after the black kids first started coming to Hickman, i think that there was, [sighs] I think there's some possibility of, of, [sigh] - I don't know how to say it. I know, I know a couple of the people in my class didn't even go out for some sports. Now, I don't know why. But they could've gone out and played if they had been competing on an even level. But maybe there were some things there that were going on that I didn't know about. Because we had a couple guys that would've been good ball players that, that didn't go out. But then, then the next year, like, for example the guy I told you about, "Fuzzy," he was a running back and he'd play. He played a lot. But, uh, before that, there weren't very many. 'Course before that, there was only one or two years of school. And, uh, but the best black athlete at school - at Hickman - back then was Michael Richardson when I was there. And Michael died in July 2002. He was the first person to die on the state championship basketball team."

0:36:25 Blackmore doesn't remember the community's response. It wasn't an issue in his mind. When the Battles moved into the western part of Columbia and people were like, "Oh my God, there's a black person living in our neighborhood," it wasn't something that he thought too much about.

He remembers when blacks had to sit in the balcony at the movie theater, particularly at The Varsity Theater (now The Blue Note). It had double-feature matinees on the weekends, so everybody love going on Sundays.

"You never saw any black people sitting downstairs and you never went and sat in the balcony - at least I never did."

Blackmore remember sitting in the balcony at The Hall Theater and Missouri Theater. The Boone Theater was over by Providence. Blackmore doesn't remember going to that theater but he thinks that was another location where blacks couldn't sit downstairs.

There were also restaurants that didn't allow black people to eat in them. Blackmore says that if he ever had any of his black friends in the car and they went into a drive-in restaurant, they didn't go inside anyway, so it didn't matter. That didn't really happen frequently, since he mostly ran around with his friends he'd known since fifth grade.

Track 5: (37:23)

0:00:00 He doesn't remember any conversations with his parents about desegregation. Both of his parents were from farm families. They at least lived in small towns that were farm communities. His father is from Rhineland and quit school before graduating from high school. His father taught school.

"When they harvested and stuff down there, any black people that lived close or within distance that they could get there, they would go around and help people harvest their crops during harvest season. And I didn't realize that my dad, or his mother and dad, had any black friends or any black people in their lives that they really knew.

Well, I met this guy, coincidentally, I just ran into him on the Honor Flight last time - 22nd Honor Flight. I kept looking at this black man that was there. And I said, 'Boy, I know that guy. Where'd I know him from?' And we talked and we just didn't discuss where we knew each other from 'til finally, when they had their get-together after the flight, when they come back in a Sunday later, he was there and he had two ladies with him and this man. Well, the man was his father and these two ladies were his dad's sisters. And his name was Steve Moore.

And, back in the 70s and early 80s, when I used to go to Fulton to DJ, there was a restaurant over at Fulton that I used to DJ for the policeman's Christmas party and there was a black guy that worked there named Steve Moore. And Steve Moore and I kinda became friends. He's a big, heavyset guy. And now, he's thin but it's because of his illness. He's on dialysis and

stuff. And, when I first met him over there and would see him from year to year, he's say, 'I'm, I've leased this little place and I'm gonna open up a black club. So, I go to his club to DJ when he first opens up. And, it's, it's up towards Mexico, Missouri. It's actually an old place out in the woods that the AP Green family that owned the brick company over there years ago built out in the woods as a hunting lodge. But it's a beautiful old stone building and stuff. And he opened this up and called it "Esteban's."

At the bar, Blackmore got to talking with Moore's family and told them his name. Because his family says the name "Blackmore" sounded familiar, he eventually told them that his father grew up on a farm down in Rhineland, Missouri.

"As it turns out, why he'd heard that name is at that time Steve's grandfather was still alive. And he lived in a little town called - well, it's on the way to St. Louis - called New Florence. It's just off the highway. Well, Steve's grandfather was still alive and Mr. Moore, his dad, said, you know, 'My grandf- my dad's told me stories about how he used to go down to the Blackmore's and help them do crops and stuff.' [Laughs] 'I just never associated my dad with having black people that he was friends with. I don't know why. I just didn't.'"

Blackmore's parents went to New Florence on their way to visit his grandma and stopped by to visit with Moore's grandfather. That was the only connection that his family had to black people on his dad's side.

0:04:36

On his mother's side, a black man killed his great-grandfather William/James Hayes. He was the second police officer killed in the line of duty in Lawton, Oklahoma in the 1920s. He was shot in the back when answering a family disturbance call. His grandfather was Orel Hayes.

"That ended in some real, real nasty things going on in Lawton over that deal."

The livery stables are also used for storing bodies in preparation for burial. So, the night his father was shot, Blackmore's grandfather had to go pick up his own father. They took him to the hospital but he only lived a few hours.

"It was a nasty scene, you know, after what happened, what happened to that black guy after that all happened."

- 0:07:50 The people Blackmore ran with had no problem with black students coming to Hickman.
- There might've been some people that were put out by it. I mean, I know some of the friends that I had that were - I kinda considered myself as, as my family being, like, middle-income family. We weren't, uh, we weren't affluent. We didn't live in a big home and I didn't have parents that were gonna buy me a new car and that sort of thing. My dad worked and my mother didn't and my grandparents were there to help us when we needed things. But we were much more in that middle income, I guess, back in those days. And, and, uh, I'm sure that some of the friends that I had that were from upper income families, I think professional people might'a had a little bit different feelings about black people coming to the school but I can't remember ever having any discussions about, uh, about it with anybody."
- They played ball in the summertime and played Church League Ball in the wintertime and Douglass High School was the gym they used for the latter. They'd go on Saturdays and play basketball at Douglass. They didn't think anything about it.
- 0:09:30 There weren't any black people in Louisiana, Missouri. His best friend there were wealthy and they had a black man who worked for them, named Sylvanus. He was their chauffeur, their housekeeper, cook and everything. He'd ask what you wanted for breakfast and he'd cook it for you.
- Blackmore's dad had an accident one time because Sylvanus ran into his car. Blackmore doesn't remember his dad getting mad about it because they knew they guy.
- 0:10:18 Blackmore remembers some kids making lewd comments about black kids but not discussion. One kid said, "I don't see anything wrong with black people. I think everybody outta have a couple of'em." At one time, Blackmore says, that was the norm in the U.S. - whether they were slaves or hired hands, it was true. He can remember his dad talking about having black people that would come work for them on the farm.
- He doesn't remember any other lewd comments that were made.
- 0:12:30 Blackmore saw some changes in Hickman. He talks about the people who came over to Hickman before the closing of Douglass and that he didn't

know why they'd chosen to do so. Most were very intelligent - honor roll students. Blackmore questions whether they transferred to take advantage of the educational and scholarship opportunities there. He says he doesn't know what Douglass was like or how strict they were about keeping grades up and staying in school.

0:14:33

"There was a little bit of, people, kind of a fear, maybe, of the black kids when they came there. But yet, when you look at it open-mindedly, there really shouldn't have been any reason for any white kid to ever be afraid of the black kids because there was a whole lot more white kids than there were black kids. But, the white kids would not express their true sentiments to a black person because they were afraid of what might happen, you know?

But I didn't feel that with my friends and stuff. But we did not talk about black and white. We didn't talk about it because I don't think the attitude back then of black people, they didn't even want to be referred to as black back then. They wanted to be called 'negroes'. And, and I don't know when it became politically correct to use the term Afro-American instead of negro but I always kinda looked at it and laughed. Well, it's kinda like the music, okay? They used to call the black music in magazines - Billboard - it used to be called the R&B charts. And then they changed it to the Black. And then it changed to Soul. [Laughs] It's like, what the hell's the difference? It's all the same, right? R&B, Black, Soul - what's the difference? And nowadays, when you listen to music, you don't know if it's black or white."

Blackmore prefers R&B/Black/Soul music over Rock'n'Roll.

0:16:15

"Like I said, I didn't have any opinions one way or the other. I didn't have - I was totally indifferent about it, you know. It didn't bother me that black kids were there. I was just as happy being there with them there as I was before they were there. It didn't affect or interfere with my education or my life or socially, what I did or anything. Just didn't. And I considered those guys that I went to high school with just as, just as good a friend as any friend I had in my class but I didn't consider them as good a friends as those people I ran around with. But the white people I didn't run around with, I didn't consider them as good a friends as those I ran around with either. I didn't choose my friends based on what color they were."

He maintains that if times had been different back then and people had been able to sit and talk about their differences, it would've been better for

all involved. He would've gotten to know the black friends he did have a lot better.

Blackmore likens it to the vets who came back from World War II and Vietnam. Some of the whites didn't want blacks at the school. Some of the blacks didn't want to be at the white school. "But we're not gonna talk about it, we're just gonna do it."

0:18:24 Blackmore's opinion is that there are some traditions that were at the high school that were treated more loosely with the black kids - like sophomores having to wear the green and white beanie. "I think the reason that they did away with some of those traditions is because maybe there wasn't any problem, but they suspected there would be problems."

Sophomores had to wear the beanie at all times except for sleeping or church. If you were caught without it, you were subject to harassment. They had to do this until before the bonfire at the homecoming football game. Blackmore doesn't remember any black kids from his sophomore year participating in that.

The tradition went one year and then it stopped. Because of numbers, by the late 60s and 70s, the balcony was no longer "Senior heaven."

0:22:30 Changes in the community after the closing of Douglass: Blackmore doesn't know that he saw any changes at all. "It's just a matter of, I think people just gradually grew to accept it until - uh, like I said, in the early days, I don't think there was any problems with anything because neither the, from my perspective, I didn't see a lot of white people speaking up about, being unfavorable of it happening."
The only problems that came up was that people who went to Hickman in the 70s had an actual fear of black people in the school. Blackmore thinks that it had to do with the different tone of blacks in the 60s.

When I first saw "Roots" on TV, that was a pretty eye-opening experience for not just white people but black people, too. And I think a lot of black people - I guess you would, I've heard the comments, say 'playing that Kunta Kinte card,' you know? Because, but, when you look at that in terms of, like, well, I went to school in the 60s and there weren't any black kids in the white schools in the 50s but then in the 60s, there were. And there has been ever since.

But what has happened after the fact. Why does, why, I mean, certain people in the schools now, I don't think the black kids or the white kids have any, any thoughts at all about that black person being less qualified or not equal to them. I don't think that exists anymore. But back when we were young, it did. I think the white community, uh, just from reading history and, and the way that you grew up, I think that, that black people were not given equal rights. We know that from history. But, but when did it become the point that the white people are absolutely just afraid of black kids at the schools?"

Blackmore says when he talks to his kids about it, they said that they never knew when a black kid was going to pull a knife or gun on them.

Blackmore doesn't think this has any link to the desegregation of Hickman. He's not sure when things went south and the climate of the country shifted for blacks and whites.

"I think that if we'd had a better understanding about it a long time ago and the black people and the white people had all treated the situation a little bit differently, and we had become equal when we should'a become equal, then it would'a had a different impact on the way things are now because it just doesn't seem like it's working right anymore."

- 0:27:05 The only black friend Blackmore talked to about race issues was Don Renfro, from the post office. He experienced a lot of prejudice in regards to jobs and not wanting to have heart surgery because of how he would be perceived by white people. Beyond him, there wasn't much conversation about race issues.
- 0:28:20 "The impact of desegregation: I don't feel like it's had any impact on it whatsoever."
- 0:29:29 The numbers of black students who attend reunions is not good. There were 22 or 23 black people in Blackmore's class of 622 (He later says 322?). He and Marcella Bluett went through the old books she had from Douglass High School and his books and tried to add people to the reunion list.

If 100 people come and 3 are black, the percentage is actually just about right. At one of the reunions he recently attended, there was a better response. He talked to one of the attendees, Kay Dixon, who his friend Don Renfro talked about, about why their seemed to be a better response by the black alumni to that particular reunion. She said that the black kids

in that class got involved in it and asked the other black students to come to it.

0:33:25 "But the other thing that goes on in Columbia that kinda is a factor is - have you ever heard of the Black & White Ball? Every year. It's in August every year. And if you're a black person, and you went to Douglass High School at all, I mean, if you went to Douglass at all, and now, we're talking about in 1960, the last class that graduated from Douglass. But we're talking about kids that were in Douglass in the second or third or fourth or fifth grade and went to grade school there - and then they come to the white, the high school that was predominantly white kids later on, a few years later. We're still getting up almost to the late sixties or so with kids that started in Douglass but they, then they didn't have a high school there.

So, I think you've got a lot of the black population of Columbia - as far as those educated black people that went to high school - that are saying, you know, 'If I moved away from Columbia and I'm gonna make a trip back to Columbia, am I gonna go to the Black & White Ball or am I gonna go to the Hickman reunion?'"

0:34:30 Frank Gardiner and Roy Lee were always involved with the Black & White Ball. When they were younger, the optimal time to have a reunion was August. It's vacation time and all of the kids' summer activities are finished. Blackmore says that people - black and white - are lazy and not going to go to two high school functions.

"They went to the black one and they saw all their black friends in August. They ain't gon' care about seeing those few white people that were friends in high school. 'Cause there weren't that many of them that were friends in high school. 'Cause the white people had white friends and the black people had black friends."

0:35:49 Blackmore says things are different now. Some of the black friends he has now are foreign-born, like his friend from Dominica who helps his wife do garden work.

"It's a weird country we live in but as far as whether segregation had anything to do with the outcome, I don't think it did. I think that's just - we're all here and we're trying to get along and some of us do and some of us don't. Don't think it has anything to do with what school the black kids or the white kids are going to because there's too many other colors in the mix now that it doesn't really matter."

Marva Jo Brown – Douglass High School Class of 1956

Marva Jo Brown remembers growing up in Columbia as a feisty, mischievous child who would raise such a ruckus in the home that her mother sent her out onto their property on Highway 40 (now Business Loop 70) to help her father tend the pigs and chickens. She was also one of the few girls who ran around with the boys, trekking deep into the woods to pick blackberries or catching crawdads down by the creek.

She would also frequently mouth off at teachers at Douglass when she was younger who challenged her verbally or spanked her sisters.

Tales of cheekiness aside, Brown says the two teachers from Douglass who stand out in her mind are Mrs. Ruth D. Wiggins and Ms. Emma Mae Turner. Brown describes Mrs. Wiggins, the English teacher that everyone adored, as “strict but helpful. She wanted you to learn. She had a desire for you to know. She was well-educated and she wanted to impart that to you. You knew that you knew what you knew when you left her room.”

In contrast, Turner, who most students describe as “one who didn’t take nothing off nobody,” was forceful yet knowledgeable. “She always reminded me of a man in front of a class teaching you. You will learn and you will do this. She wasn't afraid to call you out – like, when she told me I didn't act like a ‘damn Brown’ in front of the whole class. But, you knew she had your interests at heart.”

Conversations about the Supreme Court’s 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling abounded in her household. From an early age, Brown’s parents made all of their children become members of the NAACP so that they would be aware of the realities of segregation. Brown says her parents were excited about the prospect of a better education for their children but had concerns about if Hickman would be better for them. In the end, she was the only one of her siblings to transfer to Hickman that fall.

In addition to being closer to home, Brown’s mother thought Hickman would help her daughter focus. She told her, “You will be forced not to be with friends and you will be forced to learn. Even though I think you've done a great job at Douglass, I think this will help you. How do you feel about that?”

"I thought, I really don't want to go but if that's what you say I need to do, that's what I will have to do," Brown says. “So, that's how I went to Hickman.”

Reality of the isolation of her situation set in when she started at Hickman her sophomore year.

“In a sea of white faces, there were five black kids. It was two in each grade, except for in the sophomore class, which I was in. It was just me. And although I knew some of the white girls – my mom worked for some of'em ... [and] by me being a counselor at camp, I'd been around some of the other kids and knew them – it wasn't the same as knowing them and being friends with them.”

Brown says she suffered small indignities as one of the few first blacks at Hickman but she also believes that being there made her study harder and focus on her education. Her mother’s mission was accomplished.

**Audio Log of interview with Marva Jo Brown
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project**

Track 1 (38:45)

INTRO – 0:00 – 0:20

Name: Marva Jo Brown

Date of birth: June 3, 1940

Birthplace: Columbia, Missouri. Brown was born in the house her grandmother lived in, on Highway 40, across from Hickman High School. Her parents were living with the grandmother because they hadn't built their home yet.

A midwife was present.

Parents' names: Madge and Sherman Brown

Parent's occupation: mother – homemaker and housecleaning for one or two people in the community; father – was a (supervisor of) janitors at Stephens College for 47 years. He'd worked as a milkman and janitor at the Missouri bookstore but ended up working most of his years as a janitor at Stephens.

Sibling(s): 6 sisters, 2 brothers – Barbara, Shirley, Elaine, Sandra, Nathalyn, Janice, Danny (Daniel) and Sherman Jr. Marva was number three. All were born in Columbia. There was actually 10 children but one died when he was 4 days old.

0:02:38 Brown went to Douglass from grades one through 10. For grades 11 and 12, she went to Hickman.

0:03:02 After graduating from Hickman, Brown worked at Hartsdale's clothing store. She went to LPN school and worked at the University of Missouri Medical Center. She worked there for 10 years, then moved to Milwaukee and worked at several hospitals. She spent most of her time with the county hospital. Brown obtained her BSN from the University of Wisconsin in 1979 and worked there as a nurse.

0:04:04 Brown went to Senegal and France to visit her niece.

- 0:04:57 Brown never married but had a significant other for about 30 years. She met Ennis Smith in Milwaukee. She had 10 children – seven of her own and three adopted children (including three sets of twins). Her biological children are Anthony, Deric, Michael, Kalisa, Gregory, Marcus, Monica. The adopted children are Shanell, Elijah and Trashima. Two of her biological children were with Ennis Smith. The others were born in Columbia.
- The adopted children were from a lady who used to come to her house a lot. When she was losing custody of her kids, Brown stepped in and helped keep them together.
- 0:07:52 Brown comes from a large family where she says her parents were always together and of one mind. She says it felt like they lived in the country, off on Highway 40 (now Business Loop 70, near where the Joe Machens dealership currently is), because her parents were the first people to build a house there. They had cows, pigs, dogs, cats, rabbits and gardens.
- There was not a playground in the area and her mom renovated the vacant lot next to their house into a community playground. They had big events there during the year.
- It was a neighborhood that worked together. There were a lot of relatives in the area. They were known as "the highway gang." They played ball against the kids from cemetery hill at Douglass Park.
- 0:10:00 When she was younger their didn't have indoor plumbing - outside water and toilets. They had coal stoves, so the kids had to come home from school and do household chores and were expected to get their things ready for school the next day. Kids had to be on the porch by sundown.
- 0:10:28 Kids couldn't play in the front yard but had to keep it to the back yard. They wore the grass out. Since the boys were the last two, their dad played ball in the house with the girls and they broke a lot of lights.
- Neighbors knew each other, all played together and all walked to school together. "For me, it always felt like the people who lived close to the school were really rich folks. In later years, I found out they felt the people across the highway were the rich people." [Laughs]
- 0:11:29 They were a very close-knit family. Brown's parents believed that they should be involved in organizations. All of the girls were Campfire

Girls/Bluebird Girls and went to camp every summer. They had to belong to the NAACP. They had to volunteer.

"Because there were so many girls in the family, there was always a dad-daughter dinner for Campfire Girls and we each had an adopted dad and my dad was Reverend Coleman. And got to know him and his wife very well, you know, we did things together. But you had to be a part of something. You couldn't just sit around and do nothing 'cause there was no TV to watch every day, until later. And then when we did get a TV, you only had certain hours you could watch it."

Kids spent time outside, making up games.

0:12:46 Brown remembers there were not a lot of girls in the neighborhood initially, so she was one of two who would go into the woods with four boys to pick blackberries and dewberries. They'd go to her grandmother's house and pick apples. They'd go to the creek and catch crawdads.

There was a man who had a cornfield who didn't live in the area. The kids would steal his corn and sell it to buy Kool Aid. Then, they'd go build a fire and cook all of their food.

They were caught and the man told their parents. Brown says he wasn't really too mad about it.

0:13:53 They had baseball teams and would create toys from things that were laying around - like using tin cans and sticks to make stilts or telephones. Marbles and jacks were big games. Everyone played together.

0:14:25 There was an outdoor movie theater that they didn't have money to visit. They would sit in their cars from across the street and watch the movies from the outside. Sometimes the boys would put the girls in the trunk and they would all get into the theater that way.

0:15:08 A group of kids would walk from the highway to Douglass school (kind of like the walking school bus). There was no bus. No matter how cold it was, kids didn't miss school a lot.

0:15:30 The drive-in was on Business Loop around where Parkade is now. There were a couple of them in Columbia but this is the one she and her friends went to because it was near their home.

- 0:15:54 They would sell the corn they stole to people in the neighborhood, not to a shop. They would eat their meal by the fire - crawdads, corn, Kool Aid and fried apples.
- 0:16:17 The corn field was owned by Merle Slater. "Everybody was afraid of him because he acted so mean but he really wasn't."
- 0:16:48 Brown's neighborhood was integrated. The Sapps, Perkins and someone the kids called "Want-a-ride" (Herbert, maybe?) whose wife's name was Ollie. She jokes that they thought he was always riding around trying to pick up kids. The black families were the Thompsons, the Browns, Matthews, Banks, Logans, Hattons and Jones.
- 0:17:49 "Practically, we had everything we needed right within our neighborhood."
- They had a church in the neighborhood. There was also a McDonald's that "has been there forever," a Dairy Queen and Hillcrest Dairy near the intersection of Providence and Business Loop. There were shops along the highway as well, including the Grand Avenue Grocery let people run a tab during the month. Anybody could go into these stores to shop. Blacks couldn't go in and sit down but they could order.
- She doesn't think the Dairy Queen had seats where customers could sit down, though.
- 0:19:35 Brown describes the playground that her mother organized, which would've been where Joe Machens repair shop currently sits.
- "She thought that we should have something organized that we could do and that it would pull the community together even more."
- The land belonged to one of her mother's relatives and she asked to use it. They raised money for the playground through crafts and baked goods. Brown isn't sure if the city gave them additional funds for the equipment. There were swings, picnics, a carnival every year, the baseball teams would play there. People started pitching in to keep the park up.
- 0:21:07 "This is where my sisters and I used to meet up because when we left home together, we had to come back together. And if one got there before the other one - it was like a little seat that they had built between two trees right between the corner of Dakota and the street was Iowa at the time -

and we'd just sit there until we all met up together to come home. [Laughs] Because if we came home without each other it was a big, big issue because when you leave together you have to come back together."

Brown remembers having a bad headache one time and thinking that it would be okay to come home first (by herself). When she got home, her mom asked, "Where are your sisters?" Her sisters stayed at the skating rink. My mom said, "Oh, so you come home by yourself and they stayed? That's unacceptable."

They all got in trouble. Either she should've stayed or they all should've left.

0:22:12 If you asked mom to go somewhere, she would ask, "What did your dad say?" If you asked dad, he'd ask, "What did your mom say?" They had to be on the same page before the kids could go anywhere.

0:22:27 There were movies closer to Douglass School. They could go to the white theaters but they had to sit in the balcony. When they opened one for the blacks, called Francis Theater, it was in the community.

Brown rarely went to the movies, though, because she loved reading. She'd spend her free time reading unless she saw someone on the playground. She couldn't skate so she didn't do that either. She went just to hang out.

The kids that hung out with one another looked out for one another. The boys looked out for the girls. There wasn't a lot of violence or anything like that.

0:24:04 Parents during those days talked to each other. If you got in trouble with someone down the street, your parents knew it by the time you got home - even though the phone system wasn't that good. "If that sister down the street spanked your butt, you got a spanking when you got home."

Kids didn't talk back to adults or look people directly in the eye but Brown would get in trouble for both of those things.

0:25:00 Brown talks about chores - bringing coal in the house, getting wood, fanning the fire to keep it from going out at night, making sure your clothes were clean - and how it gave them a sense of responsibility. "It

made you understand what life was all about. If my father gave you a nickel, you better figure out what you were going to do with that nickel.

Brown tells the story of how she started working in a lady's house at age 13 for 2 hours a week, for 25 cents an hour. She had 50 cents - a nickel for lunch, a nickel for play, a nickel for the house. He taught them to budget and to not waste it.

0:26:15 Brown talks about the Diner on Providence Road where her classmates did the first sit-in. She didn't think segregation was bad even though there were limitations. She says it didn't really affect her lifestyle until the 60s hit and Martin Luther King became a public figure.

0:27:16 She went to camp every year and ended going back as a counselor. The camp was in McBaine at the apple orchard. It would flood but they had to stay. The five tents were 150 steps up. The camp was segregated but they always had white counselors. When Brown got to be counselor (around 9th or 10th grade), she was there when the white kids were there as well.

"It was a different feel, a different time. I just can't say enough about camp helped mature us. You're away from home for a whole week, you don't have your parents there - they could write you but not come see you. They dropped you off and they came back on a Sunday to pick you up. And I just remember some of the girls that went to Douglass - they were in high school when I started grade school - and I always thought they were so pretty. And they were, like, our counselors while we were there."

Brown had Georgia Porter, a mild-mannered girl, for a counselor. She shares a story of how they had white shorts and when it rained, she would slide from the top to the bottom. She would just say, "I'm calling your mom, I'm calling your mom. Because now you have to find some way of cleaning your shorts."

0:29:34 Girls didn't wear pants in those days. Women had to wear dresses. It took a while to grow on the community. Women also couldn't go into the billiard halls.

"The first time I put on a pair of pants I felt so out of place!" [Laughs]

0:31:05 The Campfire Girls organization was over the camps. Mrs. Peggy Rhynsburger and Mrs. Brooks were actively involved with putting on the camps.

The camps were full of activities during the week away. Brown talks about swinging out over the river on a rope, even though she didn't know how to swim. "Now I look back and see how dangerous that was and think about that."

The first time she went she was lonely and afraid. She started going with her sisters. Campfires went from Bluebirds to Campfire to Horizon girls and as her sisters grew older she couldn't go to camp when they did. She'd go with her younger sisters and feel responsible for their safety.

Brown stayed for a month when she was a counselor. The cook was one of her mom's friends and a cousin.

0:33:08 Brown fast-forwards a bit and tells about being upset when she'd just started the university and was missing home. As she was crying in the bathroom, a lady asked her was wrong. As they talked about her homesickness, the lady reveals that she's Miss Willa Mae, the woman she worked with at the camp.

"The bonds that you formed when you were young, these people stayed in your life. It wasn't like today, I can't tell you anything because now you're older. No, we knew you when you were in diapers and we're continue to tell you right from wrong."

0:34:58 The movies that they went to were mostly dramas. Brown remembers seeing "The Ten Commandments" but that came out a little later. Her dad took them to see "Lassie." She also saw "Gone with the Wind" in the theater.

0:35:52 My father use to, he worked, not only was he the janitor at Stephens but his after-hour work was he was the doorman for all of their plays, all their teas and stuff. We always got invitations to go there.

And I'd think, "How dull this is and try to sleep. And he'd just walk by like he was really walking to take somebody and he'd thump you on the head. And when we came home he would tell us how important it was for us to stay away and see what most children didn't get to see at that age. That's where I first saw "The King and I" live drama."

The school would always have the international teas and Brown loved seeing what happened in different countries. At that time, Stephens was a

prestigious college and girls' school. People came from all over to attend the school.

"We got a lot of our clothes from there 'cause when they knew their parents was coming, they would give all their clothes away. I'm thinking, 'We're wearing second-hand clothes' and kids at the school was thinking, 'oh, you dressin' fine.' We really did get a lot of hand-me-downs. And they went from the oldest ones who could fit and it would go down to the rest of them 'til the clothes were worn out."

0:37:25 The international tea happened once a year. Students from different countries would bring bits of their culture to display and put on a fashion show. They'd have their food, clothing and information about their way of life.

"Everything Stephens had, even during the segregated era, my father could bring us and we would go. And, I thought, 'No other kids do these kind of things, why are we doing this?'" but today I appreciate it so much."

Track 2 (38:51)

0:00:03 Brown was young - just out of grade school - when she started going to the international teas.

"Even though my parents only went to high school and my grandparents probably went to fourth, fifth grade, they believed in education. And, probably, I was their worst child where education was concerned because I thought school was a place for me to play. And, when I'd go to school, I did learn because the teachers were going to - "You will learn" - and I, um, I would just clown a lot."

Brown recalls going out to the trees on the Douglass grounds and breaking off a limb to take in as a switch for a first grade teacher. She told the teacher, "I'm just going to whip you because you whipped my sister and that will not work." She went to the office for that. "I was like a little devil," she says.

0:01:20 Because Brown's birthday came late in the year, her parents were going to make her wait to start first grade. She cried so much, they decided to let her go ahead and start. There were too many kids in the first grade class, so they had to join a first-B class with a second grade class. Brown says she learned more second grade work than first that year and would often

blurt out the answers to the second grade work assignments when she was supposed to be focusing on her grade level's work.

"I remember the teacher says, 'If you get out of your seat one more time I'm going to glue you to the seat and I'm gonna put a clothespin on your mouth.' And I just stood right up and said, 'And my mom will be very upset that you got paste and glue on my clothes and you will not put that on my mouth.'" [Laughs]

Brown remembers being obnoxious to the teachers.

Mrs. Strahan (2nd grade) had a brother (who was probably mentally disabled) that everyone was afraid of. When she'd leave the class, she'd tell them that her brother may be passing the window. At this time, Brown would fight anything and anybody, so she would fight the little first-graders. The teacher ended up lifting her up and putting her in a tall wastebasket.

"What people would call cruel now, it was a lesson for me. This is how babies feel when you touch them. You don't put your hands on other people. Now you're standing in this wastebasket, you can't do anything because if you try to move, it will fall and you will fall with it. So, how do you think they feel? It taught me a good lesson."

- 0:04:00 Brown's mom was president of the P.T.A. and Brown would tell the teachers who whipped her sisters that her mom says, "Men do not whip girls and she does not like it and don't you ever do that again." The teacher stopped speaking to her mother and she didn't know why. He never asked her. Eventually, she had to go to the principal's office.
- 0:05:07 Brown always looked up to the older girls. She got to work in the cafeteria with them and hoped to one day be smart and pretty like they were. In those days, Brown's hair was always a bit unruly and she frequently tore her dresses.
- 0:06:13 "I loved going to Douglass. I loved it because at the time they were thinking that we're all alike here but just loved it because of the care and the concern that the teachers had and the education and how they made you respect yourself and respect what was going on in your building."
- 0:06:41 Brown says that at Douglass, Mrs. Wiggins diagrammed sentences every day, teaching poetry and giving words of wisdom.

"Only one teacher told me that I didn't act like a Brown, I acted like something out of nowhere and I would say, 'And you don't act like a teacher because I went in the classroom next to you and I can hear your big mouth.' And, so, of course, I was put out of the classroom for the afternoon." The teacher was Emma Mae Turner.

Brown says that Turner was right on target and the only teacher to ever give her an 'F'.

Brown skipped 5th grade. She said the kids in 5th grade felt like the four students who skipped bypassed them and the kids in 6th grade considered them "dumb babies." She thinks she also missed out on some fundamentals of math - fractions, specifically - that she needed. She was in 6th grade before she learned how to tell time.

0:09:41 Brown's house had four rooms - living room, kitchen and two bedrooms. Her parents later built on two additional bedrooms. It was cleaned on Sundays (they had Sunday bedspreads and weekly bedspreads). There was a coal stove before going to propane. There was a basement that Brown was afraid to go into that held the freezer and storage area.

"When I was watching them dig I was thinking, you only go six feet for a grave. This is really scary. We're going to hit the devil pretty soon!"
[Laughs]

The fear of the basement never went away.

0:11:15 The house was always neat. Brown says you knew when someone was coming over because her father would move stuff around. Otherwise, he didn't really do a lot of housework. "He was king of the household because there were no boys."

The living room was only for company, so you didn't go into it. The kids were four to a bedroom. When the family added on rooms, there were only two twin beds in those. They went to the oldest kids.

There were outdoor toilets but around the time that the propane tanks came around, they got indoor plumbing.

- 0:12:20 Brown remembers having to take the slop jar out as a chore. It was a little pail inside that the family used as a toilet so they didn't have to go out at night. In the morning, it had to be emptied.
- 0:12:52 They all went to church together (Friendship Baptist). It wasn't mandatory - it was just what you knew you were going to do. They had basket dinners where families would bring a basket full of food and people could either choose who to eat with or everyone would share all that was in their basket with everyone else.
- 0:13:50 Brown describes the path to the living room where visitors would sit. It was spotless. If someone came for dinner, the adults ate, then the kids ate, and the kids would have to clean up. While she resented the fact that guests ate first and kids got "the scraps," her father reassured her that they would never go without.
- 0:15:20 Brown hated the killing of the pigs - or any work, really. She loved milking cows. Because she frequently caused chaos in the house, her mom would tell her to go help her father out in the field. She learned to milk the cows, feed the pigs and run the fields in gum boots. She'd go out to the garden, supposedly to bring in food, but would sit out there and eat what she wanted, then bring in what was left.
- 0:15:55 Brown says family problems were so minute that her parents would work them out in the background, then tell the kids altogether what they were going to do and how it was going to work.
- 0:16:10 Brown remembers buying a TV on credit while living at home with two kids. She thought she was working, so she can do this for her dad and mom for Christmas. Her father made her take it back to the store.
- He said, "If you can't afford to buy it, then don't buy it - especially as a Christmas present. The TV we have works and if you wanted to buy us a TV you should've put it on layaway and paid it. That way, if you can't afford it, you can get your money back."
- This was a big lesson for her.
- 0:17:21 The milkman, ice man and watermelon man came through the neighborhood. Brown describes how the icebox worked.

- 0:17:40 When her father killed animals, it was done in the yard. Everything was used. They made balls out of the bladder. There was a shed where they salted the meat down and hung it in the smokehouse. The rest went into the freezer down on Broadway where families bought storage.
- They canned every year. (Brown didn't learn how to can.) They grew all kinds of vegetables in the garden: cabbage, greens, tomatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, corn, carrots, green beans, peas and potatoes. It was a huge garden.
- They would pick blackberries, dewberries and gooseberries from the fields. Some had to be cooked and put in jars but some was cold-packed. Some lids had to be sealed with wax, some lids just screwed on. It was an all day process.
- They also made a kind of salsa with ground green tomatoes and hot peppers.
- 0:21:00 These things were all stored in the basement. If there were too many watermelons, they'd roll them under the beds.
- The store was for sugar, salt and pepper. She loved the cream from the top of the milk, straight from the cow.
- Brown's father had an old Ford that he cut the back off of. You had to crank the truck to get it to start. The kids all thought it was fun to ride in it.
- 0:23:18 Brown describes the kitchen. She describes the coal-stove and oven, the icebox, kitchen table and sink. There was no in-coming water. There was a pump outside where you fetched water and brought it in to wash dishes or take baths. There was one window that looked out over the yard.
- The first refrigerator came from a food store. Brown says she signed her parents up for it. When they won, she was scared to say that she'd done it because she forged their name.
- "The kitchen was the hub of the household. Honest to goodness. Everybody came there. It was always food on the stove. My mom and dad were always so upset if you didn't eat something when you came, if it was just a piece of cornbread. Eat something! Otherwise it was an insult."

There was always enough food and her mother always cooked, no matter how hot it was. There was no air conditioning. After you ate, you sat outside and fanned.

0:26:20 There was always someone else living with them. Her mother's mom, her grandmother, a cousin and her brother lived with them. They would let hitchhikers stay with them. If they didn't have space, they took strangers to the church to stay. The church doors were always unlocked, Brown says.

"The kitchen was life." Brown explains that when her father died and her mother started going downhill, people would comment on their being no life in the house. "The food was there but the conversation was never the conversation."

0:27:59 Meals were pretty heavy. A typical meal consisted of things like navy beans, ham hocks and cornbread. There was always a vegetable, some kind of meat, bread and something to drink. They always had steaks, pork chops, beef, etc., but no one besides Brown's father ate a lot of meat.

They raised chickens and rabbits, had pigs and cows. Brown's father was an avid hunter. There was always plenty of meat and wild food. He killed and her mother would clean. They ate fish sparingly because no one in her family fished. People would come around selling catfish, which is where they would get their supply. Brown says fish and spaghetti with a salad and cornbread was a typical meal.

Breakfast was fried potatoes, mush (cornmeal cooked with water or milk), oatmeal and okra.

"Meals were always good and whatever's on your plate, you eat it."

0:31:20 Brown was such a hellraiser that she was often sent out of the kitchen. She hated cooking then and hates it now, so she never learned. She says that when she had to prepare meals for her father, she would go to Kentucky Fried Chicken and put it in a pan like she'd cooked it herself.

0:32:02 You didn't have dessert for every meal. Her mother's peach cobbler was the best. Food was always made from scratch, including the desserts.

The weekend breakfast was biscuits, fried potatoes and a piece of ham. During the week, they had mush or oatmeal.

0:32:51 The Sunday meal was always done before you went to church and consisted of either ham, chicken or a roast, with potatoes or rice. There were always vegetables. After the meal, everyone would go out and relax either in the living room or out back under the trees.

She talks about aggravating her uncle (Herb Smith), who had a knot on his head that the kids would play with when he fell asleep.

0:34:33 There was a skating rink on Park Avenue on the opposite side of Douglass, where kids would go to roller skate.

0:35:36 Brown clarifies the situation with the adopted fathers who would step in for the Campfire Girls Dad-Daughter dinners.

After the dinners, they would sell candy (like the Girl Scouts do with cookies).

0:36:47 Brown gives examples of the types of games the kids in the neighborhood would make up - talking on cans, card games, yard games, roll down hills in tires, hopscotch, running games.

They would mix chicken poop with mud and pretend they were selling sandwiches at their makeshift stores. They always played in the mud in the back yard (where there was no grass).

"You could not sit in the front yard. You couldn't sit on the porch in the front yard. That was for company to do."

"If you got flowers and grass growing, by the time we finished, it was gone." They had to get the broom and sweep the yard.

Track 3 (37:44)

0:00:03 The back yard was big. There was a mulberry tree and water pump near the house. There was a pear tree on one side and at the bottom of the incline there was a shed, smokehouse and outhouse. A gate divided the upper part of the yard from the lower part. They also had a barn on the property. The garden was behind the smokehouse.

0:01:37 All the kids in the neighborhood came to the house. They also learned how to drive on her dad's truck. If a kid in the neighborhood had money to put

gas in the truck, they could learn to drive on it. Her father would let them go up and down the hill.

0:02:24 "It was a community right there. People came to my mom and dad and told them about their problems that their parents didn't know about. And they would never say anything, it was the, this is a place for you can come and unburden yourself, and if that helps, that helps."

They'd sit out in the yard at night eating watermelon and see how far they could spit seeds.

0:03:15 Brown describes the water pump, which was just a pole in the ground that had a handle on it. They would heat the water on the stove for washing dishes or to fill galvanized tubs for baths. The youngest would go in first, then the next, then the next. She would always fight to take a bath.

0:04:10 The family used a washing board and a tub to wash clothes. They eventually got a wringer type washer. The clothes would hang on the line year-round. Like most, Brown says the clothes smelled better back then. Brown says that she remembers when her parents got a real washer and dryer. She didn't think anything of it - "it was just signs of the times."

She also remembers when margarine came out and it was white. No one wanted to eat it. Then they started selling powder to put in it to make it yellow. People were still afraid to eat it, she says.

0:06:08 Brown clarifies her parents' mandatory NAACP membership rule. "Because my parents said you need to be a part of that because it's a very vital part of your life. And, you'll get to know how life really is with segregation and the things that you can do to help. So, they made sure that we had memberships in it. I don't know if we went to all the meetings. I know we may have went to one or two a year but we had to be a member."

She thinks Reverend Cohen actually bought her membership (she talks about this around the 0:05:30 mark).

They were quite young when this started. (Possibly junior high)

0:07:40 Brown would get up at 5am because they cleaned the KFRU radio station as a family. When they came back home, they had to tend to the animals - make sure the cows were out and milked, the animals were fed. They walked from the highway to Douglass in groups for school. After school,

they had more chores, homework and get ready for school the next day. She says they were in bed by 8:30 or 9pm.

0:08:43 After-school chores were work in the house - doing dishes, cleaning, cooking, bringing in coal or wood, banking the stove, feeding the animals. Each child had an assignment for the week. Mother decided who did what chores in a given week.

"If you didn't get'em done then everybody would do them together. You had to help anyway."

Mom and dad plus two kids would clean KFRU in the mornings. As you got older, the next two would join the cleaning team.

0:10:35 Brown describes the schedule at Douglass when she was in high school. School started with a prayer, a song and Pledge of Allegiance. Homeroom was first period. Students went to their first three classes, then to one of the staggered lunch periods. They went through their afternoon classes and were finished.

Brown doesn't remember going on field trips. They had gym and study hall, which Brown says was a "waste of time for me because I would just pick at the teacher." She was put out of the class often.

0:12:10 Brown describes the classrooms: blackboards in the front and on the side, table chairs for students to sit and do their writing. There was some silent work and some oral work, especially in Mrs. Wiggins' class (poetry reciting, memorization, diagramming sentences). Kids would go to the board to solve problems.

0:13:28 In the lab and art room, there was equipment. They actually got books to take home and do work. She's not sure where the books came from.

0:14:21 Mrs. Williams was her homeroom teacher. "Not only was she your teacher in the classroom, she was your teacher when she saw you in the street or wherever she saw you. She would correct you and start you in the right way." Brown describes Williams as "motherly" and "boring." Williams taught geography. "I never learned anything. I learned the capital of the states and that's it."

Mr. Allen - she says he allowed too much playing in his classroom.

Mr. Logan, Art – was really involved with his work. Brown didn't draw well, so she didn't have much to say about him.

Ms. Turner, math, health and physical education - Brown had her a lot. She describes Turner as "forceful." Brown describes her classes with Turner as "rowdy sometimes." "She was knowledgeable. That's what I liked about her. She knew her subject very well, even though I never learned that. But she was very forceful in what she wanted you to learn. She always reminded me of a man in front of a class teaching you. You will learn and you will do this and you will - like, she wasn't afraid to call you out. It's like, when she told me I didn't act like a 'damn Brown,' I mean, in front of the whole class, she would say that. But, you knew she had your interests at heart."

Mrs. Wiggins, English - was "strict but helpful." "She wanted you to learn. She had a desire for you to know. She was well-educated and she wanted to impart that to you." Wiggins used books and tried to get students to use your brain. "You knew that you knew what you knew when you left her room." "Her teaching style was not one of force but one of ease that made you feel very comfortable in her room and to feel like you were learning something that you really wanted to know. It wasn't exciting for me but it wasn't boring either."

- 0:18:57 Brown talks about her interaction with teachers outside of school. Ms. Williams was the only one because her girlfriend - who lived with her older sister, played loud music and drank alcohol - lived across the street from Mrs. Williams. Brown says she never drank while visiting this friend but her mother didn't know she was spending time there. Williams confronted her and let her know she was going to tell on her and spank her when she came to school. Brown believed her because Williams was the only teacher at Douglass who did give her a spanking "for being loud and rowdy in another classroom" and she didn't want to get in trouble or be embarrassed in front of the classroom.
- 0:20:03 Brown says Williams gave the entire class a spanking with a board paddle one day for being rowdy in another Math teacher's class. Brown says she laughed at Williams because her mother made her flour sack skirts that were real full and every time Williams would hit it would wrap around the paddle. Brown had to stay after school.
- 0:21:04 Brown's parents' relationship with the teachers was very good. Her mother was president of the P.T.A. They were very present, very vocal and very

involved. Dad wasn't as active in the school because he worked a lot but he was well informed.

At football and basketball games, the parents always sold things in the cafeteria.

0:21:56 Brown wasn't involved in any extra-curricular activities. Her sisters were involved in school clubs but she wasn't.

0:22:47 Gym class: they did baseball, basketball, health, strength testing. The class was scheduled at different parts of the day for different students. She wore long shorts and a top. Each student purchased their own gym clothes.

She thinks the administrators just gave students their schedule.

She wore dresses all the way through school. Some girls wore tennis shoes, some wore brown and white oxfords or penny loafers. The older girls wore makeup but Brown never wore makeup until she went to Hickman.

0:24:55 Brown ate in the cafeteria for lunch. Sometimes they would go to the chili place on 5th Street and Mr. Paul Britt had a restaurant. Miss Jenny had a restaurant and a little store across the street from the school that they would go to as well.

Brown says they could go off campus for lunch. She had a friend (Josephine Johnson) who lived in the country, so her mom always gave her a dollar for lunch - which was a lot of money for lunch. Brown usually ate in the cafeteria but if the friend was going off-campus for lunch, Brown would get her friend to buy her something too.

"So, I'd say, 'You have to buy me some chili today or I'm gonna have to tell your mom that you don't need this dollar for lunch.'" [Laughs]

They were good friends and remain so to this day.

Odele Hayes, Josephine and Brown ran around together. They were three of the four students who were skipped from 4th to 6th grade.

0:26:43 The cafeteria served vegetables and a meat, spaghetti, macaroni & cheese - heavier foods. Brown thinks the food then was healthier than what's served today. Milk was served with lunch.

0:27:38

Brown heard about the plan to desegregate the high schools through her parents. They talked about it a lot at home, trying to decide whether the kids would go to the white school or the black school; whether all would go or one would go.

Her parents would talk this over with the kids present. Brown says to her it didn't make a difference - until the time came.

"They were excited about it. It'd be a better education but will be better for you?" Brown ended up being the only child that they moved to Hickman. (She was part of the 1954 integration process).

"I was the only one that they moved [laughs] because my mom says. 'You're closer to home. All I have to do is walk up the street and I'm in the classroom. And if your dad has a car that day, it doesn't matter. I can still get there. You will be forced not to be with friends and you will be forced to learn. Um, even though I think you've done a great job at Douglass, I think this will help you and how do you feel about that.'"

"I thought, I really don't want to go but if that's what you say I need to do, that's what I will have to do. So, that's how I went to Hickman."

0:29:44

Brown didn't notice any difference between her response to these conversations and her sisters'. "'Cause I knew that if they wanted me to go, I was gonna go whether I had an opinion or not. They would listen to that opinion and they would weigh that opinion in their decision but I would still probably go. My sisters didn't say much, I don't think."

Brown says they were sheltered from the segregation, even though they knew it existed and knew how they had to act in certain places. Her dad taking her to integrated things and being involved with the camp counselors, they were sheltered from the harshness of segregation.

"It was there and I knew it was a big decision but it wasn't until reality set in that I realized how big of a decision it really was."

Reality set in "when I started Hickman. In a sea of white faces, there were five black kids that went. It was two in each grade, except for in the sophomore class, which I was in, and it was just me. And although I knew some of the white girls - my mom worked for some of'em - and I was, you know, had been around them for a little while. And then, by me being a

counselor at camp, I'd been around some of the other kids and knew them, but it wasn't the same as knowing them and being friends with them."

- 0:32:00 There was a room called the Tri-rean room (?) where all the girls went. Brown says when she went in there, she automatically felt out of place.
- 0:32:20 In one of the classes, the students were all talking around her but she wasn't saying anything, "because who was I talking to? What was I talking about?" The teacher said, "How many of you know about KFRU radio station?" When Brown raised her hand, the teacher said something to the effect of "Just the way all this talking is going on in here is the way the radio station talks. Would you agree?" brown says she was mad and insulted by it because she felt the teacher was directing the talk at her rather than to say, "What did you hear at the radio station?."
- 0:33:06 In another class, there was talk about cashmere sweaters and, when Brown raised her hand to say she knew about them, the teacher asked how Brown knew about cashmere sweaters. "I don't know if she was being derogatory at me but why didn't she ask somebody else?"
- She'd encountered them working at Hartsdale's store where she says white women would rent clothing and never bring them back.
- 0:34:00 She says a man at the school came down the steps, saying he would spit on her. "That's where we draw the line and you will not call me out of my name either."
- Sophomores at Hickman had to wear beanies at this time (a practice that was discontinued in 1960/1961). Brown refused to wear it. "This is your tradition. This is not mine."
- When it came time to burn the beanies in a bonfire, she felt like an outsider.
- 0:34:26 She never felt part of their traditions. There were those who befriended her who remember her as a different person - one who laughed and talked. She doesn't recall that. They always call and ask her why she didn't come to the reunion. She's never attended one.
- 0:35:00 Brown did a lot of things with Douglass kids. She went to their prom but didn't go to the Hickman prom. She graduated in January because she had a baby in February, so she went to the Hickman graduation.

"It was the little things. You know, you just felt like you're in but you're not in. And, I think that people tried, especially in band, they tried to make you feel welcomed and you did a lot of things with the band. Like, I went with the band to Kansas

City, being the only black going to an all-white school and I was feeling very lonely and out. And it was something in my food (a nail) when I got it. But there's a black man who worked there and he came over to me and said, 'I think I know you. You look so familiar to me.' And he was talking to me and he said, 'Well, who are your parents?' and he said, 'Yes.' And, uh, I know who you are."

Brown doesn't know if her parents called him because they knew people in Kansas City but it made her feel good because there was someone in the hotel who knew her.

0:36:39 Brown said she went to the zoo with the school and a monkey spit on one of the kids because they kept picking at him. And, he said, "Ain't that just like a nigger." Brown let him know he'd overstepped his boundaries but when she looked around, there was nothing but white people.

0:36:55 She says she can't say they mistreated her and she can't say she didn't learn. She did, however, have to study harder. Her parent's mission in sending her there was accomplished. They knew she wasn't doing the work but still getting good grades. Was it because she really understood her work or was it because the teachers knew her parents?

"I guess that's one of the reasons that they did send me is that they knew I would have to buckle down and really become - and I did."

Track 4 (37:35)

0:00:06 Brown describes going into Hickman on that first day. Douglass was much smaller with fewer students. She describes the school as a much larger building with a "sea of white faces." She didn't get to see the other four girls who were part of that first integrating class during the day.

Figuring out how to get to her classroom was a chore. Who do I ask? She says someone must've helped her, she just doesn't remember. After the first year, it wasn't as bad because there were more kids who transferred and she knew people on a first-name basis.

- 0:01:15 In her biology class, they had to dissect a worm. "I knew the stuff and knew how to write the stuff down but I just could not touch that worm inside and out. And Wayne Reynolds walked over to me and said, 'If you do the writing, I'll do the dissecting and together we'll do our project.'"
- 0:01:50 Brown talks about vocal choir, where students recited poems. This opened up more relationships to her.
- 0:02:13 "By graduation time, I was okay."
- 0:02:26 Brown doesn't recall the community's response about her transferring voluntarily to Hickman. The kids she went to school with continued to include her in activities. Josephine and Odele were still going there.
- "At their graduation I felt a little, I don't know, a little sad that I wasn't there graduating with them." Thirteen or 14 of her peers graduated together.
- At Hickman, "I felt like there was a thousand kids in one classroom. In one grade level. Even though it wasn't that many - probably just a thousand kids in the whole school but versus going to Douglass and thinking that Douglass went from kindergarten to twelfth grade, it probably wasn't a thousand kids in there."
- 0:03:58 "And to look at integration now, I just think that, um, for a lot of reasons it was good and it's bad. Good because I think our kids actually get books - well, not actually get the same books, but they don't get the second-hand books that we were getting. Um, that they are, the education is still not all quality but it's better than it was and that the schools are integrated but it has left a void in the community - you don't know your neighbors, you don't go to school with your friends, you don't do the same things."
- 0:04:41 Brown shares about a fellow nurse friend's children were going to a prestigious white school in Milwaukee who didn't want to come home to the inner city. He wanted to go with his friends.
- "I think that they see what the Caucasians have versus what we have - what we could have - if we had the same, um, chances that they have."
- She talks about the prejudice her children experienced at Parkade, years later.

- 0:07:15 Brown tells the story of one of her daughters going on a field trip to Stephens College and pointing to a picture hanging on the wall, saying, "That's my grandfather's picture." She was told she was lying.
- When the same adopted daughter told her teachers that her grandmother's been to Africa during an international program, they told her that she was lying. Brown went to the school to confront the teachers.
- 0:08:09 The jump in audio is a result of my recorder's storage being full.
- 0:08:23 Brown talks about her sister being the only one who knew about her pregnancy during her senior year. She didn't tell anyone.
- 0:08:38 Brown was due in February, so she attended Hickman the first semester of her senior year. She still did everything as per normal, so no one suspected anything. She still jumped over fences, climbed trees, rolled down hills in tires, etc.
- After she left Hickman in January, she stayed at home and babysat her sister's kids. After she had the baby, she worked at Hartsdale's for a while. Then she went to the university as a CNA (nurses' aide).
- 0:10:15 A woman who worked at the hospital knew her father and told her what she'd really like to be is a nurse. Brown said, "Never!" She convinced Brown to try it for a couple week and if she didn't like it, they'd try something else.
- The father was at Douglass and graduated from there. He went on to go to college in Louisiana for a couple years, then quit. His mother helped Brown with the baby but she was always pretty independent. She would criticize the things the baby's father's mother would bring by. Now, she chalks it up to being "young and stupid."
- 0:12:03 Brown says that in the years just after desegregation of schools, people would try to exercise their freedoms, only to figure out that those things were still forbidden. The stigma of racism remained. After a few years, black people started demanding to try things - "Let me try this on in your store. I have the right to do that. I should be able to return these clothing because I have the right to do that."

- 0:13:05 Brown feels that people started feeling that black businesses were inadequate. They saw the white business and thought black businesses weren't where they ought to be. People still supported them, though.
- 0:13:27 The black community began to split and families began to split up. It became a competition between the have's and the have not's.
- "We don't know each other anymore. In some ways it was good because you learned from any person that is different from you, you will learn something. And I think we've learned and we've lost."
- 0:14:36 Blacks have learned how to get into business, resourcefulness, to fight for equal education.
- Brown tells the story of a pastor in the area wanting to open a church who didn't have the finances to do so. He was asking for assistance from the community. Brown says one organization's board president suggested that it might not be a bad idea to not support the venture because they can swoop in and take over when they fail to make payments. Sabotage.
- "Now, those are the kind of things because we do sit inside and sometimes they really consider us as a little bit less smart than they are that you get this piece of information that you never have gotten before."
- Blacks can now sit on boards and go places where you couldn't before. The community feeling is gone. The relationships aren't as close. Most of the teachers are all white in schools. There's no "I see myself there as a teacher" feeling. She says that a lot of the black community's kids are exposed to a white world with few successful blacks in it.
- "I think it has harmed and it has helped."
- 0:18:36 Brown talks about Douglass today. She tried to talk her daughter out of going to Douglass when she got pregnant because she thought it was a substandard school. Brown went to the school, toured it, talked with the principal and was impressed with the principal (Dr. Neville).
- 0:21:52 Brown feels the education she received at Douglass was good and if she'd applied herself, she would've gotten more out of it.
- "When they taught the classes they taught us. They didn't teach at us but they taught us what we ought to know."

When she went to Hickman, she didn't feel that. She thinks it might be because she was an ice breaker.

I felt like that every teacher was teaching from their viewpoint and not from mine.

"You go in the office and you say, um, "I really think that I might want to go to college," there's no need in you doing that because, you know, all you're going to be able to do is use a broom and sweep a floor or you can be a nurse's aide but you can't be a nurse."

Brown says she received this feedback herself, especially after she was pregnant as a high school senior. Brown thinks a lot of kids still get these responses.

0:23:12 "And probably, had I stayed in Columbia, I would've been satisfied being an LPN. I probably would never have gone to university. But when I went to Wisconsin, I was far more advanced in my practice than the nurses - the RNs - were in the hospitals that I worked in. And I felt like I'm doing the work, or I have the knowledge to do the work but I'm not allowed to do the work. So, what is it for me to do?"

After she had her last set of twins, a woman who was a home health care counselor helped her get into the LPN program. It was a program for people who'd been out of school for a while. She had an excellent counselor who helped her apply for financial aid and walked her to all of her classes.

Although she felt lonely at the school, she met a few older women and formed the Future Black Nurses association. Before them, only two blacks had graduated from the nursing school in 10 years. The organization is still going.

She says that some people in Columbia don't believe she's a nurse.

0:26:31 "But I find Columbia - the blacks in Columbia - in a lot of ways are stagnant because they feel like there's no hope and no help."

Brown wants the senior citizens in Columbia to mentor the youth.

0:27:16 The influence of the transfer to Hickman on Brown's life:

I think it taught me that everybody has something to offer you in that, you play the game no matter where you are. And then, while you're playing the game, you're actually learning. And I think that it helped me to realize that I needed to do the best that I can do no matter where I was. And, so, I think it has influenced me to say, and my parents too - I can't leave them out because they were always pushing - is to say, 'I don't want to be just a nurse's aide,' which is nothing wrong but that's not where I want to be. I want to be something that I can help make decisions. I want to be something that I can make money. I have a family to take care of. I think that influenced me to say, you know, there's other things out there."

0:28:43 Brown doesn't think that Columbia has reached even middle ground where integration is concerned. She feels schools are integrated but not; that you can walk into shops downtown but you don't always feel comfortable.

Brown says people stand in judgment of blacks - first, because they're black, second, because they're inner city and third, because they think you're dumb.

0:30:30 Brown talks about it being hard to get a loan from a bank if you're black in Columbia. Most of the people who work at the banks are white. She believes it's the same with many businesses, city offices and hospital staff in Columbia, especially in positions of leadership.

0:32:03 Their racism is undercover now rather than just being right on top. And that's where it used to be - they didn't care. Now, they know that there is some consequences to their actions, so let's put it underground instead of over the top. That's my feeling."

0:32:34 Brown would like to see better books in the library at Hickman for students to read, take home and discuss. She says there are other books besides "Roots" to put into Douglass and other high schools. She'd like to see more standards for how children dress to go to school.

She talks about her (grand)daughter wearing short shorts that are supposed to be longer to school at Douglass and receiving no consequence. Brown says we shouldn't be afraid of the children.

Brown says that people are expecting Battle to be a "bad school" because all of the kids that they have problems with will be going there - Oakland, Gentry, Lang.

0:35:01

"I just think that the future is going to rely heavily on the black community making sure that desegregation is not hurting our children in the schools. And I think the burden of that will be placed on the black community. We have this thing where, 'Oh, I don't want to go into the school,' 'I don't want to voice my opinion,' 'I don't want to be a rabble-rouser,' 'I don't want to do this because everybody's going to judge me.' Well, sometimes we have to step out and we have to be judged. And until we do that, we're always going to have these problems."

Brown says that there are good people in each of the schools. She believes that Dr. Neville has the kids' best interest at heart but can't get the support that she needs.

Mary Bush – Hickman High School Class of 1961

Mary Bush was born in a small home across the street from Douglass School on what was then Third Street (now Providence Road). Growing up in Columbia, she says she didn't know that anything was missing. "I don't think we realized we were disadvantaged until we were grown because we had that kind of love."

She talks about a childhood full of neighborhood friends who were just like her. She learned important life lessons both at home and at school, where teachers were looked upon as bearers of possibility and role models for success.

"I think the teachers believed in us at Douglass. They believed if you worked hard and you tried you could be successful. They had a vested interest in us. They had a vested interest in what we could do to help make things better. And, I think many of us are a product of that."

Bush was a cheerleader, involved in Honor Society and played clarinet in the band under the direction of Russell Boone while at Douglass. Boone took students on trips down south to places like Little Rock for competitions at the height of the upheaval there due to the integration of schools.

Bush was one of the students for whom the transfer to Hickman was mandatory due to the closing of Douglass in 1960. She says the transition was a smooth one for her because she – and her senior classmates – knew their time there would be brief.

"I think because, in my class, we were older, that we had almost did all these things in high school at Douglass, so we weren't tripping when we went to Hickman about being involved in this and that and the other. At least the females that I know weren't. We already had what we wanted to do - go there finish this."

Another reason the transition was pretty seamless stems from the idea that this was the direction things were going in and resistance was futile.

"It was like you were rolling with the tide," she says. "One of our cliches when I growing up was 'Be flexible or you'll break.' So, you have to be able to go with the wind - be flexible or you gonna break. So, you just roll with it."

Bush sees the freedom to live anywhere one chooses and the full integration of schools as positive changes in the wake of desegregation. She also feels, however, that the lack of economic hope and the evaporation of black businesses that occurred with Urban Renewal as negatives that have left the black community in Columbia in a tailspin. She says:

"Well, I do feel that the ball has been dropped in our community somewhere along the way. Um, I don't sense from a lot of young people a commitment to continue the vested interest in improving the black community. I don't feel it from a lot of young people. I don't know if the parents thought they did the job and rest or whether they're tired or didn't feel the need to continue to instill this in their children - that we still have to work hard to improve the values and work ethic of our children."

Regarding integration, she says, "We thought that was the answer and it wasn't the answer."

Audio Log of interview with Mary Bush
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project

Track 1 (39:52)

Name: Mary Bush

Date of birth: 9/24/1943

Birthplace: Columbia, Mo. (born in a house on Providence Rd.)

Parents' names: Elizabeth Gray Williams, Elroy Brenham

Parent's occupation: mother: cook at sorority/fraternity house; father: construction

Sibling(s): Kirk, Glenda, Terry – all her father's children by another mother

Douglass (grade 1-11), Hickman (grade 12). Graduated in 1961

Married her tutor, Wayne Bush, who also attended Douglass and played in the school band.

Children: Timothy A. Bush, Kimberly Bush Smith

Started at University of Missouri studying nursing but switched to counseling. Received counseling credentials from U.C.S.D. Worked in physical medicine and rehabilitation under Dr. Lester Wolcott. Moved to California in 1968. Currently volunteers at Pomona Valley Hospital, where she served on Board of Directors. Was coordinator/Director of the Hispanic Health Careers Opportunity Program.

0:09:10 Bush talks about growing up in Columbia in a home with unconditional love. "I don't think we realized we were disadvantaged until we were grown because we had that kind of love."

0:10:19 Hers was a childhood filled with roller skating, swimming, played softball and volleyball, celebrations at the park and going to the movies - where blacks had to sit upstairs in many of the segregated theaters.

"It was like a way of life. You didn't, you know, run into it everyday and react to it. It was just the way things were."

Blacks couldn't sit down at the Woolworth's counter, blacks had to order something and take it away.

- 0:12:07 Children figured out where they could go and what they could do by emulating the adults around them. Kids didn't ask questions, they just followed. "The look" also worked to let kids know what they could and couldn't do.
- 0:12:48 Bush talks about being in the Douglass band with "Superman" Russell Boone. The band was scheduled to take a trip to Little Rock while the troops were stationed there. Some parents wouldn't let their children go. Her mother, who she describes as a "progressive for her time" asked her if she thought she'd be all right. She met some of the troops.
- 0:13:49 Bush speaks about traveling to Arkansas during the time of military occupation when schools were integrated:
- "The troops were very friendly. And that's one of my first lessons learning that what you see on TV is not always what's happening in real life. Because the TV showed, it was like these troops keeping things together and stuff like they were on a firing line but in actuality it wasn't that bad. It wasn't, just, they were there. They were people just like everybody else. They were just doing their job."
- 0:15:05 Lessons from Russell Boone included being on time, being neat, working hard and helping other people. These lessons started at home but were reinforced in school.
- Boone led by example. His students noticed. "You saw the way he conducted himself, the way he carried himself - always on time, always clean. And he was successful to us. So, to be successful, you need to emulate these traits."
- 0:18:21 Bush's house was small - one bedroom, which meant someone had to sleep in the living room - with no indoor plumbing. There was an outhouse. It was just she and her mom. "Most of your friends lived the same way so you didn't feel like you were any different."
- It was one of the first to be demolished with Urban Renewal (located across the street from Douglass School).

- 0:20:52 In the kitchen was a refrigerator, stove, sink, little table for water, and a table to sit and eat.
- 0:21:52 Washing clothes took place in the bedroom. They would bring in the machine, put the clothes in, rinse them in a separate basin, squeeze the water out and hang them on the line (outside) to dry. "It was a task!" She said she didn't really have any other chores because she was kind of spoiled.
- "Her only child had its benefits."
- 0:24:05 Her friends came from the neighborhood. "People of color lived, like, in a box. So, you weren't that far from each other. And, I mean if somebody started a game people just jump in. So, it was a lot of the classmates and neighbors."
- People she ran with in the neighborhood: the Doxley's, the Hayes', Jo Ann Herndon, Rita Mitchell, Pat Hickman, Mary Patton, Mabel Taylor, Lila Stimmons, Maurice Ballenger, Charles Allen - "It was just a bunch of us."
- They used to go to Helen's Cafe.
- 0:25:42 Regarding interactions with kids from the different neighborhoods (Cemetery hill, Douglass and Highway 40) "I don't know that when we were growing up I called it anything other than 'us'. Some of that probably still has to do with me living across the street and I'd see everybody, so I didn't always know to separate who came from where."
- 0:27:04 Bush was involved with Bluebirds and campfire girls, which she says "probably helped with furthering no problems with integration because we had been going to things that were integrated before the mandatory school closing. And the same thing with sports. The guys had been playing sports together so they weren't reacting when they had to ... Hickman."
- "We went to camp together, we sold candy and stuff together and, I guess, sometimes we'd have functions together. So, that's moreso it than anything else."
- 0:28:37 No white families lived in the neighborhood.

- 0:28:45 Bush shares about church life at the Methodist (C.M.E.) church. Fashion shows and Sunday School. Most Sundays, her mother worked, so she would walk.
- 0:29:43 Bush describes briefly a typical day in high school. She was in R.O.P. where you could go to school and get credit.
- 0:30:50 Walked to school or ride with one of the classmates who had a car. When she was in high school they were living in the projects (on Unity Drive) because the house she lived in was torn down.
- 0:32:53 If you got in trouble at school, you usually got in trouble at home. Bush says she was good and not trying to get in trouble.
- 0:33:06 Students were very active. "If you would look at the yearbooks you would see that the number was smaller so a few people were in everything. I participated in the Honor Society, I was in the band, again, and I was a cheerleader, which my daughter became, my granddaughter became a cheerleader. I mean, it's just something we're interested in. And Mr. Brooks, every fall I think about him because he taught us enough about football so that we'd be yelling the right yells. Cheers, when it was appropriate."
- 0:34:12 One of Bush's favorite teachers at Douglass was Mrs. Connors (third grade teacher). She was fair and didn't show partiality. She cared about students learning.
- 0:34:48 Mrs. Williams was the civics teacher and "hot." She was fiery and instilled in students the need to vote and make a difference. The math teacher was one that stood out for Bush but she can't remember her name.
- Mrs. Wiggins showed students that it's possible to do bigger and experience bigger things than what they could see. She'd been places and done things.
- 0:36:40 Bush and the principal didn't have much interaction. She would see teachers and administrators at church moreso than out in the neighborhood. Since Bush was a good student who didn't give any issue, her mother didn't have many interactions with the teachers or staff.
- "One of the things I was really sad about: I was in the ninth grade and I was elected May Queen and usually they don't do that for freshman. And

my mother couldn't help me get ready. She came at the end of the program but, uh, that was sad. But that's what happens when you have a single parent raising, you know, you make sacrifices."

0:38:13 Bush describes what the May Queen meant to her. There's a dance, the wrapping of the maypole, a big assembly where each class performs for the whole school. The football team nominates people for the queen. Her cousin nominated her and they voted for her.

"I did something, I know, that made my mother mad. One of my girlfriends, Mary Patton, wrote a sign before the voting and said, 'If you want to be in luck, vote for the girl whose teeth buck' - as my friend. And so, as I was walking down the aisle, that day I started thinking about it and I (bucks teeth). [Laughs] And my mother tells me, 'Close your mouth! Close your mouth, Mary.' You know, these are the hilarious things that happen to us as we grow up."

Track 2 (35:24)

0:00:00 Bush wasn't elected to anything else like the May Queen position in high school.

0:00:26 She had good relationships at Douglass. "You couldn't help but be on a first name basis with everybody in a small school like that." She tried out and was selected to become a cheerleader. She thinks there were 10 of them who cheered at football and basketball games.

0:02:21 Bush worked at University Hospital as a nurse's aide in a newborn nursery technician. "When I talked to my mother about the job she said, 'Well, Mary, you can't even change a baby's diaper, how are you gonna work out at the hospital?' (Laughs) And I said, 'Well. We will see. So, I adapted and I loved it.'"

The school organized these positions for students.

0:03:22 "I think the teachers believed in us at Douglass. They believed if you worked hard and you tried you could be successful. That, they had a vested interest in us. They had a vested interest in what we could do to help make things better. And, I think many of us are a product of that."

Bush said the teachers had "fought the good fight" for civil rights, voting rights.

"If you don't nurture that effort, and continue it. It'll die."

0:04:24 Example: Mrs. Williams taught them how a bill passes and stressed the importance of voting.

0:05:03 Bush heard about the plan to desegregate the schools through gossip. The neighborhood buzz and TV brought her news of Douglass's closing. She didn't think too much about it, though, since she had enough credits to graduate at the end of her junior year.

"I think because, in my class, we were older, that we had almost did all these things in high school at Douglass, so we weren't tripping when we went to Hickman about being involved in this and that and the other. At least the females that I know weren't. We already had what we wanted to do - go there finish this. I had enough units to graduate at the end of my junior year and Mr. Battle wouldn't approve of me graduating a year early because he knew Wayne and I were engaged. I guess he was trying to help me and stave off this marriage (laughs) at that point in my life. I don't know. We never talked about it."

0:06:57 Her initial response was that she "didn't trip on it."

"Maybe I should've but, thinking back, we were 'good citizens'. We complied with the law. (Laughs)"

0:07:31 She didn't hear boys talk about the situation. They may have been talking about it amongst themselves but she doesn't recall hearing anything. Younger students knew they'd have a longer period of time to stay at Hickman but for the graduating class, it was brief.

0:08:05 Bush says that the students at Hickman weren't disrespectful or harsh to her. "However, I did not get the feeling at Hickman that I got from the teachers at Douglass. And, I guess, that was all, had to do with politics and things but I did not get a bad feeling."

"Well, the teachers at Douglass had a vested interest in the black community, uh, trying to elevate a lot of people to do better. Do well, to do as well as they could. I don't feel that sentiment - I did not feel that sentiment - at Hickman."

She cites the brevity of her time there as a possible reason for this. She only took five or six classes over the two semesters. The move to Hickman was mandatory.

0:10:12 She says there were mumbblings in the community regarding to the closing of Douglass. There was fear that it would work out, that there would be a "Pine Bluff" at Hickman. (Referencing unrest in Arkansas during the Civil Rights Movement here).

Bush talks about the effect of Urban Renewal on black businesses and how, at the time, the community didn't see the impact that would have on the black community.

0:11:50 Not a lot of preparation was made for the transition to Hickman. Bush talked to her mother about it. She talked with the teachers as well and says that many of the students wondered if the teachers would have a job. There was an orientation but it was a basic one.

"It was like you were rolling with the tide. One of our clichés when I growing up was 'Be flexible or you'll break.' So, you have to be able to go with the wind - be flexible or you gonna break. So, you just roll with it.

0:13:35 Bush remembers getting a new dress for the first day of school at Hickman. Women in those days could wear dresses or appropriate slacks and blouses to school. She says she thinks they were able to wear jeans and tennis shoes as well. (?)

0:14:47 She got a ride from a friend who had a car to school that morning. "There's comfort in a lot of people."

0:15:12 Bush says a counselor at Hickman helped her choose classes for her senior year.

0:15:28 She says she felt, "This is a part of history," then went on in that day.

0:15:50 The classrooms were very nice, very put together. It was a typical classroom with chairs. "It seemed more maintained than Douglass. That's what I'm trying to say, in a nice way. I saw that. And it was a lot bigger. I'm, oh, God, it was a lot bigger. And all the parking spaces and stuff like that.

- 0:16:55 Just because she didn't feel that the teachers had the same vested interest in the black students as the teachers at Douglass doesn't mean that they didn't.
- 0:17:24 Mrs. Mosley, chemistry teacher at Hickman, stands out to her. "If any of them had a touch of what the teachers had to me from Douglass, it's her - Mrs. Mosley."
- 0:18:10 Her mom had no relationship with the teachers or principal at Hickman.
- 0:18:32 Bush thought her interactions with the other students at Hickman was good. There were no issues - it was "just students going to class, like a university - everybody the same, just busy doing things."
- 0:18:57 Pam, who was in the Chemistry class, was the one white student she felt she connected with.
- 0:19:16 Bush was in the National Honor Society but was called "The affiliates" at Hickman because she came from Douglass. "I guess that was one of the ways of putting us in our place." In the second semester, they let them be part of the National Honor Society.
- "Now that you look back on it, some of it, all you can do is smile. I mean, it's like, it didn't make or break us. And that's what you learn."
- 0:20:27 Went to fast food restaurants, like Dairy Queen, that were close by for lunch. At Douglass, she went to the Cozy Shop (sp?)(a black-owned shop) and get snacks for lunch or up to Jake's (a white restaurant) for lunch.
- After games or events, blacks would go to people's homes or to the Tiger Lounge. When she was younger they went to Sharp End and just hang out or go get a sandwich. The Minute Inn, which was located in the black neighborhood but was an establishment where blacks couldn't go inside, was another place they went. It was a white cable car restaurant on the South side of Providence Inn.
- The Blue and White restaurant was black-owned restaurant where they would go as well. Miss Jenny's and Helen's Cafe were also around when she was younger. They were places to hang out as long as they weren't causing any trouble.

- 0:25:11 Bush says she was 36-24-36 back in the day but all of her girlfriends were big like that so she didn't have a complex. (!) For dates, she and her future husband Wayne would go to the movies, watch movies at her house or would hang out at friends' houses. They'd go to plays and concerts at MU. They'd go on band trips together as well.
- 0:27:43 Since desegregation, people of color live all over Columbia. Black businesses evaporated. Schools are truly integrated now.
- 0:28:51 "Well, I do feel that the ball has been dropped in our community somewhere along the way. Um, I don't sense from a lot of young people a commitment to continue the vested interest in improving the black community. I don't feel it from a lot of young people. I don't know if the parents thought they did the job and rest or whether they're tired or didn't feel the need to continue to instill this in their children - that we still have to work hard to improve the values and work ethic of our children."
- 0:30:19 "A part of it I think is like well, that was the job, the job is done so now we're through. And, we're not. We didn't know, maybe because we didn't have the experience, that the continuing struggle - just all the different feelings about Tayvon (Trayvon Martin) being shot and double standards in the penal system. I mean, there's still a lot going on."
- Bush cites a statistic that says 90% of crimes in the black community are black-on-black crimes as an issue that the black community must address. She says it's a way to kill off a whole race and a sad commentary on the current state of affairs.
- 0:31:44 Lack of economic hope - when people have a job and resources to take care of their needs, you don't see as much crime. It's linked "because we thought that was the answer and it wasn't the answer."
- 0:33:52 Columbia seemed like a happier time in the years following her high school graduation. Her husband was training people and they would get the higher positions and he wouldn't. (She wouldn't say where.) The couple found the house of her dreams in Columbia but were told they couldn't sell it to them because they were students. These were catalysts for their leaving and moving to California.
- Some things were slow turning around after the school desegregation and that was like, housing and jobs. But it appears to have been on the increase since then.

Track 3 (07:24)

- 0:00:18 She thought the quality of education she received at Douglass was great. It helped prepare her for the future. It helped her learn to be self-confident and believe she could achieve success. She says she hasn't really thought about the education she received from Hickman.
- "Douglass feels more like my school because I was there so long. That's why I don't have a lot of things to say about Hickman."
- 0:01:46 When asked about the influence having to transfer to Hickman had on her life, she mentions that the Douglass class of '60 and '61 celebrate together - the last and the first. "It's linked us for time."
- 0:02:39 She hasn't attended any of the reunions at Hickman. "The last one, I was thinking about going but I wouldn't know people. The ones I really know would be at this Black & White Ball that's here moreso than the ones - I didn't know that many people at Hickman."
- 0:04:09 What was gained: "From the civil rights struggle, I feel that we made progress and stopped accepting 'separate but equal', so that was a very, very positive thing. People gave their lives for this to be better, like in education and the military and so many areas of our life. It needed to change. So, out of change you have some fall-out."
- 0:04:55 What was lost: "What was lost was really a sense of community that we had because we could just walk to somebody's house, you know. And, now, we live all over, so we have lost the sense of community to some degree." Bush says that if you make the effort, you can build community but in the 50s and 60s, everyone was right there. You couldn't avoid community. "It takes a community to raise a child existed during that time. I don't know that that same community exists to raise a child today."
- 0:06:15 Bush gives the example of if you got in trouble in front of Ms. Thing's house, you were going to get in trouble with your mom at home. Everybody was looking out for each other's kids and caring for them. "We were so close that people understood what was going on in every household so you could get it done."

Barbra Horrell – Douglass High School Class of 1959

Barbra Horrell believes that most black children in Columbia had a good childhood where they lived in a very "contained, loving situation." She spent her formative years in the home of Dr. Bruner, for whom her grandparents worked. The doctor's son, Donnie, was her constant companion until they started kindergarten and were forced to go to separate schools. Horrell recalls the moment when her grandfather dropped Donnie off at school that first day and she had to stay in the car because she would be attending Douglass. She says that they were, "just heartbroken ... 'cause we'd always been together." It was the first time she knew she was "different."

Horrell describes Columbia in the 40s and 50s as a place where "everything they needed could be found in the black community. There were barbershops, restaurants, clubs, hair salons, grocery stores." The only thing they didn't have was a clothing store. Blacks during this time could shop in town but weren't allowed to try things on. Most black folks, Horrell says, would go to St. Louis or Kansas City to shop.

Back then, black families ate meals together, kids knew to be home before the streetlights came on and neighbors looked out for each other. It was also a time when old black businessmen would sit at the coffee shops and soda fountains downtown once a week in their Sunday best for years and not be served.

The black community had four neighborhoods that kids used to set up their baseball teams. There were the inner city kids – where "townies" lived, near Douglass School – the cemetery hill kids, Highway 40 kids and the railroad kids. Douglass School was the center of the community where summer picnics, holiday celebrations, events and organized baseball games were held (girls played on Saturday, boys on Sunday).

Students at Douglass could be involved in everything the school had to offer. According to Horrell, "Band was everything. I was drum majorette, I was [in] marching band, concert band, special ensembles. Like sports for the fellas was everything, band, for the girls, was everything."

Mr. Boone took them on road trips to black schools and colleges in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas. At the height of the school integration conflict, they stayed in Little Rock and got to meet the "Little Rock Nine" and the National Guard members who were guarding them. These trips allowed them to experience the world outside of Columbia.

"You learned music. You made friends. You traveled. You saw people. You were entertainers - and we loved it."

When the option to transfer to Hickman in pursuit of more class options came up, Horrell says the decision was an easy one.

"Most of us made a conscious decision that we were doing so many things in our school that we knew the first ones at Hickman wasn't gonna get to do. When you're involved in band and chorus and all of those things - football, basketball, all that - you're not gonna leave what you know to go to where you might be a third-stringer or no-stringer or you're just going to school."

Audio Log of interview with Barbra Horrell
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project

Track 1 (39:34)

INTRO 0:21

Name: Barbra Horrell

Date of birth: 12/11/1941

Birthplace: Columbia, Mo. Horrell was born at home – at 8 Worley – and was one of the first black children to go to University Hospital, which was, at the time, the Student Health Center. Dr. Bagaby delivered her. Caroline Williams, an aunt who lived with them at the time, was also at the delivery.

Parents' names: Irvin and Mary Virginia Brown

Parent's occupation: mother: went to school to be a dietician (nursing degree) and was a single parent; father: went to college, ran restaurants and bars

Sibling(s): none

Douglass (grade 1-12). Graduated in 1959. Horrell was the first black female student in Columbia to get a full ride to MU (Curator's Scholarship). She graduated with a degree in education and went to work at MU. At that time, she says, MU didn't hire black graduates unless they were in a medical-related field. She ended up working in administration for 12 years in pathology as the Director of Student Diagnostic Records, 5 years in Personnel and in her last years, was the director of continuing medical education and recruiter for the school of medicine. In total, she was at the medical center for 30 years. Her total time at the University was 42 years.

After leaving the medical center, she transferred to the College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Agriculture, where she did recruiting of minority students for these programs.

Horrell also has a master's degree in Higher and Adult Education.

- 0:04:35 “What happened to black kids in Columbia years ago – if you showed that you were persistent or you showed that you had the initiative or you showed up and asked questions, folks pulled you out of their arenas.”
- 0:05:18 She has a lifetime teaching certificate in Missouri but never taught here. She had an incident with a handicapped student and figured out quickly that she couldn’t do it. He locked her in a closet. She’s claustrophobic, so she came out of it angry.
- 0:06:10 Horrell was dating a guy (who she eventually married) at the time who worked at the Medical Center, which is how she ended up working there. Someone there saw her work and said they wanted her to work with them.
- 0:06:30 She started the School of Health Professions on the MU campus as its coordinator. Dr. Rich Oliver, who just retired as dean, was one of her first students. At his retirement party, she joked with him about having to get on him about his grade point average in those early years.
- 0:07:13 Horrell says she was not scared to talk to white people.

“White people did not excite me because I grew up in that, that arena.

I grew up, my first living experience and my first understanding of that I was different from the family that we all lived together – we lived as a communal family because Dr., um, my grandparents were caretakers or my grandmother was in charge of the house, my grandfather was in charge the yard, the people that was hired for, uh, for a doctor here in town because his wife was ill. My grandmother raised his four children. And so, I was always there because my mother traveled when I was a kid. My mother worked out of state.

And so, all winter I was with her until I got ready to go to grade school. When I got ready to go to grade school, they had a son that’s my age. And, he and I used to play and we were constantly, constant – we ate together. My, you know, everything went together. When we sat down, we sat down as a family – the four of them, my grandma, my grandfather and me. Okay? There was no, I didn’t know any difference. They didn’t treat – when we got ready to go to bed at night, to read our lesson, playtime, we played together. We always was together.

The most thing I ever remember, my hardest life story, was when we got ready to go to kindergarten. My grandfather put us in the car. He takes Donnie to school on campus. And I’m still in the car and I’m getting ready

to get out and he goes, 'No, you're going to another school.' And I'm going, 'I'm not going to school with Donnie?' 'No, you're going to Douglass.' I did not know what Douglass was. We went to segregated church but that was not a big [deal] 'cause they didn't really go to church. But that was the only time we were ever separated. And I remember that so – and Donnie and I both still remember that. 'Remember when they separated us and you went to one school and I went to another?' Just heartbroken that were – 'cause we'd always been together. And that was the first time I ever realized I was different.

Her childhood friend was Donnie Bruner.

Married David Preston Horrell in 1961. They have one son, Darren, born in 1963. She has one granddaughter, Morgan Grace, age 9.

0:10:39 Horrell believes that most children in Columbia had a good childhood because they lived in a very "contained, loving situation.'

When her grandfather retired from working for the doctor and they moved to town, where they lived at 18 Pendleton. She says almost everything they needed could be found in the black community. There were barbershops, restaurants, clubs, hair salons and grocery stores. They had everything except clothing stores. You could buy clothes in the stores but you couldn't try them on.

Horrell had polio as a child, so she had a difficult time with shoe fitting. Her grandmother would take her uptown to buy shoes, where they'd fit her on a board but she couldn't try on the shoes. They had to buy them outright. Horrell wore hi-top shoes until the 5th grade. Kids used to call them "brogans," a heavy, ankle-high boot.

They went to St. Louis and got their clothes. Most black folks, she says, went to St. Louis or Kansas City to do their clothes shopping.

0:12:37 Horrell had an uncle (Freddie) who lived in St. Louis who would shop for them from a list and send the items in boxes via Greyhound to Columbia. He'd let them know the boxes were there for pickup. It was common when people didn't have cars.

In these days, when people wanted to send something, if it didn't come through the mail, it came by greyhound bus.

He'd say, 'I'm sending you all Easter frocks.' And he'd send my grandmother Easter hat, I had a Easter frock, two changes - we always had two changes for each. Black children had - Easter was a big occasion for us. Christmas, Easter, our birthdays, special occasions. You got new clothes for those things. Easter you had a Good Friday outfit, you had a Easter Sunday outfit and maybe, if you had a little extra change, you had, because every church would have a after-Easter fashion show. You had to have another outfit for that.

- 0:14:22 The dresses she wore were full of ruffles. They also had bonnets, gloves and patent leather shoes.
- 0:14:50 The hi-top shoes were shoes Horrell had to wear because she had weak ankles. They were support shoes but they called them hi-tops. They were very pricey, around \$49-50, which was a lot of money during the 40s. Her grandmother would put money aside for them. Horrell had two pair - one for Sunday and the "browns" she wore everyday.
- 0:15:49 All of the businesses and services were in a proximity of the neighborhood. There were the inner city kids, the highway kids, the railroad kids (who lived out near the railroad) and the cemetery hill kids. She was one of the "townies" who lived near Douglass School.
- Horrell plots their path that kids walked to school. Some people had cars but almost everyone walked. Her mother was 82 and still walking to church. They walked to church every Sunday. Everything was in close proximity, so it was no big deal. The Highway 40 kids probably had the farthest to walk but they also walked to school, as did the kids from the railroad.
- 0:17:35 The Douglass Park that exists now wasn't Douglass Park back then. They had picnics, 4th of July, labor Day, Juneteenth, summer picnics, concerts, baseball games (girls played on Saturday, boys on Sunday). "It was a good time." Elders would dance and the kids would sit on the grass and giggle while their parents danced. There was no fighting - if people had issues they took it elsewhere.
- 0:18:33 "We didn't know we were poor."
- They had a skating rink, which was across from the school. It used to be a black-owned lumber company. When it burned down, he made the area a skating rink out of what was left.

They had a movie theater where the Tribune building currently sits. If you got to go to Boone Theater, which is where city hall currently sits, black kids had to sit upstairs. "My grandfather said, 'No, you won't be going to the movies.'"

The only time she got to go to the movies was in St. Louis. Her mother would come home during the summer and they'd take a vacation in August. They'd go to St. Louis, stay at the YMCA and go to the movies and shop for her fall clothes.

0:20:00 Horrell's mother was a dietician who worked with private families. She worked for the family that owned the Broadmoor hotel and was gone during the year.

"This big limo would come every year in the fall to whisk her away for the school year. 'Cause I'd stay with my grandparents. And then, when she quit that job 'cause Mile High City got too mile high for her and I was growing up real fast, so she came back to Columbia. That's when she worked for the university. She was a dietician at the university."

0:20:49 Horrell's grandparents were Carrie and Warren Hill. She was with them until she was around 7 or 8. Around that time, Horrell says, "her mother realized she needed to take care of her own child."

Her mother married her father and had her just out of high school. He went to Jeff City to college but she didn't. At that time, Horrell says, only one or the other could go because they couldn't afford it. He stayed in a rooming house with other students from Columbia because he was an athlete who played basketball. He ended up being the first black umpire for the state. He used to officiate basketball at all black high school for the state of Missouri.

She says she would cry when people would say, "Aw, your dad's the referee. He's no good."

0:23:06 Her grandparents took care of everything at home. Her grandfather ended up working for the university and her grandmother stayed at home. They had breakfast, dinner and supper together. Horrell would get up at the same time as her grandfather, getting ready for school, and her grandmother would make them all breakfast.

"We always ate our meals together and you ate in the kitchen because we didn't have a dining room. We always ate at the table; none of this TV tray and all of that. I do remember in 1954, our next-door neighbor got a TV. The first TV I'd, you know, we had. And all the kids in the neighborhood, we all buddied up to the girls who'd lived there and we all would go there to see the cartoons and would watch the test pattern go on." [Laughs] They went to drive-ins - blacks could go and weren't segregated there. It was at Parkade Plaza. Horrell says the one neighbor who had a car would pile all the kids in the back. They'd load up on sandwiches and take blankets to sit on the ground and watch the movie.

"Once a week, we knew we were going to drive-in if you were good. If you were a bad kid all week, you couldn't go to the drive-in."

"We did not look for and expect anything else. We knew where we were and we knew - we had concerts and ... things at the school. We had things at our churches. We went from church to church. Groups came into town. We had the best band in town, so everybody came down Broadway when Douglass came down Broadway, marching, folks stopped what there were doing. Banks closed they door. Folks were on the street watching us. Those were the highlights of our going to school. You had band, you had chorus, you had had, of course, the guys had more gym and P.E. than we did and they played basketball and football. And the girls played baseball and basketball. So, we had teams - baseball and basketball teams. In the summer, everybody played baseball. And we played all the other little small towns. The boys played football and they'd play the Kansas City, St. Louis summer groups. It was always something to do."

0:26:14 Horrell says they had their own swimming pool. Those who couldn't swim would go, hang out and watch until it got too hot. Then, they'd move to the shade trees to play hopscotch or, when they got older, cards or dominoes.

"We did not know we were different. The only thing, I don't remember seeing white people except on man that had a store. It was a grocery store. And Mr. Jakes had the grocery store. And the guy that I ended up marrying, his mother ran the grocery store. But everything was mom & pop and you knew everybody."

0:27:00 Horrell talks about going to "Miss Jenny's," who served chili, hot dogs and hamburgers at the dinner meal. They'd go to Pop Britt's "Blue and White" for lunch and he had the big polish hot dogs. He'd cut them down the

middle so they looked bigger and pop them on the grill. They would go over to Jake's when she was younger and get treats. Most of the girls would get a dill pickle and a peppermint stick that they'd poke through the middle.

0:27:53

Horrell remembers losing 50 cents down a crack in the floor at Miss Jenny's and being devastated. Ms. Jenny's brother, Mr. Taylor, told her not to worry about it and gave her 50 cents back. When she got older, there were "little joints" where the teenagers would go stand around the jukebox and dance. In the summer, they'd dance on the sidewalk.

They'd sit in the schoolyard in summer and sit, watching and cheering on the boys play baseball.

"We didn't think about cars. We got older, as seniors, we thought about trying to go to Jeff City and, you know, hang out and stuff like that. Otherwise, we did it in Columbia. You know when your curfew - everybody had the same curfew. We'd start heading for the hill at the same time. Leaving Douglass School, there was a mass exit from the playground 'cause everybody had time to get home."

When they were younger, they had to beat the streetlight coming on. They'd start blinking to come on and folks would scatter up the hills. When they got older, curfew was 10 pm.

0:29:58

"Columbia stopped, for black folks, at that particular time, uh, Stuart Road, you know, where the power plant is? That was the end of where we ended up 'cause that's cemetery hill was right here and that was where it ended. And, as a kid, I remember they used to, um, close - university used to close that area. Once a year and you had to be admitted into that area because that was the University of Missouri property."

Black people did not go downtown.

"My grandfather and others sat in Newberry's and Woolsworth for years and they wouldn't wait on them. If they sat at the soda fountain, they would not wait on'em. You could buy things in Newberry's and all of that but if you wanted something from the soda fountain, like a soda or something, you go to the end of the counter and as they got around to it they waited on you.

I never ate ice cream 'cause Central Dairy, you had to stand outside to get your ice cream."

0:30:57 Horrell tells of a restaurant (Minute Inn) in the heart of "black city" at Ash and providence Road, where the Boone County Bank currently sits where blacks couldn't go inside. You could order at the window and they'd hand it to you but you couldn't go inside. Whites would go there to eat. The owner worked for the city.

They'd leave games at Douglass and walk up to the bakery on Broadway (across from LeCours there was a bakery) where one of her girlfriend's dads was the baker. She talks about him making something called "the George Washington pie," which was made from all of the leftover fruit from the day's baking and covered in icing. It would sell for 10 cents a square. In the cold, they'd walk up the hill to get that, a sack of donuts, a bottle of milk and walk home.

0:33:32 Blacks used to have to go in the basement of the hospitals (Boone County had a black entrance in the basement). Her boyfriend (now husband) dislocated his shoulder in high school and they had to wait until someone came down.

Dr. Battersby (sp?) was the OBGYN who delivered babies. Most black families who were able to go to white doctors went. A few white doctors cared for black people. Horrell remembers being told that white doctors would only see black patients after 3 pm so they wouldn't interfere with their other patients.

A friend whose husband is older and moved to Columbia around that time was told that he should see black patients at that time.

0:35:00 Blacks had their own dentist. Dr. McAllister was on the corner of Ash and Garth. Dr. Roland Wiggins was the black cardiologist and internist. His practice was on Providence Road in his wife's Ruth D. Wiggins) family home.

Most black families that couldn't afford going to the doctor went to the health department. Ms. Kimbrew was the city nurse who delivered babies and healed wounds. Ms. McClanahan was the school nurse, a black lady, who did a lot of triage work at school. Dr. Leroy Miller was the city doctor at the Health Department.

For emergencies, you went to the emergency room at Boone County and reported to the basement. Boone County was the only hospital at the time.

0:36:48 Horrell didn't have much interaction with white people in the black community. Saturday at 8am the Manner bread man came around selling bread. Roberts Mercantile sold clothes. "We used to laugh and say, 'Oh, you can get something from Ms. Roberts. And you get it on time and it's \$29.99!' Every item was \$29.99."

"You could go to uptown and buy stuff. Now, you may get treated like crap."

Horrell remembers that she was going to buy something in Park's Department Store just as she was getting ready to graduate from high school. Everyone was looking for dresses for the occasion. The lady told Horrell she'd have to wait until she could get around to showing her some things. JC Penny's was the same way.

0:38:04 She gives the layout of the shops downtown.

There was a little coffee shop near where My Secret Garden currently sits where black businessmen would dress up every Saturday and go sit. They'd never get served.

The older black men would have on their bib overalls and when they got ready to go out, they'd don starched white shirts, dress pants and shined shoes underneath. A Fedora would be on their head.

0:39:00 Black women and kids went to church wearing hats and gloves.

"We Baptists believe in our hats. Sistas will put on their hats, okay?"

Horrell says the girls who went to Lincoln took proper etiquette classes and would wear their gloves to school.

Track 2 (39:45)

0:00:00 Sit-ins were happening in Columbia long before the well-publicized ones occurred. No one got served. In '51/'52, when the black power movement started to gain momentum, they'd go every day.

- 0:00:30 The "good white folks" worked at Stephens College treated blacks well because they understood that the black help kept the place running smoothly. Black help kept the restaurants and other establishments working.
- Monica Naylor's grandfather had a place called "Monty's" on Fifth Street where people, black and white, would try to get in. He made the best chili and barbeque around. Horrell's husband's father was a chef who barbequed with him. They came to Columbia together from Sedalia.
- "Girl, on Saturday - Friday or Saturday night - you couldn't get into Monty's and if they had something in the park, you could smell the barbeque for miles."
- 0:01:52 "I do not ever regret growing up black because I learned values, I learned respect, I learned, you know, we never, you know, we didn't think of the harsh and the negatives as far as races. We just didn't know the races. I knew the races 'cause I had come up living that way but other than that, the only white people we saw was once a year when they brought the books to school and we got - others have probably told you - we got the second-hand books. The books that went to Hickman first and Jeff Junior, and there may be a page out. You may be reading along and 'poop' there's two or three pages missing. Or somebody's highlighted or colored the books and backs may be coming off and they, the janitors would spend the summer putting the books back together. I mean, those were the only things that I resented.
- I resented the fact when we started out as a band, that we had to - had, our parents worked like dogs to get us band uniforms of our own because they wanted to give us old band uniforms from other schools. Same with the football players' uniforms. So, you know, that's the reason we had band boosters and parents had groups. PTAs had, you know, they laugh about the chicken dinners and all of that but we started that in kindergarten. And that's how we got things. You, you either made do until you could do better and then you did better the best you could."
- 0:03:52 Horrell played baseball. Girls played dolls until they got older. Somebody in the neighborhood taught them how to sew and then they made every kind of potholder there was.
- People went from neighborhood to neighborhood to neighborhood to play in empty lots.

"We had a empty lot behind our house the way we called 'Square Garden' and everybody'd come from blocks around if the boys were playing."

She shows that she has a scar she calls 'Square Garden' that she got when she ran into a barbed wire fence that she got trying to get away after the girls stole the basketball from the boys who were playing there.

0:05:00 Horrell marks the path the football players would have to walk to the field where they practiced, dressed and carrying gear, from Douglass School. They'd have to walk back and shower afterwards. There were no facilities at Douglass. There were four or five bleachers for games. The field was around McBaine and Oak Streets.

"If they had a football game you couldn't turn us out 'cause we were sharp as tacks and we were - every parent in the world - was up there for football game."

Horrell says every other school, even the junior high schools, had sports facilities.

0:07:01 The girls played baseball down at Douglass - on separate teams than the boys. They played high school teams from Hannibal, Fulton, Jeff City, Mexico, Wellsville.

When they were younger they'd play sandlot baseball in somebody's back yard. For basketball, all they needed was an empty bucket and tack it to a pole.

"Kids made their own fun."

0:08:13 Horrell's aunt taught her to sew. Her mom could cook. She says anyone in town would say her mom made the best bread, pies and cakes. She also made the best fried chicken and hot rolls.

Horrell didn't want to learn to sew but she did. When she first got married she used to make all of her own clothes. She was one of the first ones hired as a salesgirl at Hartsvale's (sp?) in high school, which she says was the Nordstrom's of Columbia at the time. She was hired as a seamstress helper, where she would take the street labels off of clothes and sew a store label in.

They told her she should be on the sales floor because she was intelligent and could run a cash register. Customers would ignore her.

The same would happen at Stephens College. She said the girls at Stephens were really nice. The lady who ran the botany program told her she should be a botanist because she was smart and knew enough science. On trips, they would have the best time but people would ask, "Well, who's that with you all?" The implication of the question was that she couldn't be a student; she had to be a maid or something like that.

0:11:03 Horrell was the head of a program at the university and doctors would go flying to her white assistant for guidance or help. The assistant would refer them to Horrell. When she was over things at the medical center, doctors would come in on their first day of residency and go to one of her six white helpers/secretaries. They'd refer them to Horrell.

She tells the story of a doctor who told her that he was going to get her fired because she wouldn't give him a diagnosis. She told him, "Ethically, I cannot do that and I think you should go to our department chair if you have a problem with me not giving you this diagnosis because it, one, it's not your patient and you weren't the one that sent for - and I can't pass this information." He told her, "Who you think you are, girl?"

When she went to personnel (as the first black in that department)

"Being the first in a lot of things, you experience, you got a strong back and that's - I had to learn to just [kissing sound] and swallow. I've swallowed so much stuff. I should have lumps."

Being a black female, she had someone ask her, "Does your husband know you're out here doing this" when she was traveling. She said, "Yeah. He likes the pay too."

When she went to the vet school, the first thing people asked was if she was a veterinarian. At the medical school, they wanted to know if she was a doctor. She'd tell them, "No, but I live with one every day."

0:13:17 Horrell says her husband was told he couldn't be a physician. He could be a tech or anything else, but not a physician in those days.

Blacks could be nurses or teachers. They could not be doctors.

0:13:50 Guys didn't have the same number of opportunities as girls. They could be janitors, orderlies, work on the docks without a college degree. Her husband worked on the loading dock at the hospital after high school because they didn't take his interest in medicine seriously.

"Times have changed. People haven't."

0:14:40 Horrell says she was in a store a couple months ago and the lady waited on everybody but her. She was standing in the store with a bunch of merchandise in her hand. The lady asked Horrell's white friend if she could help her. The friend said, "My girlfriend here's been standing here with this. Did you not see her?"

"We're invisible. We are still invisible in certain situations."

"By and large, I have not had a problem with Columbia. You know your place, you do what you can, you either decide you're going to stick it out or you get - like most of them, got their hats and left."

When they get ready to retire, they move back because home has changed. It hasn't changed that much, they soon realize.

0:16:34 Supposedly, blacks can live where they want to live now. Horrell tells a story of a realtor who had their down payment (\$500) for six months, trying to find them a house. In the end, he said that he couldn't find them a house and suggested that he'd build them a little house. They ended up going with the Miles Manor Project, which is the first black subdivision outside of the inner city of Columbia. It started out with 20 families. Most of them are still there - or the next generation lives there now. They built their home in 1972. They're still there. Many people have no idea that the subdivision exists.

Horrell explains that there were homes where Providence Road runs now until Urban Renewal renovated the area.

"There was just no place to live. They did not want to rent to you. They did not want to lease to you. And, it was like, you're getting out of your circle. And, you've heard the stories of families that finally got out, like the Battles - his dog got killed 'cause he lived over on Crown Point."

Horrell talks about the number of displaced people when Urban Renewal cleared out multiple blocks of homes.

"It became the second 'neighborhood'. It was like you moved back into 'the neighborhood' because the families that were out there, the original families out there, those were people that were on two or thr- streets behind me in the inner city. And, so, my very next-door neighbor, her daughter and I grew up and our homes were back to back in the inner city. So, it's, it was home."

There are three streets and everybody knows everybody.

0:19:54 Horrell describes her house as "typical" with a living room, three bedrooms, kitchen, two baths, back porch and front porch. She referred to it as a bungalow with rooms that were about 10' by 12'. The kitchen had a dining room on one side (called a converter).

She had a bed, chest of drawer and dressers.

0:21:24 The kitchen had a stove, refrigerator, kitchen table, sink. It was white because back in the day they only had white. It wasn't until the 60s when they started getting pastels.

They had a double-wide fridge that was top-and-bottom first - freezer in the top, refrigerator in the bottom. There were Maytags and Kenmores. Later, Kenmore made a side-by-side.

"Everybody had a Kenmore washer and dryer and you had a Maytag stove and refrigerator." In the 50s?

[RF note: I went off tape to explain to her that her "typical" home was very atypical, which was why I was asking the questions I did.]

0:22:35 Horrell says that large families may not have had what other families had. "We all had different stuff."

They had a back porch that was glassed in. Her grandmother eventually made the dining room out in that area. You made most of the rooms in those types of houses fit what your family needed. She had friends who had dining room and when their grandparents got older, that became grandma's bedroom. Family's made do. They didn't send people to nursing homes. Their nursing home was grandma and grandpa came to live with you.

- 0:23:42 A car was the only thing they didn't have and that was because they could walk where they needed to go. They also had friends and neighbors who had cars.
- 0:23:49 Horrell says that grandparents and others was the neat thing about growing up in inner city Columbia. Her grandfather and three other guys, who she used to call "the gathering of old men," would get under the big shade tree and tell stories - about the war and how things used to be when they were kids. People spoke to people on both sides of the street.
- "[If] you didn't speak to somebody, they'd tell your grandma, 'Barbra didn't speak on the way to school this morning.' When I come home for lunch my grandma say you better make it speaking to so-and-so as you go back to school."
- 0:24:45 Easter, Christmas, neighbors would stop you and say, "Come by here." When she traveled with the band, the lady across the street took all her clothes to the laundry, got them ready for travel and folded them. They had no children. The lady's husband would say, "Come over here before you go to leave in the morning," and give Horrell a "little piece of change" (maybe 5 or 6 dollars) to buy herself something on the road. She'd bring back postcards and souvenirs for them.
- One neighbor would make every kid a sack lunch when they were going on trips. They had goody bags.
- "It was all community."
- After Sunday dinner, you'd drop by all the neighbors on your block for dessert and sample all of the baked goods.
- 0:26:19 Sunday dinner was similar to other meals because, Horrell says, her grandfather didn't skimp on meals. A typical breakfast on Saturday and Sunday mornings was fried chicken, fried potatoes and gravy, biscuits. "My grandfather believed in a hearty meal." Lunch and dinner would be another meal.
- Sundays, they'd have a roast, baked chicken or pork chops with mashed potatoes, gravy and corn. They'd also get fresh green beans out of the garden in summer. If one family had extra spinach in their garden, they'd share it with neighbors. People always shared.

Horrell's grandfather grew red and green peppers, green beans, pole beans, snap peas, squash and pumpkins. It was a small city garden but some people had gardens across their back yards. There was a lady who would grow cantaloupes. The kids would wait until they were a good size and then steal them. People grew watermelons, strawberries and grapes as well. They usually couldn't keep anything on the vine for all the kids who would sneak in on them.

"They were self-sufficient 'cause we didn't have open-air markets and stuff like that. There was some families that would have little markets - little home grocery stores would have little markets."

Horrell says they got to be little demons when they wanted the cantaloupes from Mrs. Bass's garden but everyone else would share their crops. "They were neighborhoods. Columbia was small enough that you knew every family surnames. That's the reason now, here in Columbia, we don't know anybody 'cause nobody's, everybody's from someplace else now."

People could point out whose kid was whose. Family names were very important.

0:29:42

Horrell says that her back yard had swings, a place for her grandfather to sit when he wasn't sitting in his glider on the front porch. "That's where all the older guys would sit. And families sat outdoors. My mother had, in fact, until she passed, she had a glider and two chairs on her front porch. And the neighbor across the street had a glider on her porch. And they would sit out on their porches and talk back and forth across the street until it got to be so bad that the criminal element was riding up and down the streets and saying ugliness and kids walking up and down the street with - we never had that. We honestly never had that."

She told her son that when she was growing up, if you swept your sidewalk, you swept all the way to the neighbor's sidewalk and they picked it up from there. You never had to pick up trash because kids didn't drop trash. If you were walking down the street and dropped something and you're not from around here, one of old guys would yell, "Son, you need to come back. You dropped something." In other words, don't leave your trash here.

"Society has just given us a blank page of do what you want to do."

- 0:31:18 Horrell talks about the summer program she ran for 10 years at the university with HCOP money (federal Health Careers Opportunity Program grants). She'd bring 50 black and Hispanic students from across the U.S. who were interested in the field of health professions and put them in the dorms. High school students were brought in for four weeks and given \$1,000 each. College students received \$2,200 for six weeks.
- One weekend, the kids from St. Louis decided to tear up something. She made them clean it up and call their parents to let them know their kids are on the next shuttle home. A few missed their curfew. Same thing.
- After these incidents, the students would say, "Dr. Horrell ain't playing, She gon' send you home."
- Most took advantage of the opportunity and did well for themselves. Horrell says she's had 200 black vet students who did summer programs with her and are doing well.
- 0:33:52 Horrell shares her experience with Campfire Girls. The order: Blue Birds (elementary school), Campfire Girls (grades 5-7), then Girl Scouts. They didn't have a Girl Scouts group. Most girls were part of Campfire Girls. "That was the sorority of black Columbia - well, most public schools."
- They interacted with the white Campfire Girls and went to camp. Camp Tippee-Toe-Toe. It was in McBaine, right on the river. They'd pitch a tent and cooked s'mores. It was not stuff they did in the black community. They always had a white counselor. Mrs. Rhynsburger was always there with them.
- This was how they got to know some of kids from other towns and some of the white kids from Columbia.
- "It was a little strange because they kinda segregated us and then, once they, kids got to playing and you, you're playing baseball and you playing stuff and you keep including somebody else and the next thing you you know, whoop! You got a mixed pot here."
- They learned to cook baked beans on the fire.
- 0:36:04 Campfire Girls were the after-school activities and Saturday activities. There was always something you had to do as a kid - Blue Birds, Campfire Girls, Sunbeams at church, the girls auxiliary. Boys, not so much. Horrell says the Boy Scouts fizzled out in the early 50s because

boys were doing sports or had odd jobs. Girls didn't really work in the summer.

Once a year, you saw kids - black and white - from other schools at camp.

0:37:11

When Horrell would go to her other grandmother's house, on Hickman, blacks lived on one side of Hickman, whites on the other. The black kids had to go to Douglass and the white kids all went to Jeff Junior. The Highway 40 kids had to cross through that group in the morning. Horrell says the white kids would go flying through there because of the mass that would walk down from the highway.

"Every now'n'then we'd stop one of'em. Just: 'What you doin' over here? You on the wrong side of Hickman. You supposed to be on that side of Hickman.'" [Laughs] The white kids would do the same. The white kids walked on the north side of Hickman, the black kids on the south side.

Her grandmother had a big, glassed in porch. The people across the street had a lot of kids who were always making lots of noise in their yard. There were mostly older families with no kids on her grandmother's block.

Her grandmother said of them, "They make the most noise for little people."

Horrell says the adults talked – some did, some didn't. The older ladies would talk about the flowers in her grandmother's garden.

Track 3 (39:13)

0:00:00

The only chore Horrell had was to keep her room clean. When it was time for washing, she had to have them ready. She'd help with the folding but not with the hanging of the clothes. As an only child, she didn't have to do much.

She'd sit on the porch with her grandfather, rocking back and forth. They'd go get snacks together. Her favorite was a mayonnaise sandwich with a bit of sugar sprinkled on it.

She had a friend (Bonnie) who used to make onion and garlic sandwiches.

0:01:48

Horrell talks about the big dill pickles with the peppermint stick in them again. At this time, pickles were sold from barrels. Kids would try to get

the biggest one. The peppermint sticks were as big as a quarter but cost 5 cents. With your finger, you'd hull out the center until you got a good hole started. All afternoon, you worked on the pickle that was stored in your bag between classes.

0:02:42 They used to have dances but, because she was Baptist, they couldn't dance. When she was a junior in high school, they started having 2-hour summer dances at the United Methodist Church. They got to be with a lot of the white kids then.

0:03:39 She attended Second Baptist Church. They're "shouting, hand-clapping, praise-the-Lord kinda folks - out loud." They're not quiet. She'd attend Sunday School and stay for the 11am service. They'd go home for lunch. If they didn't have a program in the afternoon, they'd go back to B.T.U. (Baptist Training Union). She went to church at night because her grandparents sung in the evening choir.

If you were good all week, you might get to go to the movies Sunday afternoon. Because blacks had to sit in the balcony, Horrell never went. Churches would often have Sunday afternoon programs, so she was never wont for things to do.

Horrell says there would always be snacks at B.T.U. They would do Bible drills and Bible studies. When they got older, they would flirt with the boys who were there. She recalls that the director was always a good-looking dude.

Most black families in town were either Baptist or Methodist.

0:07:15 Horrell talks about the one-week Vacation Bible School in the summer. Kids would do arts and craft with some Bible study. Older kids would help younger ones. When Horrell was a kid, she would go to one church's VBS one week, then another the next week.

0:08:35 Friends were kids in the neighborhood, classmates and cousins. Evelyn Jackson, Orthola Bush, Elaine Brown, Nadine Taylor, Rhoda Sue Mitchell, Phyllis Bass (cousin) and Susie Miles were a few she named. William Clayburn, Herbert Crumm, Robert Simmons, George Edward Stimmons were some of the guys.

Horrell's next-door neighbor was a chef and when he'd come home from work, he'd bring leftovers. "We'd beat Uncle Earl's door down to get to his house." (Earl Miles, who started the Miles Manor subdivision)

0:10:04 "Kids ate good. Because a lot of our parents worked at the chapter houses on campus and they would come home with all the leftovers. And in the summer when they closed the campu - you had food all summer. You know, you had stuff, you know, they didn't want to leave it on the shelves and stuff, so they clean out those shelves and shhhh. You could eat mac'n'cheese at everybody's house all week 'cause everybody cooked it differently."

"My life in Columbia was not - and my childhood was not, was not bad. The only thing was that I was contained and I didn't know I was segregated. I knew we lived in a certain part of town and we did a certain things and we did things a certain way but that's about it. I thought everybody did that."

0:11:11 Horrell walks us through a day, from bath-time to bedtime.

Whoever lived at the top house would start off and they'd pick everyone else up all the way to the schoolyard.

0:12:56 They used to have community house movies where they would rent a film and show it at the community center. Different church basements would host. They were things like The Lone Ranger – cowboy movies that were "clean."

0:13:43 Horrell says she had a typical teenage life. The girls would put on a little makeup and try to go out on the town. When they got older, they'd try to go to the shops, just to browse. "But you never went into Woolsworth unless you were going in there to buy something from, like a tube of lipstick or something like that. Because you couldn't get that in the neighborhood after a while."

There were no department stores in the black community, just grocery stores. Woolsworth was like Walmart, where you could get toiletries and stuff. It was junkier than the department stores. JC Penny's was just clothes, shoes and housewares.

0:15:23 High school students had 5 classes, sometimes 6. She had band, so that was her sixth class at the end of the day. It would last until 6:30. Then,

they'd hustle home for dinner and spend the rest of the evening there unless they had a function to attend. Horrell remembers dances, recitals and concerts.

They also had proms for the juniors and seniors. They'd play all the black music that folks listened to back then - especially Motown.

0:16:40 One year, they did operata and did country-western. Horrell says it was "a hoot" because black kids don't know anything about country music and cowboy boots. Her gym teacher taught them to square dance that night. The fellas, Horrell says, didn't want to learn it.

0:17:46 In high school, classes were English, history, math, home economics (for girls) and shop (for boys), library/band/chorus. Boys got out early to go for P.E. Girls had it as well. They played basketball, baseball, played indoor games like volleyball in the winter.

In home economics, girls had to learn to cook and sew. The home economics teacher's classroom had a cooking unit and sewing machine in it. They learned etiquette as well.

0:19:00 Horrell says the best classes were English and Black History. Students had to learn black history and civic history (or, "black history and white history," as Horrell called it.). Ms. Edith Williams taught Civics and Black History. It was mostly national and world history. They didn't have a lot of local history. They were taught about local community leaders and business people.

"You were taught who was who in Columbia. You were taught to appreciate who was around you and what they did."

"The trash man was taught was important to us. Because he took care of your trash and he was an individual and he was somebody's parent."

Mrs. Wiggins taught English.

0:21:10 Classes were set for you. Students didn't choose your classes. The curriculum was set. You had a set course list and number of units to obtain (17) in order to graduate.

0:21:50 Teachers were people that truly enjoyed teaching and making you learn. You didn't get passed along because they knew who your people were.

Many teachers pulled dual duty, meaning they taught more than one subject.

Horrell mentions the following teachers, briefly:

Ms. Edith Williams, history and civics. "If you didn't pass Edith Williams' Civics test, you did not graduate."

Mrs. Ruth Wiggins, English. She started teaching at 16 and was her mother's very first teacher. She was also both Horrell's and Horrell's mother's homeroom teacher.

Ms. Turner, gym, math. She was a hard geometry teacher.

Mr. Brooks, driver's ed., football/basketball coach.

Mr. Belcher, shop and math.

Ms. Van Buren, general studies (a combination of civics and world history).

Mr. Frank Logan, art teacher.

Ms. Buckner, home economics

"The ones that really shape you was your homeroom teacher 'cause that's who you're with every morning. You go to homeroom first when you get to school and you do the Pledge of Allegiance and all of that stuff."

"Mrs. Wiggins was very polished. She even wrote our high school, school song. But Mrs. Wiggins, um, she finally, she never married until she was older. But Dr. Wiggins, she married. Mrs. Wiggins taught us poetry. She taught us English She taught us to be little ladies. And, her feature was - and we all would go to her house and hang out. Us girls would, on Saturdays, okay? And, she carried herself very proper. She played music too. And, she would sit like this. And, in her fingers, we all noticed this white stuff ... lavender powder. And, so, all of us girls started wearing lavender powder in our fingers. [Laughs] I can still smell the lavender. But she wore lavender powder and Cashmere Bouquet flower, which was a powder brand. And that's what she wore."

Horrell says that she could clap her hands and the scent of the powder would come off her hands. "She was so proper."

Mrs. Wiggins had a sister who was an opera singer who traveled the world. When she would come in town, the limo would drop her off. All the girls loved being around both of them.

Mrs. Wiggins put Horrell out of homeroom because she called a boy who was messing with her a dirty name ("stinky punk"). She said, "Little ladies don't talk like that," and made Horrell stand outside of homeroom for a whole week.

0:26:38 Edith Williams would whip boys with a thick paddle. They garnered their students' respect. There was no talking back.

"They worked hard for you to learn." Mrs. Buckner told Horrell that she would never cook. Instead, Horrell learned to make cookies. Her mother and grandmother told her, "You don't have to learn to cook. You either marry a cook or you get rich enough that you can hire a cook." So, Horrell didn't try. She still can't cook to the day.

0:28:30 "They reminded you that you were an example and that you were an example of all black people. And they would say, you're too loud." Teachers would tell students to use their "good voice" when talking to one another.

Guys would know that certain things are taboo. When they stepped out of line, they were called on it. The guys used to pick on the girls. One of the teachers, Ms. Turner, would stand the guys up in class and tell them about not being respectful. If the girls were doing something - being disrespectful or dressed inappropriately - they would get called on it or sent home to change. A letter would be sent home too.

Same thing would happen at church.

0:30:32 The teachers would give you one-on-one teaching if you needed it. They didn't play. They gave lots of homework and expected students to come ready to do it. Study hall was not a fun place - it was like going to the library. Ms. Boone would look out over the class and give you "the look" if you were being disruptive. You stopped.

Being sent to the principal's office was not a good thing. The paddle awaited.

"We had paddling principals."

0:31:37 Russell Boone, the band director pulled a guy a guy out and threw him out of the band on Broadway because he wasn't doing what he was supposed to be doing when the band was marching. He made the kid march down the sidewalk all the way back to the school.

"He was our father figure. Mr. Boone could tell us to try to take the moon and we'd just try our darnedest to reach the moon."

0:33:18 When Horrell graduated from Douglass, she thought about how much she was going to miss the people she saw every day who'd poured into her - at school, at church, in the neighborhood.

"They were a constance in your life."

Some were relations. "We used to go to Mrs. Wiggins's house to eat up her food - which she didn't have a whole lot of because she was by herself. But we'd make sandwiches. And then, we'd eat all her sandwiches and she'd say, she'd put a little tip jar there and she'd say, 'You all have to buy more for the next time.' And we'd all chip our little money in there. So, you just got to know them very intimately."

0:34:34 They knew everybody at church as well.

0:35:00 Ms. Edith Williams, Mr. Boone and Mrs. Wiggins, Ms. Buckner were her favorites.

"The others you respected but they weren't my favorites."

0:35:30 "Those are your good days. I'm serious! Band was everything. Because you had band, you had chorus, you traveled with your band. I was drum majorette, I was marching band. I was concert band. Special ensembles. You know, we'd go to different meetings of like clarinet meetings and play competition. Band was everything. Like sports for the fellas was everything. Band, for the girls, was everything. And, I mean, you could do everything at your high school because you were in everything ..."

Horrell feels like it's tougher to get girls - especially those who are attending Douglass today - interested in things like band or sports.

"We got up at seven - to tell you how interesting band was - you got up at seven o'clock in the morning and marched up and down fourth street for marching band practice. At seven a.m. and you weren't late. Six forty-five, you hit Douglass gymnasium waiting for band practice.

We had, we practiced long nights. Some nights, 10, 11. Getting ready to go on concert tour, like to Tulsa and places where we'd go? Oh my goodness. We'd get through with band at 10, 11 o'clock and we'd stagger home. Parents pack you bag and the next morning at seven o'clock they would bring you to Douglass and we'd get on the big Greyhound bus and, oh my God you couldn't beat it. You could not beat band. You could not beat band.

Like, the boys couldn't beat basketball and football. We'd be waving'em goodbye. Oh, we'd stand and wave goodbye. Ah, it was very different."

"You learned music. You made friends. You traveled. You saw people. You were entertainers - and we loved it."

0:37:57

Mr. Boone was very strict. You learned your music. He would check your spats on your shoes. He was a dark-skinned man who said he had to see his face in your shoes. Your spats had to be soaked in soapy water and bleach to get them gleaming. You put them flat to dry and then placed them in a plastic bag to take them to school.

"'Cause you didn't want that spat to be dirty because Mr. Boone see a dirty spat you ain't going nowhere."

Horrell says she got to be a "drama queen" in drama class. They did Shakespeare, "Macbeth," "A Raisin in the Sun."

Track 4 (36:13)

0:00:00

Horrell paints a picture of the Douglass band marching downtown. The band did precision marching, played their instruments without music and didn't stop at the end of a parade - they marched all the way back to the school. Mr. Boone would look at them and say, "Showtime." Lines were perfectly straight. Everybody stopped to watch.

"It taught us precision marching, responsibility. It taught you, uh, that you were important, that you were showcasing your school and you as the people, and everybody that related to you. In the year that I was drum majorette I was sure enough show-off. Leading the group down Broadway – froop, froop, froop. Step out. Steppin'. Steppin' high."

She gets chills just talking about it.

0:02:12 Horrell talks about being in Little Rock, AR when they were trying to integrate the schools on a school band trip to Arkansas A&M (Pine Bluff). They were at the school that was integrated (Little Rock Central High School) during her junior year with Daisy Bates. They stayed in their homes because there were no hotels in Pine Bluff. They got to ride in the guarded cars. They talked to the guards. The guards were impressed with them as a band.

They couldn't stay in hotels in general on these band trips, so they stayed in people's homes.

Sandra Brown Turner's sisters - Barbara, Nathalyn and Elaine - were in the band as well. They played the flute.

0:06:17 When you started grade school at Douglass, you started at the north end (closest to the swimming pool). You graduate attending classes near the south door.

0:06:44 Horrell describes the classrooms as "regular classrooms." They had "old-time" desks in a row. They had hallway lockers in high school where books and supplies could be stored. They were assigned. Teachers sat at desks at the front of the room. There had blackboards. The teachers made do, with teacher's aids. "If they didn't have it and they need it, they bought it with their own money. Teachers would share space and share things."

Each teacher had their own room but some classes spilled over into other classrooms. If a teacher used someone else's room, they'd clean up after themselves. People gave Douglass a lot but most of it was second-hand. They got second-hand books and band uniforms from the school system. Groups bought things like projectors and a/v equipment.

0:08:43 Horrell remembers Mr. Boone wanted a megaphone and one of the band boosters bought it for him. A lot of the musicians used a lot of the Shell's

Music Store towels. The store gave the school some instruments. Most students had to buy their own instruments, though.

The music store was on Broadway and Tenth Street. When your parents bought an instrument from there, they made sure your parents had a plan they could afford.

Horrell says the hand-me-down instruments the school system gave them would be used until they fell apart and held together by wire before they reached Douglass.

0:10:11 Horrell says the parents were supportive of the teachers. Parents took the reports they got from teachers seriously. The teachers lived in the neighborhood - sometimes next door to you. The principal lived there too, right next to the football field.

They had an all-white school board, so they had no interaction with them. When the superintendent of schools was around, everyone knew it. "Dr. Aslin's in the building! Only white man in the building - it's Dr. Aslin."

0:11:17 Horrell's relationship with the other students was a good one. She was pretty outgoing, a serious student and enjoyed high school. She was involved in everything she could possibly be involved in because she was curious.

0:12:06 Lunch in grade school and junior high was eaten on campus. In high school, students could take the 40 minutes and eat off campus if they wanted.

"But lunches were good. Oh my goodness. You know, you got mommas in there that can really cook in those kitchens. Ms. Pullam cooked everything." She was the head dietician. Students were given a full meal and dessert. They served things like mac'n'cheese, salad and a heavy dessert. Fried chicken or baked chicken and dressing was also served. They had turkey and dressings for Thanksgiving.

Horrell thinks they added to the meals that were set by the school system.

0:13:42 Juniors and seniors went to little neighborhood places near campus like the Blue and White to get the big hot dogs, Miss Jenny's to get a hamburger or up to Monty's to get a bowl of chili. Some kids went home, some brought their lunch.

They ate in the cafeteria or out on the playground.

Horrell says she was a social butterfly who was everywhere, so she ate with whomever she was socializing with that particular day. There was the core group who would eat together. If she was going home for lunch, there was a group of kids from the neighborhood who would walk together.

The kids at the top of the hill would head back first and pick everyone else up along the way. Horrell says that sometimes they'd have to run once they hit Third Street because they were being "cool" up to that point.

During her senior year, a couple friends had a car and they'd catch a ride to and from school for lunch.

0:16:05

The plan to desegregate the schools was in the news. It was on the TV, radio and everyone was talking about it. Teachers talked about it, sharing the advantages and disadvantages. They encouraged them to talk to their families about it.

"Most of us made a conscious decision that we were doing so many things in our school that we knew the first ones at Hickman wasn't gonna get to do. I mean, you know, how accepted were we gonna - you know, it's like you're moving into a new town and you're like, 'Well, am I gonna - how accepted am I gonna be and, you know, this is still a racially charged kinda situation and we know the neighborhood and we are involved.' You know, when you're involved in band and chorus and all of those things - football, basketball, all that - you're not gonna leave it what you know to go to where you might be a third-stringer or no-stringer or you just going to school."

Horrell says those that stayed were more involved than those that left.

Horrell says the teachers "gave us the option of understanding that we were not obligated to stay at Douglass but that we, if we felt that we wanted to go and do this, that we were qualified to." Teachers told them they had the best and would be able to sit with the best of them.

"Most folks just stayed. I mean, your friends are all there. Why go out there with seven folks that you may or may not know that you spent time with? So, most of us stayed."

Boys stayed because of the athletics. The seven who transferred were all girls. "When you take sports away from guys, when they know they can play and they know they're gonna be able to play, they're gonna do this."

0:19:13 The community was fine with the plan to desegregate but were leery of how well the kids are going to be treated once they got there. Horrell says that's one of the reasons that none of the kids in the lower grades transferred until they had to do so when Douglass closed.

Parents talked about it at PTA meetings, at church, in the neighborhood - everywhere. It was a support system. Horrell says that they would see the kids who transferred and supported them as well.

0:20:24 Horrell says that her mother knew she wasn't going anywhere.

Horrell didn't need to have a conversation with her mother about the possibility of transferring. "The option was that I could be here and involved or I could be here and be isolated. It wasn't like, 'They're going to be open-handed, waiting for you to come.' It's like, 'You can come if you want to' kind of attitude. So, I didn't want to do that."

She says she didn't want to have to jump through any hoops she didn't have to jump, especially in her junior and senior years.

0:21:27 Horrell saw no changes at Douglass once students started to transfer to Hickman. "We had nothing to change. Douglass went on like it was until they started whispering about closing Douglass and that's when folks started getting upset."

Horrell's class (1959) should have been the last class. They extended it one more year and actually closed it in 1960.

"In fact, we thought we were the last class so we really had a good time, being the last class at Douglass. And then they said, like the 15th of May, they said, 'Oh, we're going to extend it one more time.' Well, we graduate the 28th of May. Well, pft, we thought we were doing it, right. We were going to take souvenirs." [Laughs] Since they extended it for another year, they left things like band pictures, band instruments, stuff like that, alone.

0:23:24 People got upset when "they" said Douglass was going to close.

"Every child was not ready to transfer. You know, you just don't - it's like, you do or you don't. It's not like, 'Well, let's get this prepared and let's get this.' I mean, you're talking about, like '55 through '59. And, kids didn't really start transferring until '55 - well, one girl transferred in '55, maybe two. And the rest of them were further back in the grades. Well, of those seven, we never heard anything that they were doing except going to school. And they would tell the stories of, 'Well, we're not into this' and 'No, I'm not playing in band,' 'No, I'm not in chorus,' or 'No, I'm not in drama classes like we used to be.' So other kids just - I mean, we enjoyed Douglass."

0:24:37

Most of the teachers retired when they started to hear whispers about closing Douglass. They never gave students their opinion and most were older. They encouraged students to do what was best for them. They planned to ride out the time at Douglass and retire.

Horrell says that when Douglass closed and kids all had to go there, the parents didn't get as involved as they should have. Their children weren't involved in any activities, so parents didn't get really involved.

Horrell says that trying to learn to navigate the University of Missouri was like trying to navigate a maze.

"It was huge. When you come from a small high school and you step out here, and 14,000 students, uh and 23 of us were black? It was just like those kids starting out over there, at Hickman. We had to learn the norms, the rigors, the insults, the attitudes all over again. And we came from a very secure surrounding and that's what happened to a lot of kids, black kids that transferred. They had been nourished - not pampered, but they had been secure and supported. Out here, you got a number and if you didn't make that number you didn't make it. And until the parents started to understand that they had to be better support systems, those kids weren't making it."

0:27:48

What was lost with desegregation:

Kids lost the ability to know basic survival skills. They learned that someone wasn't going to hand them anything. They had a more individualized support system under segregation. "If Johnny wasn't reading, then Johnny got extra help at Douglass. If Johnny wasn't reading at Hickman, he got left behind. He either dropped out of school or he went to summer school or he, you know, failed the course and had to repeat."

"It wasn't so much that we were handicapped or disadvantaged, we just didn't know their system. Value systems are very different. You know, sometimes at Douglass, you could get away with five minutes late. Over there, you might not get away with five minutes late."

"Kids had to learn to be responsible - more responsible - and not expect that somebody's going to understand."

Kids going into that environment had to learn that they had to be responsible for themselves and how they maintained self. Parents had to be more knowledgeable about what's going on with their kids because they don't tell you at Hickman like they did at Douglass.

0:29:50 What was gained:

The advantage was that blacks were all of a sudden in an arena where things were available to them. They had "new stuff" and "what everybody else had."

Kids were all of a sudden in classes with people they didn't know, where they'd been in classes with people they'd known all their lives at Douglass. The support system there was gone.

Survival skills had to be taught in the churches and community groups with other black kids who had been through the system.

0:31:20 The church was where community happened. There was no real community center. Horrell says the Blind Boone Center comes close but she's never been inside it.

0:32:14 Kids who went to Hickman came back to Douglass on every occasion - for parties, dances and things. They weren't included in the ones at Hickman.

"They got more variety of subjects and choices and class offerings and things. I don't know if they took'em or not but they were more readily accessible. We knew what we had at Douglass and we used it to our advantages."

0:32:56 Regarding her education at Douglass, Horrell says, "It was top-notch for what, for that particular time in my life. I learned everything that I needed to learn. I learned my ABC's, my, my, you know, I knew music, I knew

pros, I knew cons. You know, we did everything that everybody else did. We might have done it on a smaller scale."

"Just because you don't have the newest stuff, it's not that you don't learn."

0:33:45 "Book-wise, I was smart as anyone else needed to be to make it. Personally, um, I knew survival. I knew how to, to, to deal with other people. I learned very quickly how to deal with my non-black peers. Um, I really wasn't uncomfortable once I got into a system and you know the game and the rules, you're okay. And if you get okay with yourself - not that I was so over the top okay with myself - but I, it was like, 'Self: if you gon' make it.' That's the reason why we've never left Columbia. You know, all of our friends quickly got into college and left Columbia and left family and my husband, Bud, and I both said, 'If we can't make it at home, we probably can't make it anywhere. 'Cause this is the hardest place in the world to make it.'"

Horrell says the black professionals in the area stick together. She's glad her children got out because she feels there aren't a lot of career opportunities for blacks in Columbia. She cites as example the lack of black representation in city council and that there's only been one black person to run for mayor. Most talent leaves because they don't see a reason to stay.

Kids who went to college outside of Columbia saw a different world.

0:36:00 Horrell says most people - especially faculty on campus - don't think she's from Columbia.

Track 5 (09:59)

0:00:00 "Desegregation on one hand was an opportunity to grow individually. Grow professionally. But on the other hand it could be and it for a little bit of a time was a down, made you kind of questions yourself, whether you were qualified. Whether you could survive in the massive outside of your comfort zone. And I think just in general, that's the kind of, that most of us had when we started to, to move forward into this desegregated world. That we stepped outside of our comfort zone. And then when you step outside your comfort zone you have to either survive or you know, you just gonna either perish or survive. And perish is not something we were taught."

Horrell says she of that generation that says, "If I perish, somebody's going down with me."

"We had to survive. And survival meant, you adapt, you find out where your niche is and where you can make a difference or where you can be a part of. And that's where you - and where you feel comfortable."

Horrell talks about being in Altrusa, which was a group of 100 white ladies and Horrell. When they offered her an opportunity to join Altrusa, she was reluctant. The one white lady she knew said, "Barbra, you are an Altrusan. It's not about color. It's about personality. It's about you. And remember you were the Altrusa award winner when you graduated from high school. We had seen what you were able to do when and you were - your competition."

It was like a pat on the back that made her feel okay. For five or six years, she'd say, "I'm the raisin in the sun." This was her coping mechanism.

Once people get to know who people are, more than likely they adapt to you. "They have to get comfortable with you as well as you have to get comfortable with them."

She says that when she was working for the university, selling black alumni membership, a lot of the people she contacted around the state had attended during the initial desegregation period and said they weren't sending their kids to MU. They let them choose to go where they wanted, which was largely historically black colleges at the time.

Horrell says that desegregation gave us diversity. "It gave us one on one with somebody else other than the people that we're comfortable with."

0:04:30

Regarding the progress that Columbia's made in the last 60 years:

"They've made some progress. We could do better - a lot better."

Horrell feels that we're going backwards. People used to try to involve more people in everything. Now, she says, the cliques are forming again and there are no people are color in.

"What they call diversity now is gay, lesbian, other gender kinda things. That's not diversity. That's just life. We've all had that, you know, one

form or another. Diversity is when my ideas and your ideas and everybody else's ideas are put together and we come up with something."

0:05:23 She says that people of color don't participate in initiatives put forth from the Cultural Affairs Office downtown because they've never been asked what they'd like to do. She says that the Roots, Blues and Barbeque folks bring one black entertainer in and blacks should be happy. "They've done me a favor, it seems."

She raised the question, why doesn't some of Boone's music get played at the ragtime jazz festival?

0:06:35 Horrell talks about the fight to get the Blind Boone Home finished. In the Tribune, she says, some suggested tearing down the registered historical property and making it a parking lot.

0:06:58 When they did the James Scott memorial (the last black man who was hanged in Columbia), the community pitched in to get a headstone for his grave and build a memorial. They found 200 other unmarked graves of slaves and marked those. These are the types of things Horrell believes will be "inclusive."

"Columbia has been so exclusive that we just, you know, the country clubs. There's no blacks in the country clubs. I've been here all my life. Somebody says, 'Aren't you in the country club?' I said, 'I've never been even asked.' You just don't walk in the country club and say, 'I want an application. I'm gonna apply.' And they say, 'Come go to the country club with me.' I said, 'No. Don't feel comfortable yet.' And so, you don't go where you're not comfortable. I don't."

0:09:15 Horrell talks about the Miles Manor subdivision, where two white Supreme Court justices who moved into the black neighborhood. A few teachers did as well.

"They wouldn't sell. It happened to be a black man that owned all that property right there where the Forum Shopping Center. And before they could quote, 'chew him out of it' he sold it to the black group cheap. 'Cause they were gonna take his prop – they were gonna eminent domain take the property.

That's Columbia."

John C. Kelly – Hickman High School Class of 1960

John Kelly describes his neighborhood growing up as an extended family where every adult had the freedom to discipline or “fire up” any child – what he calls “vigilante justice.” There, he played baseball and basketball with other children and listened to “The Lone Ranger” and baseball games on the radio. When televisions first came out and a neighboring family got one, he joined the kids who gathered there for afternoon cartoons.

At Douglass, Kelly says teachers were “tyrants” but honest with you. They let you know that, out in the real world, the color of your skin meant, “In case of a tie, you lose.” They pushed their students to succeed.

Kelly was part of the band under Russell Boone’s leadership. The practices, performances and trips took up a lot of time, he says, but the experience taught him many life lessons – specifically about the value of time, precision and dedication. When they traveled, his English teacher, Mrs. Ruth Wiggins, who he describes as being “as close to royalty as you will ever see,” required her students to write and mail her a letter from their destination – in perfect penmanship and with correct grammar.

Once he decided to transfer to Hickman, Kelly’s involvement in extracurricular activities dissipated in lieu of focusing on academics and his after-school job. He viewed Conrad Stawski, who taught English at Hickman, as someone he could relate to because Stawski was a Polish immigrant who went through Nazi persecution during World War II. He likens going to Hickman to facing enemy fire in a hostile, combat situation. His parents were his refuge at the end of the day and a sounding board for the issues he faced at school. His father, John Milton Kelly, was one of the first black Columbia police officers, so Kelly felt he could understand what he was going through. They’d ride around in his father’s patrol car at night, talking about life.

“Parents couldn’t be much help because they’d never been through anything like this,” Kelly says. “And sometimes we’d sit down and talk about something that’d happened and we’d game plan for if it happened again. And they always reassured you. It’s nice to just come on home and just put your head on your mother’s breast and she’d pat you, ‘Son, it’ll be all right.’ Then you get up and you go out the next day and you give it your best shot again.”

Kelly speculates that a list of students was developed from which individual NAACP parents encouraged particular kids to transfer to Hickman. The leaders, he says, knew the open door was an opportunity that blacks needed to seize.

For his part, Kelly doesn’t know that he would make the decision to be one of the forerunners who took advantage of what Hickman had to offer if he had it to live all over again.

"I had so much stuff going for me at Douglass. You know, with the teachers, the social aspects of it. Being just another kid, I just don't know that I would've done it again. But, for what I was going to face, the first couple of years of college would've been - they were traumatic enough - but they would've been far more traumatic had I just come out of Douglass and went to the University of Missouri."

Audio Log of interview with John C. Kelly
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project

Track 1 (41:42)

INTRO :26

Name: John Carl Kelly

Date of birth: December 28, 1942

Birthplace: Columbia, MO

Parents' names: John Milton Kelly and Helen Beatrice Kelly

Parent's occupation: Mother was a nursery school teacher at Nora Stewart Nursery for about 27 years. Father was a Columbia police officer for 31 years.

Sibling(s): One brother, Rodney Quinn Kelly, who is seven years younger. Worked for Shelter Insurance, the Missouri Athletic Department (sports announcer) and then spent 25 years with Columbia Public Schools.

0:01:42 John Kelly talks about his elementary school years at Douglass and how grades one through 12 worked at the school. He was at Douglass from 1948 through 1958, when he decided to transfer to Hickman High School. He then went on to pursue a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Missouri (in 1966) before joining the Peace Corps in 1966 and participating in their teacher training program in India. From 1968 to 1970, he did a tour in Vietnam with the U.S. Army. Once he left the Army, he returned to Columbia and began working with Columbia Public Schools – first running the alternative school (Continuing Education/Secondary Learning Center), then serving as an assistant principal at Hickman High School from 1977 until his retirement in 1997.

0:03:35 Kelly talks about life growing up in Columbia. He was born at home and delivered by the town's black doctor, Dr. Baughman, and his maternal grandmother. He talks about having little or no contact with white people apart from the insurance man, white doctors (like Dr. Smith, who made house calls) and the people who ran the local grocery store.

He describes the neighborhood as an extended family where every adult had the freedom to discipline or “fire up” any child in the neighborhood – what he calls “vigilante justice.”

“There was no, this thing of ‘don’t touch my kid’ or ‘don’t bother my kid.’” Everybody was seemingly responsible for everybody’s kid and of course, that kept law and order, you know, to the max. [Laughs]. (6:44-6:56)

- 0:07:00 Kelly shares about his neighbors: Todd Williams, an old bachelor who took them places in his car when needed. Williams really took to Kelly and would often share meals with him. Kelly’s mother would get upset because, at home, he was a finicky eater but would eat anything Mr. Williams cooked.
- Kelly also had an Uncle Smith who worked at the Boone Theater, taking tickets. It’s where Kelly found love of B-Westerns. As he got older, his “gang” of neighborhood kids would walk from Worley Street to the one o’clock movies together on Saturdays and Sundays.
- 0:08:48 Tells the story of going to see the Frankenstein movie and being afraid of walking home after leaving the theater because it had gotten dark outside due to a bad thunderstorm that moved through Columbia.
- 0:10:10 Kids in those days made their own fun shooting marbles, pitching horseshoes and riding bikes through the neighborhood. In those days, families were converting from coal-fired stoves to gas stoves, so unused coal sheds became clubhouses, complete with “No girls allowed” signs.
- 0:10:48 Talks about some of the kids he was friends with, including the Wright family (“Big Boy,” Jimmy, Kenny-Boy Wright), the Simmons family (Bobby Simmons, Paul Simmons). Describes how most families had multiple children but he had to wait 7 years to get his one baby brother.
- 0:11:19 Girls were around but didn’t really run around town with them because they were playing dolls.
- 0:11:30 Different neighbors had basketball goals in their back yards. Before Noble Court was built, it was the kids’ baseball field. Kelly describes the layout and how boundaries were determined by “the Flat Branch.” Across the street, there was a rectangular vacant lot that was the football field. In addition, he played touch football with kids on Oak Street in a nearby

field. He recalls a really nice basketball goal that someone put up on Switzler Street that was dubbed "Madison Square Garden." It was where kids would gather to watch the really good, older athletes played.

0:12:53 Everything evolved around the school (Douglass). Band concerts were a source of entertainment for the community. Kelly describes the spring and Christmas concerts and some of the major trips they took for that time (to Springfield, Arkansas AM&N – now Arkansas State – and play in their homecoming activities or to Little Rock).

One of the trips coincided with the integration of Central High School, where Kelly got to see the guards and experience some of the racial tension. He said it didn't register until later, though, because he was more focused on the music he was playing than the piece of history he was witnessing.

0:14:58 Kelly describes the layout of the house he grew up in, on the corner of Worley and Noble Court (5 E Worley). He pays special attention to the kitchen, explaining that his father was the type of man who was always looking for a scheme or deal. This includes taking advantage of the introduction of frozen foods to society and purchasing meat wholesale from the University agricultural people. He tells the story of his father's brief stint in the chicken business, which includes a poor attempt at slaughtering a chicken.

0:20:28 Kelly describes his yard, including the old telephone pole his father brought home and transformed into a basketball goal. He tells how the neighborhood kids knew the rules of the house and would wait until the clothes were dry and offer to bring them in for his mom so they could play ball in the back yard.

0:22:57 Played baseball in Noble Court, made up a game called "card ball" - hitting a tennis ball with a broomstick - and pitched horseshoes with real horseshoes from the junk yard that they bought for a nickel a piece. Played touch football across the street. Also played checkers, Chinese checkers and cards (hearts and bid whist). Dad would get 10-lb. bags of popcorn from the university that his mom would put in a dishpan and serve to the kids after band practice while kids traded comic books and baseball cards or played cards.

- 0:25:23 Had a stereo that played 45 and 33 1/3 rpm records. Simmons family had the first television. Kids would go to their house, like the movies, at 5 o'clock to watch cartoons.
- 0:26:40 Kelly describes a typical day and how he progressed through his first 10 years at Douglass. He talks about how the teachers lived in the neighborhood and were part of the community, which meant that there were instant progress reports at all times. A lot of teachers (at Douglass) had also taught their parents.
- Goes on to describe elementary years in classrooms shared with higher grades.
- 0:28:28 Chores such as washing dishes, cleaning the yard or helping with the laundry. He tells about when the family moved away from the washboard and finally got a washing machine. He describes what it looked like and how it worked.
- 0:30:31 He had to do homework first, then you can go out and play until it was dark.
- 0:30:50 Special chores on the weekend. Kelly had to clean the black marks off of their light-colored kitchen floor with steel wool and mop the floor. He goes on to describe the family's "spring cleaning" rituals.
- 0:32:10 Where kids today watch TV, back then they listened to the radio. As a kid, he and his friends loved the Lone Ranger radio show, which would sometimes get preempted by baseball when the Cardinals were playing. It's how he got hooked on baseball. Everyone listened, so you "could literally walk down the street and not miss a pitch because everyone was listening to the game." The barbershop was also a great spot to listen.
- 0:33:53 Kelly talks about his wake up time, bedtime. When he turned 16 he got a job as a custodian at the University Medical Center and went to work at 4 and worked until midnight on Fridays, 8am to 4:30pm Saturday and Sunday.
- 0:34:55 Explains how things changed in high school: "The band took up whole a lot of your time because we practiced before school, your first period class was always band and then you practiced, you had an evening practice. And the closer you got to a performance, the more intense all these practices got." Kelly goes on to explain how things escalated when there

was a concert or trip that factored into the equation. They weren't allowed to use music - they had to memorize all their pieces so that everyone would hold the line.

- 0:36:24 Kelly describes band uniform - blue and white with white stripe down the leg with gold piping down the stripe, military style caps and white spats and white gloves. He shares that the spats and gloves had to be "totally radiant" and students had to buy a suit bag to put the uniform in and were only allowed to have it in their possession if they were 1) taking it to the cleaners or 2) performing.
- 0:37:04 Explains marching regiment and the how Douglass "marched the other bands in Columbia off the streets."
- 0:37:31 Kelly talks about how Russell Boone taught him so much about time and excellence through his regimentation and extensive practice. "He used to say, 'You can't start at seven o'clock and be here at seven o'clock. Be on time.'" Kelly talks about Mr. Boone introducing him to grits on one of the first trips to Arkansas.
- 0:38:43 Kelly explains what he used to eat at home - scrambled eggs, bacon or pancakes for breakfast. For other meals, he lists things that feed a crowd - beans, spaghetti, greens and things that came out of his family's backyard garden (tomatoes, beans and carrots, etc.). He describes country bacon and his grandmother's homemade fluffy country biscuits that he smothered in butter, sorghum molasses, honey or homemade jelly. He also pays homage to her homemade white cake with chocolate icing that would appear for birthdays. Kelly believes walking everywhere and physical labor counteracted what he now considers an unhealthy diet.

Grandmother lived on 3rd Street, right where the Blind Boone Center is, just across from Douglass, until her home was taken during Urban Renewal and she was moved to a house on McBaine Avenue (Ask what her name was!).

Track 2 (23:14)

- 0:00:24 Kelly describes the classrooms at Douglass and how students moved through the building as they progressed from grades 1 through 12. Students got lockers in seventh grade and started going from class to class instead of staying in one room.

- 0:01:16 Describes teachers as being "brutal" because they expected a lot and were quick to discipline students with corporal punishment. "You didn't need a witness. You just needed a kid and a paddle. That's the way justice was administered." He goes on to tell stories about Emma Mae Turner (math teacher) who would fist-punch you in the chest. "She didn't take any mess off anybody," he says. Describes Eva Williams as an "absolute tyrant" who would paddle you at the drop of a hat, then ask, "Did you see your mistake?" "I didn't make any mistakes in her class and she said, 'Kelly, I really like you because you can think on your feet.' And I said to myself, 'Damn right! I saw what people got that didn't think on their feet.'"
- 0:02:33 Kelly shares his thoughts on Ruth Wiggins, a teacher he says he "worshipped," who he describes as being "as close to royalty as you will ever see." Wiggins was a Howard graduate back in the 1920s who came back to Columbia to teach. She wrote the Douglass school song and was an accomplished pianist. She taught Kelly to love the English language. He goes into some depth about her teaching style, assignments she would give and how exams were administered.
- 0:03:43 "When we went on the band trips, her assignment was to write her a letter while we were gone and she had to get the letter before you got back. So, Wednesday night in Springfield, you would sit down and furiously write her a letter telling her about what had happened - grammatically correct - put it in the mail, so she would get it by hopefully Thursday or Friday before you got back into town."
- 0:04:40 Kelly talks about George Brooks, coach for football and basketball at Douglass and what it was like to play for him. Describes the athletic facilities - or lack thereof - like the football field on Unity Drive, which students had to walk from the school to where the projects are now to practice, then walk back down to shower. Also describes uniforms used.
- 0:05:59 Describes "educational hardware" used to teach that was handed down from white schools. Example given: in a class with 40 kids, there were 3 microscopes.
- "When I got to Hickman, I sat down in a science class and there was a microscope in front of me and I was waiting for somebody to come and - it was my microscope - one per kid. So, those were the kinds of things that people can kind of forget - that the black schools had the absolutely worst

equipment. But the teachers didn't let that stop them. They taught anyway."

- 0:07:08 Kelly describes supplies from other classes.
- 0:07:49 Kelly lists classes he took at Douglass - English, Social Studies, Science, Woodworking, Physical Education, Band
- 0:08:19 When he got to Hickman, things changed. English, Math, Social Studies, Art (which he actually took at both schools). He said he only needed 17 credits to graduate and when he finished his junior year he had 15. His parents made him take a full load (six more credits) his senior year anyway.
- 0:09:22 Kelly explains what homework was like for Math, Social Studies, English. Draws attention to Conrad Stawski (English) as a favorite teacher at Hickman. "We had a lot in common because he was from Poland and he had gone through the World War II persecution with the Nazi's and all. And so, he kinda knew, firsthand, what I was going through at Hickman High School. We bonded." Their relationship continued long into the time that Kelly was working at Hickman and Stawski taught at Rock Bridge.
- 0:10:58 Shares about the Men's barbeque that they used to have at Hickman when he worked there. He laughs about the off-color stories Stawski would tell at these functions.
- 0:11:47 Kelly describes art classes at Hickman and how he was not a math person, so he got "destroyed" in Geometry his senior year. He got a D in that class, the worst grade he ever made.
- 0:12:44 Kelly revisits and goes into depth about Ruth Wiggins's teaching style and character. For her 90th birthday, he wrote a poem about her called "Open up your mind." She would say this to her students when she saw them struggling to grasp concepts.
- "She gave you something to aspire to because all of a sudden you wanted to carry yourself in that manner and you wanted to speak like she did and you wanted to write like she did. And you didn't want to do anything to disappoint her and it drove you to a level of excellence that normally you probably wouldn't achieve just on your own."
- 0:14:45 Ruth Wiggins and Russell Boone were his top two teachers. They were his personal role models. Kelly talks in-depth about Russell Boone's impact

on his life. Describes Mr. Boone as being impeccably dressed, around 6'4" and walking with a kind of swagger. He was an excellent musician and music teacher and incredibly confident in a time when blacks had "all manners of discouragement thrown in their way and it didn't bother'em - they just kept right on going."

0:15:32 Kelly talks about the impact of the level of excellence Boone demanded from the band and what he learned from his leadership.

0:17:14 Kelly concedes that even though other teachers were tyrants, they were honest with you. Train crossing sign that says, "In case of a tie, you lose" presented a similar message delivered by Douglass teachers to their students in regards to competing in the society they were going into as adults.

"If you are just as good as a white person, you're not going to get the job. And so, they drilled into us 'you have be the very best to succeed in the society that you're going to enter as an adult.'"

Kelly uses military terms to describe how these teachers who'd endured racism themselves were trying to prepare their students how not to "get killed" in society. He says they came right out and told students this and weren't shy about talking about racism, then presents examples of what was said – straight with no sugar coating.

0;20:48 Tells story about his dad's football coach - Roy Woods - who was responsible for mixing the chlorine for the Douglass swimming pool and was made to take a class at the university on mixing chlorine - a class that he ended up teaching. Eventually got his PhD and taught at the Hampton Institute for years. Demonstrates the level of talent that was hidden in terrible teaching situations.

0:22:37 Begins to talk about what he wore to school.

Track 3 (04:46)

0:00:05 Kelly continues to talk about what he wore to school. Shares about uncle (NAME) who was a professional musician whose older, frayed shirts he used to wear in high school as a fashion statement. Describes "Dirty Buck" suede shoes and engineer boots that he wore. Tennis shoes were for gym class. Suit and ties were worn to church. Mother used to make him

wear a snowsuit when he was in the 3rd grade to school. He says she was overprotective.

0:2:28 Students had to go downtown to Howard Swan's (around 10th and Broadway) to buy a white t-shirt and blue shorts for gym class with a corresponding number on them that was used for gym class. The shirt, when turned inside out, was blue. "If the numbers didn't match, you didn't get credit for gym that day." Roll was taken after showers as well, before students went on to their next class.

0:04:00 At Douglass, a teacher, who was your advisor, helped you choose your classes. At Hickman, they had counselors whose only job was helping students choose classes. Kelly approximates 900 students at Hickman while he was there, 200 at Douglass (for the whole school).

Track 4 (02:56)

0:00:20 Kelly talks about his avoidance of sports where he gets hit (boxing and football). He played baseball and softball instead but describes himself as "not the best athlete," even though he had some success with softball. Tells the story of starting at age 17 on college softball team after trying out with lifelong friend, Jim Nunnelly.

Track 5 (06:38)

0:00:24 Discusses parents' relationship with teachers at Douglass. Kelly says his parents were in sync with teachers and knew education was the answer to a better life in America. Both parents graduated from high school and had many of the same teachers as student. (Ruth Wiggins was his mother's advisor.)

0:02:00 Kelly tells the story of Mr. Boone going to the music store with his parents to select his musical instrument (alto saxophone) that Kelly ended up playing in the band.

0:02:25 Shares that Mr. Boone got his friend, Wayne Bush, a full scholarship in music to college because he knew the people at the university Bush went to. Teachers were readily available to write letters of recommendations. Some students would work in the office to practice typing skills. Describes Douglass as a community-based school where teachers assessed your skills and weaknesses and work on things to make you the very best you could be, even with limited resources.

Kelly says that there was no interaction with school board and higher-ups because of the segregation line. The principal of Douglass was as high as things would go until integration occurred.

- 0:04:40 Teachers lived in the community, went to same churches, ate at the same restaurants, etc. Possibly went to the same person's kitchen to get their hair done. Teachers would often stop by your house and have a cup of coffee on the weekends while they were out. There was much more social interaction with teachers than you have now. Relationships were built and maintained.
- 0:05:50 When Kelly got his promotion to assistant principal at Hickman, Mrs. Wiggins wrote him a note saying how proud she was of him. He used to pull these types of positive notes out as a coping mechanism when he worked at Hickman and was having a bad day.

Track 6 (25:52)

- 0:00:00 Kelly talks about his interactions with the other students as a shy, quiet kid.
- 0:01:00 Kelly talks about having to deal with bullies at school because his father was a police officer.
- 0:03:20 Kelly describes the difference between school fights during his school days versus fights on high school campuses now. He shares that back then, the fight was between the two people involved and others would stand around to watch. As punishment, the two students were taken to the office and possibly paddled. Now, he says, there are 7 or 8 people who get involved, making for an explosive situation for which administrators had no warning. He explains that during his career at Hickman, due to the risk of weapons and the "posse" mentality, law enforcement was called in to handle situations.
- 0:06:00 Trouble at school spelled punishment at home as well.
- 0:07:05 Kelly discusses the layout and composition of classrooms at Douglass. He describes classes with 30-40 students in a classroom that produced stress on equipment and how students in elementary school would share desks designed for one person. As a left-handed person, he tells how he had to

twist around to make the desks work for him and about the status of equipment used in other classes.

- 0:12:21 Students purchased their own instruments (except for the larger ones, which were purchased by the district) for band class.
- 0:13:20 Kelly describes school functions and performances, including plays, band concerts, sporting events, dances (a.k.a. "socials") and the end-of-the-school-year celebration of May Day and wrapping the maypole.
- 0:19:00 After school, once the homework and chores were finished, kids would play "pick-up" games (softball or baseball). The whole neighborhood would go to the movies on Saturday and Sunday at the Boone Theater. Sundays were filled with Sunday school and church. In the AME church, young people would attend Allen League - named after Richard Allen - which was an instructional group where students learned about the AME church.
- Miss Jenny's Restaurant and the Blue and White were places where students could go and get a hamburger or ice cream sundae after games.
- 0:21:00 Kelly talks about the types of games he played with his sports fanatic friends, like collecting baseball cards and playing them in position on a cardboard replica of Ebbets Field, where the Dodgers played. He also shares how he "terrorized" the neighborhood with his friends by practicing their musical instruments on the front porch.
- Parents also expected kids to contribute to the household by mowing the lawn, washing dishes, feeding the dog, etc. Kelly shares how sometimes kids would visit their grandparents and simply sit and listen to them talk or listen to the radio.
- "I've always wanted to be better - to learn something. You know, how did you do that? Why does it work for you? Will it work for me? Can I incorporate that into, you know, my lifestyle. I really enjoy being around older people, listening to them and listening to how they grew up, what they went through."
- 0:23:42 Grandparents lived across from Douglass school and when they retired, a bunch of "old men" would hang out in their large front yard. Kelly was the gopher - for ice water in tin cans. The group would follow the shade across the front yard - as the sun moved, they would pick their chairs up

and move with the shade from the north side of the yard to the south side. Kelly talks about the things he learned from just sitting and listening to this group.

Track 7 (03:08)

0:00:00 Kelly describes what he did for lunch at Douglass. He ate in the cafeteria, where hot dogs, hamburgers and "normal" food was served. The cafeteria, which also served as the band room, was where students ate. He describes how the band would set up for the lunch crowd after band practice, then the lunch crowd would set up for band practice the next day.

He'd sit with the few good friends he had - Jim Nunnally, William Frank Hovort, Dave Jefferson. Boys all sat together and girls sat together.

Track 8 (12:01)

0:00:00 Kelly doesn't remember how he heard about the plan to desegregate schools. It was just the talk of the community or probably in newspapers and on the radio. It wasn't such a big deal because people here didn't expect anything to change. "With all deliberate speed" is something that can be interpreted in several ways - it could've meant 20 years or 20 months. It didn't register because people were so ingrained with a segregated society. Life as he know it was going on.

0:02:34 "It didn't resonate with me because I already had a school. I didn't even think about going to another school, you know, when the school board said that. It just was still 'out there', it just wasn't part of my world yet."

0:03:00 Speculates that the NAACP was the only group really attuned to the conversation because it was something they'd fought for. Stuart Parker (a local mortician) was the president at the time.

0:04:26 How Kelly made the decision to move to Hickman is really foggy. Mr. Parker talked to Kelly's father about kids that should go over to Hickman. He explains that it was his decision.

"Maybe I was trying to do something to please my parents. I just don't recall, you know, why I did this. But knowing how close my dad and I were, it was probably something to please him, something that I thought he approved of, something he may have mentioned to me - a subliminal message saying this is something that you ought to do - but I really, after

all these years can't tell you that I sat down and said, 'This is the best thing for me to do.' I mean, it just seemingly happened."

"Like they say in several, in your life sometimes you come to a fork in the road, and, which one do you take? I guess when you look at it, and, you say, well, maybe I'll be better prepared for college if I go to a school with better educational facilities and whatever.

But the unintended consequence was, for me, as I think about it now, it prepared me for college in a different way because now I am the only black kid in a class. And when I went to the university, I was the only black kid in a class. And so I had two years of preparation for the kind of situations I was going to face and deal with in college and that was probably the best thing that I got out of the integration situation ... and for the rest of my life, almost, literally.

There have been many, many, many instances where I had been the only black person in the room. You know, when you look at the, when we had principals' meetings, you know, for several years I was the only black principal in the room. You know, when you went to conferences and when you went to workshops, and, you know, just time and time and time again, you're there, you're surrounded by white people and you're the only black person in the room. That started in, you know, September of 1958, when I started to learn how to operate and how to get over the anxieties, the self-doubt, all those kinds of things because you're the only black person in the room."

"And what do they think about you and what do you think about yourself and how do you perform, how do you learn, uh, how do you deal with some of the indignities that you face sometimes. And another thing: how do you go back tomorrow?"

"It makes you just mentally tough."

0:09:27

Kelly talks about the backlash from the community for transferring to Douglass. He says the teachers considered the students traitors and saw it as a threat to their employment. Messages came through the grapevine, through snubs in interactions. Some were supportive, some not.

The response from the students who were friends and who would hang out with him didn't shift. Guys still got together and played basketball, football or sat around the card table together.

Track 9 (04:14)

0:00:32 "I've always said that if I could be put in a time machine and sent back to that time I don't know if I'd have make that decision. Because I had so much stuff going for me at Douglass. You know, with the teachers, the social aspects of it. Being just another kid, I just don't know that I would've done it again. But as I say, for what I was going to face, the first couple of years of college would've been - they were traumatic enough - but they would've been far more traumatic had I just come out of Douglass and went to the University of Missouri."

Kelly goes on to talk about the cushioned landing to deal with the vastness of the school and the number of people. He describes the entrance process to MU and registering for class with course cards. There as no orientation - students were handed a map and were sent off with a "Good luck!" to navigate campus.

Track 10 (19:47)

0:00:00 No formal announcements made regarding the decision to transfer. Kelly said he probably just showed up at the registrar's office and filled out the paperwork. He describes some of the supplies students were (probably) supposed to purchase.

0:01:55 Kelly provides the name of several if the nine students who Mr. Parker mentioned as good candidates for transferring to Hickman: Raymond & Celestine Hayes, Richard McDonald, Wallace Gardiner and Percy Selee. He speculates about how the list of students was developed - that individual NAACP parents encouraged particular kids to go.

"They knew the momentous occasion that that was, to have that opportunity to go and from their perspective, why not take advantage of, you know, here's the door that's opened to us. We need to take advantage of this. Here's a huge educational institution that has all sorts of facilities that are not available at Douglass to include classes and educational hardware. We need to take advantage of that. We fought so hard for this victory that we've got to have some people go in and take advantage of it."

0:04:43 Kelly talks about some of the things he gave up in transferring to Hickman: a strong personal relationship with family and teachers, the individual pushing and preparation for excellence, the opportunity to be anything in the school (president of the student body, participation in

student council, playing in the band, being considered for athletic ability only on teams, social connection with all the people in the school. A "normal" life and protection from segregation due to lack of contact with white people within the "safe confines of the black community."

0:08:18 Preparation for the transfer to Hickman - how did the adults prepare him for it?

"I don't know that they really could because nobody'd been there before. It's kinda like Star Trek: to boldly go where no one has gone before. That's kind of what we were - we were just out there, seeking out other life forms. I mean, we just had to do it ourselves."

Kelly goes on to talk about how he dealt with being "educationally lonely" and only "going to class." The warmth, empathy, love and support was a respite before heading back out to the "front lines" the next day.

"I kind of compare it to a combat soldier. You go out and you're facing the enemy, you're under fire and there are people being blown up all around you but then you come back into the base and you can take a shower, you get a warm meal and you, you know, get some sleep and rest. And then you gotta suit up again and go back out to fight some more.

Like I said, the parents couldn't be much help because they'd never been through anything like this. And sometimes we'd sit down and talk about something that'd happened and we'd kinda game plan for if it happened again. And they've always reassured you, you know, it's nice to just come on home and just put your head on your mother's breast and she'd pat you, "Son, it'll be all right." Then you get up and you go out the next day and you give it your best shot again."

0:10:15 Kelly shares how his dad would allow him to ride around in his patrol car with him when he worked the graveyard shift and they would talk about things. His dad started neighborhood policing. These conversations and experiences served to ground Kelly in the world he was accustomed to so that he could go back into the new world he was dealing with.

0:13:20 Kelly elaborates on the strength of the bond between him and his father and how that played a role in how close they were. He shares that his father was a latchkey kid who grew up as the "extra" in his great-grandmother's household during her third marriage. His rough background

and upbringing prompted him to pour out his love and attention on "two people who totally his" (Kelly and his mother).

0:15:00 This is the story of Kelly's father coming home from WW2 when he was 3 years old, after he'd had his mother's undivided attention. A trip to Jenny Taylor's restaurant (Ms. Jenny's) and a huge ice cream soda repaired the relationship and made them inseparable.

"The highest compliment he ever paid me, he said, and, of course, the people who are - back in the old days - called me 'Johnny'. He said, "Johnny, you're more like my brother than my son." And that's just how we were.

0:16:55 Kelly shares lessons that he learned from his father about work ethic and the importance of education. His father used to say, "I've never been late and I've never been rushed." This was reinforced by Russell Boone's "You can't leave at seven o'clock and be there at seven o'clock" message. These kinds of lessons fit together and were reinforced at home and in school.

0:18:08 Things that Kelly would talk to his parents about include the story of a Latin teacher at Hickman who said, in class, "You know, the circus, where you can go win things like nigger babies." After the class was over, the teacher handed Kelly a note saying she was sorry for what she said.

"We were two entities that had never been mixed together and you just didn't know what to say and what to - of course, "nigger babies" was probably something she'd said a hundred times, you know, but I wasn't in the room. And, so, that shows you how teachers had to start changing as to what they did, what they said. That's why I admire Conrad Stawski. He'd gone through the Nazi situation in Poland and he knew what being a minority was and being discriminated against was. He'd seen it far more graphically than I ever had. That was a bond that we had."

Track 11 (24:36)

0:00:11 Kelly talks about his daily routine in after transitioning to Hickman High School, from the moment he woke up to the time he went to bed. He lived at the corner of Worley and Noble Court, so he walked to school. He shares about the "tug at his heartstrings" when he walked down Third Street (now Providence Road) and hearing the Douglass band (that he was once a part of) practicing in the morning. Instead of making the right turn to walk to Douglass, he'd make the left to go to Hickman.

He thinks he had homeroom as the first of his six periods of class. Lunch was usually a solitary affair. He enjoyed the gym classes because of Coach Jim McCloud (basketball coach), with whom he often played one-on-one. He shot jump-shots from behind his head and would joke with Kelly about not being able to block them.

Homework, chores and his night janitor job filled his evenings.

- 0:03:10 Kelly talks about meeting colorful, Damon Runyan-type characters at the hospital where he worked. William "Bill" Petty, from Glasgow, Missouri, was the janitor that he worked with. Kelly talks about having to get in shape to wield a 2-pound wet mop and the instruction and tall tales Petty would tell him in order to make him forget about being tired.
- 0:04:28 Kelly shares that Delroy Payne, who worked in the cafeteria, would make them overloaded milkshakes on their 10 p.m. break. Petty taught Kelly to always keep a rag in his back pocket in case you get caught standing around goofing off when someone in authority happens to walk by.
- 0:05:40 Many of the guys Kelly played fast-pitch softball with and against also worked in the hospital. Trash-talking ensued.
- 0:06:46 Kelly talks about what he wore to school - blue jeans, t-shirts and tennis shoes. Hickman wasn't as strict about what students wore for gym class, apart from the separate pair of tennis shoes that were required for gym. They were particular about what could be worn on the basketball court.
- 0:07:51 No one showed Kelly around Hickman on his first day.
- "The orientation was a map and hopefully you didn't have it upside down."
- 0:08:28 Students at Hickman had lockers to store their belongings.
- 0:08:38 Kelly describes the classrooms at Hickman. Desks were all in a row, no circular formations, with 20-25 students to a class. Rooms were nicely spread out and people weren't "elbow-to-elbow." Students had assigned seats. Students had filmstrips and slides. (??) In Biology class, students had to dissect frogs and draw the different parts of the frog.

Teachers used chalkboards and chalk.

- 0:11:40 The school district provided the new edition of textbooks at Hickman. Retiring editions went to Douglass.
- 0:14:47 Teachers teaching styles at Hickman were similar to those at Douglass. Kelly shares the story of a social studies project where, instead of answering the questions at the end of the chapter, students were asked to outline the chapter. In his haste to gather his assignment up to turn it in, he dropped a chapter and it fell behind a desk at home. The teacher flipped through the pages, not really reading it, and gave him an "A" for 34 of the 35 chapters. Teacher: Tom Trimble
- 0:16:20 Kelly talks about enjoying Mrs. Long's art projects. Conrad Stawski's English classes and Margaret McTurnan's English classes were also some of his favorites. He tells the story about an assignment he completed for Margaret McTurnan's creative writing class that she absolutely loved about the Christmas suit he'd just received. He was really encouraged by the fact that his teacher really thought he had a talent for writing.
- 0:18:26 Kelly liked Stawski as a teacher so much that he took classes with him as a junior and a senior.
- 0:19:07 Norman Proffer was the other teacher - besides the run-in with the Latin teacher - that Kelly had friction with. He says it was his own fault and a self-fulfilling prophesy. "I was black and I was not a good Geometry student and that was all he needed to know to validate his preconceived notions. Like I say, he just gave me a 'D' in the class because he was fearful I might come back the next year to take the class over. I appreciated that and I left him and bothered him no more."
- Kelly avoided math and science classes whenever possible. He describes himself as more of an "artsy" person.
- 0:21:02 Class selection at Hickman was decided by guidance counselors. The standards for graduation dictated what he needed to graduate but the counselors checked for natural aptitude as well.
- 0:22:45 There was no interaction with teachers outside of school while he was a student at Hickman. Once he was at MU, he did play softball against Tom Trimble from time to time. Back then, people didn't venture into other neighborhoods, so the teachers never interacted with Kelly on his home turf.

0:23:42 Parents only signed report cards and sent them back. This was the only interaction with the teachers or administration at Hickman. The only time there would've been a conversation would be if there was some sort of disciplinary issue at school. Kelly had none, so interaction was limited.

Track 12 (17:33)

0:00:07 Kelly talks about his interactions with other students at Hickman. He wasn't very social, due to the demands of his job. He did join a group called the High-Y club for a while, until his job took over his time. Besides this, most of his interactions were in the classroom. It wasn't unusual for him to work 30 hours a week at that time. He states that he probably wouldn't have wanted to do many extra-curricular activities.

"For example, if you wanted to go to a Hickman function, you'd have to get a girl from the black community to date you to go to whatever you went to. So, I don't even think I went - maybe I went to one homecoming dance and that was about it. But again, that was on me ..."

0:02:44 Kelly made \$50 a week working as a janitor at the hospital (8 hours a day, 5 days a week). When he became a certified umpire, Knowles Grocery Store used to have a big tournament with double-headers that were played on Saturday and Sunday. Kelly explains that he could work two softball games and make \$25 in cash. So, he could make the same money working the weekend (4 hours) as he did working for an entire week at the hospital.

0:04:01 His only interactions with students in class were during group projects. Since the lecture method was mostly used by teachers, there was little interaction with other students.

0:05:42 A few guys that Kelly befriended at Hickman: Buddy Leach (whose father was a doctor in town), Steve Stewart (became a fireman), Eddie Lane (worked with Kelly at the hospital). Kelly stresses that the lack of interaction with other students was his fault because he didn't reach out to them as his brother (Rodney) did when he attended Hickman High.

0:08:10 Kelly describes the cafeteria food he ate - similar to what was served at Hickman.

0:09:05 No option to go off campus for lunch. Students were only given 20 minutes to eat. This morphs into a conversation on the changes to the buildings and space-usage on the Hickman property.

- 0:10:55 Kelly speculates about where people would sit and why.
- "We'll call it a 'racial security fence'. Kinda like that stuff you put in your yard that the dog won't go out of. You know, you sit down and, you know, there are not many people who are gonna sit down and eat with you."
- 0:11:40 Kelly shares how he attempted to get out of taking Geometry by trying to take study hall and go out for football. His parents didn't buy it. He found out around that time that only the standout stars made it on the team anyway.
- "Unless you were an absolute superstar - I mean, out in the next galaxy - you weren't going to play that much. And, so, why take the beating that you're going to take in football practices and not play? And there are stories of the kids who came on later that were absolutely head and shoulders above the current white athletes and only a few of them got to play."
- 0:13:14 Pressure from parents who didn't want a black kid taking their child's position. Kelly explains the dynamic from his point of view.
- "If you were a B+ (player) and the other 'B' stands for 'Black,'" then you weren't gon' play."
- Kelly elaborates by talking about his cousins who came to Hickman after him who didn't apply themselves in the classroom and the racial and stylistic dynamic under which they would have to play who said, "The hell with it" and decided to not play. He believes coaches were relieved because they didn't have to deal with a black player taking the place of a white player in the middle of the season.
- 0:14:55 Michael Richardson, running back and member of the 1962 state championship basketball team, is the example that Kelly gives of a "standout athlete" who had the talent to make it at Hickman during that time.
- 0:16:28 Kelly tells the story of the guy who is a senior and the all-conference running back who happens to be in line for the same position as Richardson on the football team. The all-conference player's father asks Coach Bob Rourke, "Are you gonna let that nigger play in front of my boy?" Rourke reportedly said, "Yes, I am."

Track 13 (08:38)

0:00:15 Kelly shares about the changes he experienced after the decision to desegregate the schools. He focuses on the reconfiguration and demise of the black community that came with Urban Renewal. His grandmother's house was one that was confiscated.

0:01:15 The disappearance of the area where black businesses were concentrated where the main post office stands today, at E Walnut and ??, between Fifth Street and Sixth Street. Where the Tribune building is was a black movie theater. Barbershops, restaurants, everything was removed and blacks were dispersed. They then had to start dealing with and competing against established white businesses.

0:02:38 Kelly believes Urban Renewal robbed up-and-coming students of role models. Young people then had nothing to aspire to or people who looked like them, who were approachable and able to provide individual mentorship on how to do the types of ventures they were interested in pursuing.

Urban Renewal and desegregation of schools linked.

“For aspirations of what do I do after I get this diploma, that’s where I see desegregation creating a gap that we had to fill some other way than going talking to a person who runs a business, who, you know, has, you know, some skills or something like the carpenters and all those people in the community that you may have been able to deal with. That’s where I see the community changing the most and it still hasn’t recovered, I don’t think.”

0:05:32 Kelly illustrates the disconnect with the current black community by telling the story of meeting the Chief of Anesthesiology at an MU function, a black man who lives right around the corner from him.

“We don’t have any place to go that people feel comfortable congregating on a regular basis with some kind of safety and some kind of civility. And that’s terrible.”

0:06:29 Kelly believes that the desegregation of schools was “kind of like pulling a thread out of a sweater. If you pull enough of ’em, and pretty soon the whole sweater is a pile of thread. That’s where we are now.”

0:06:59 Kelly explains how, in his opinion, urban renewal and desegregation are linked. Three years after the closing of Douglass, the neighborhoods started changing and falling apart.

“That’s why people talk about desegregating schools and urban renewal in the same breath. Because it almost, to us, seems like that’s how it happened.”

“That was the beginning of the unraveling of the whole black community.”

Track 14 (35:32)

0:00:00 Kelly talks about getting in trouble in his first American History class at Hickman because he wrote that the Civil War was caused by slavery, which was not being taught at the time.

0:00:40 Kelly shares his thoughts about his beliefs about the domino effect of desegregation and the idea that if desegregation had not happened it would've saved black businesses, even though it would've kept some "terrible apartheid type policies."

Some blacks bought into desegregation wholeheartedly and began to frequent white businesses over black businesses. The upwardly mobile saw the "advantages" of joining Kiwanis and attending the United Methodist Church over a black church, the lack of patronage caused black businesses to sink faster.

0:04:29 The disconnect between the black university population and black Columbia. Kelly cites Ellis Ingram and the work of Granny's House as an "exception, rather than the rule."

"There are not a lot of black professionals that make that trip across town to be involved. And you would think that the churches would be first connect but they're not."

0:05:15 Kelly talks about the lack of time efficiency and fear of the black community as reasons why people who could support the black community aren't doing so.

0:06:53 Kelly shares about giving up his membership with the minority men's network in favor of working with the baseball club at Douglass Park

(Douglass Athletic Association) because the group wasn't doing enough in the community.

- 0:08:22 The lack of places for blacks to safely congregate is listed among the things that were lost with desegregation. Kelly talks about the local spots - clubs, pool halls, restaurants, etc. - where blacks would unwind and how the loss of places that were "just for us" has impacted the black community. Included in his discussion is a place on Ash Street called "The Strip" where guys would stand around in the parking lot and visit. Also mentioned was the Paradise Club, which was east of town, where Ike & Tina Turner used to do shows every other week from 9pm to 1am. Kelly talks about frequenting the Salt & Pepper Club on Fridays and debrief his week with Chuck Booth, the bartender, (who also served as his "analyst") about his week. Saturday afternoons, there was a jazz DJ at the Salt & Pepper.
- 0:12:19 D. Rose (south of town), Truman's, Murray's and Bleu are examples of places where white people today can go to unwind. Kelly talks about sports bars being more popular than the subdued atmosphere he describes in some of his favorite spots.
- 0:14:00 Blacks in Columbia now congregate in individual homes, at the (Gaines Oldham) Black Cultural Center or in parks for picnics and cookouts.
- 0:15:52 Kelly talks about the minimal interaction between students who chose to stay at Douglass and those who transferred to Hickman. Diving into work prevented many from engaging with the community. The lives of fellow students went in so many directions that relationships weren't maintained.
- 0:19:00 The quality of education he received from Hickman High School.
- "I think it prepared me well but I don't think it would've been any better than the - with the exception of the educational materials - at Douglass. I wouldn't have had a frog in a tray at Douglass, you know, I wouldn't have had an amoeba, I wouldn't have had a microscope and those kinds of things but I think the quality of education would've probably been the same but I probably wouldn't have been able to take certain classes at Douglass because it just wouldn't have been offered."
- "But I think I could learn as much in Frank Logan's art class as I would in Nora Long's art class, you know, because they were both excellent art teachers."

- 0:20:12 Transferring to Hickman prepared Kelly to live in a desegregated world - to be the only black person in the room - and function. Kelly tells how Hickman prepared him to not be afraid to function in a white world, and specifically to be unafraid of giving his opinion. He believes that his honesty capped how far and how fast he was able to rise in his profession.
- 0:21:18 Kelly tells the story about being the only principal to voice a dissenting opinion to the superintendent about whether or not a faculty picnic before the school year began (the Friday before Labor Day) was a good idea, even though most of the principals knew their teachers felt the same way. Several principals came up to Kelly after the meeting and said, "Boy, I wish I'd had the courage to vote no."
- Kelly thinks this type of behavior caused others to view him as "not a team player" and caused him promotions and awards.
- 0:25:00 Kelly tells the story of his brother, Rodney, joining the Key Club. He was supposed to bring the punch for a function that the club was having. His mother asked Ms. Estes, who worked at the nursery with her what to do to keep the punch cold. Ms. Estes suggested she put a block of ice in the punch bowl. Kelly says the members of the Key Club were afraid they weren't going to have punch and when she arrived with it, they couldn't believe their eyes. He believes it elevated his family in the minds of the white members as people who were responsible and reliable.
- He refers to these instances as "desegregation tests" where blacks aren't expected to rise to the occasion.
- 0:26:42 Another example: Kelly's running the P.A. for a basketball game, introducing players. Kelly finds out how to pronounce a Polish player's name correctly and relishes the fact that he "nails it" on the first try.
- 0:28:20 Kelly tells the story of having someone who worked in personnel at Hickman who looked at his sick days and marveled at how few he'd taken.
- "She looked me straight in the eye and said, 'You've got that many sick days?' and I looked at her and said, 'Yeah.'" She said, 'You're not like the rest of them.' And I tell that story to people - she meant that as a compliment. Bless her heart, she meant it as a compliment."

0:29:50 Integration has come a long way as far as opportunities for kids who will take advantage of the opportunities. Kelly thinks it's stuck in neutral on reaching out to kids with potential but don't know it. Kelly believes that in a prison that can cure some of our greatest diseases who never got a chance.

0:33:17 Success Centers at local high schools that help kids with potential take advantage of opportunities they would miss otherwise - like study skills and time-management classes - if they realize it's important and have to motivation to use them. Kelly discusses how these centers worked during his tenure at Hickman and how, at times, students wouldn't take advantage of these offerings because doing so was viewed as "being white."

"I always told them, the color you should be concentrating on, is green. I tell them straight up that this is a great country if you have some money. If you don't have any money, not too good."

James T. Nunnely – Douglass High School Class of 1960

Jim Nunnely describes his childhood in Columbia as solitary and insular. He grew up in a meager four-room house that he says he didn't really live in, in his mind. He remembers having a chip on his shoulder that made him think "How did somebody mess up my life for me? How did that happen and who did it? And how can you think that some of the things you're doing are going to help me?" He shares that much of his youth was spent trying to figure out where he fit into society.

"The hardest part about the time was that it was hard to adjust, in and of itself, to segregation as a child," Nunnely says. "Because you not only have to learn what it is you're supposed to learn but you also have to learn a system which basically has no rules."

Nunnely was one of the brightest kids in his class at Douglass. "Being smart had its ups and downs and mostly, it was kinda down - for me, at least, socially," he says. He was – and still is – considered a "radical" by his peers who says what he thinks and does what he believes is in his best interests. This propensity got him voted class president and chosen as head of the local chapter of the NAACP at 17, after being physically thrown out of the Minute Inn for staging a sit-in with 8 or 10 others.

When it came to the desegregation of Columbia's schools, Nunnely didn't follow his closest friends Charles Allen and John Kelly in embracing the opportunities that many thought were held at Hickman High School.

"I said, 'I ain't goin'. I don't want to go and I'm not. I don't care how much they make it. I'm not going. And it was for no reason. I just [said] I ain't doing this 'cause this ain't in my best interests."

For Nunnely, the school was the only social structure he had and moving to Hickman, where an uncertain welcome awaited, made no sense. He says the teachers at Douglass personally endured animosity and hardship in their lives and would pass what they learned from their experiences on to students. They made students feel like, "When this world opens up, you gotta be ready," and being "ready" meant being smart. "So, we walked around like we were gonna save the world or save our race," Nunnely says. "I didn't like that because it's too much of a burden for me to carry."

Nunnely also resented that something so personal as education had turned into a "political football."

"At the time, I didn't feel like I was being educated. I felt like I was the first respondent to the Civil Rights Movement and I didn't really want that tag. I didn't even appreciate that tag and as a result, I think I compromised my education as a result of it because I was more black and more sociological than I was trying to learn something or trying to see where I was gonna fit in this society."

"And ... that first-respondent thing: it goes on and on. It never quits, you know, you're always - or at least, for those of us who came along in that period - were always the first one, always the only one, always whatever. It just was one continual, endless, ceaseless, introduction to social trauma."

Audio Log of interview with Jim Nunnelly
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project

Track 1 (38:01)

INTRO 0:24

Name: James Theodore Nunnelly

Date of birth: September 6, 1942

Birthplace: Columbia, Mo. He was born in a house that was where Douglass Park is now. He was delivered by a midwife.

Parents' names: Geraldine and Raymond

Parent's occupation: N/A

Sibling(s): Raymond, Louis, Minta and Forrest. Nunnelly is next to last in birth order.

He attended Douglass School for grades 1-12. After Douglass, he went to the University of Missouri, starting in the fall of 1960. Nunnelly received a full scholarship to MU but didn't know what to study. In the end, he chose English and graduated in 1965.

He graduated in 1965. He ended up working for the university, in the medical school's dean's office as the admissions officer, before moving to Kansas City in 1969. He went there to help develop a healthcare clinic that was just starting up (Wayne Miner Health Center, now Samuel U. Rodgers Clinic). When he decided to stay in the medical field, he decided to pursue a master's of Public Health Economics at the University of Michigan (1975). He was awarded a scholarship that allowed him to travel home every six weeks.

He then helped develop a family residency practice in Kansas City. He retired from Jackson County Government, where he headed up an anti-drug program, in 2009.

Nunnelly was also involved in youth mentorship through radio broadcasting (KPRS's Generation Rap) in Kansas City. He estimates that he spent 30 years volunteering with the program, during which he got to know 1,100 teens. He started out as a guest on the show, then when the person who was heading it up stepped down, Nunnelly was asked to take his place. It's the longest running radio program in Kansas City.

“I think that it had more of my reliving of my life that I wanted to admit because I remember when I was going off to college, or those critical decision years, there wasn’t anyone that I could, sort of, lean on and not feel bad about.”

The show used to have an adult host but Nunnelly changed that to make the teenagers do the planning, interviewing and he did the backup. He used this as an opportunity to teach the teens. They used topics that the teens brought up for commentary. They would have to bring in an expert to interview.

“It allowed them to see somebody that was black and professional at an early age because I never saw one – never. I mean, except for the teachers but I never saw a black physician or a black lawyer. It just didn’t exist in our city.”

Students have to research and interview on the topic, which Nunnelly says is like college preparation. “It’s probably the one thing that I hold near and dear to me.”

Nunnelly married his wife, Janice, in 1965. They knew each other in high school. They have two children, James and Jazel, and three grandchildren (who all have his name in some form).

0:17:45 "The hardest part about the time was that it was hard to adjust, in and of itself, to segregation as a child. Because you not only have to learn what it is you're supposed to learn, but you also have to learn a system which basically has no rules."

Nunnelly says growing up, for him, was awkward. Everybody said, "Get and education" because most people didn't have an education. People attributed their lack of success to lack of education.

"With integration, you not only had to, gotten used to segregation, but now you were getting another system change and you were the first respondent and therefore, made it even more awkward. So, for me, I never embraced my youth here. I mean, I never can say I really had fun. I've had more fun in retirement than probably I've had in all my life."
Columbia was a very segregated town. The only hope lied in the university because that's where black people worked. There were no black people in leadership position.

0:19:42 The hardest part for me ever, was kind of accepting that in a way that I would either work with it or work around it.

Nunnelly talks about being a young boy, delivering newspapers around town. He went and sat at a lunch counter, having no idea that blacks weren't supposed to do that. Now, as he looks back, he can see that they laughed at him.

0:20:27 Nunnelly says this obliviousness is something that he's carried with him through life. "I'm not shameless but sometimes I just don't care what somebody thinks. Or, at least, I'm not gonna let it penetrate or alter my actions. And, some people say that's 'bull-headed', 'narrow', whatever but for me, it was a defense mechanism because I couldn't survive - I couldn't learn the rules. I just, they were too much for me and I just said, I'll just do whatever I want to do and as a result of that I think I learned a lot."

0:21:03 Nunnelly's mother trained him in this way. As a young child, she would send him out to pay bills (with cash) in person with creditors. Nunnelly remembers one man, Mr. Jordan, who his mother was supposed to pay \$10 but she only sent \$5 with him. Mr. Jordan asked, "Is this it?" Nunnelly said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Is this all?" Nunnelly told him, "That's all I got. Are you telling me you don't want it?" He took it. Nunnelly says, there were several encounters like this that gave him a head start in not being afraid of people's perceptions.

"I don't worry about what people, basically, say. And I don't mean that in a calloused kind of way. I meant that, in order to survive, I mean, you cannot integrate everybody's thinking into yours. You just can't do it."

Nunnelly says he lives like a little island unto himself. When it came to things, he just did it. He says he has never read a job description because he doesn't want to be restricted. He thinks it comes from having a little entrepreneurial nature plus never adjusting to segregation or integration.

0:24:22 Nunnelly talks about the middle sex (intersex) children who are born with ambiguous or no genitalia, and therefore can be classified as neither male nor female, to explain where he was in his development.

"If you can imagine, the way I grew up and not knowing exactly what place I was to take or what road I was to tread, then this, so I created a new era or a new position or a new place which, which was neither here nor there. And, so, I say that with some frequency but that's the way I felt. I didn't feel like I was traditionally in one or traditionally in the other."

- 0:26:04 The rules Nunnelly couldn't emotionally adjust to included the integration of the schools.
- "I said, 'I ain't goin'. I don't want to go and I'm not. I don't care how much they make it. I'm not going. And it was for no reason, I mean, it wasn't like some course I wanted or some reason, I just, 'I ain't doing this 'cause this ain't in my best interests."
- His good friends, Charles Allen and John Kelly, both transferred. He stayed. He describes Kelly as "thoughtful," Allen as "strategic." Nunnelly says he's the "radical."
- "A radical in the sense that I will do whatever I think I'll do."
- "The rejection inside me was more: I'm not gonna let integration, segregation define me. That's kind of the underlying theme, not that I look back. Because it was awkward in both. And, so, like, I have to, you know, I'll acknowledge it and I'll benefit from it or whatever but I'm not gonna let it define me."
- Not wanting circumstances or society to define him led his work with the teens. He didn't want the same for them.
- "There are bigger dreams inside small places and I think it takes a certain amount of development of that strength to be able to go ahead."
- 0:29:00 Another rule revolved around included access. There was a restaurant that was in the black neighborhood that wouldn't serve blacks inside. They made blacks stand at the window to order. When he was about to graduate from high school, he decided that he was going to go in and sit down. He was injured in the process of removal.
- 0:30:00 His mother lived one street over and, after he was married, there were times that he would go from Christmas to Mother's Day without seeing her. They talked on the phone, so he wasn't mad at her. He didn't see the need to visit.
- "It's not bull-headed, it's just my own self-protection. I'm not ashamed or afraid to buck the odds but it's not bucking the odds. It's protecting myself."

- 0:31:00 In his marriage, they get two separate cars. They have separate bills. This is to avoid conflict that usually comes from it. Nunnelly stresses that it's not stubbornness - it's protection. He grew up hearing disputes about money and he didn't want that in his marriage.
- "If there's a flaw to me, it's probably a blissful flaw because I'm strong enough to be able to back it up."
- 0:32:03 Nunnelly tells the story of a young lady named Lila, with whom he was friends at school. Her family liked him. He was the only person they would allow in to see her. He would go on trips with the family. Nunnelly says he got "keyed up" on some other girl and dropped Lila. Four years ago, he decided to go back and apologize to her for disappearing.
- "What I'm saying to you is I have not developed the skill to embrace awkwardness. And, so, it calls for a decision at every point and I am not afraid to make that decision."
- His friends may call him a radical but they also know that he works very hard for what he believes in. Nunnelly says that he's done very well for himself and has never had to pay for his education, something neither of the other two can say.
- 0:34:00 With the kids in Kansas City, Nunnelly said he saw too many kids who would get a \$20,000 scholarship who didn't have the \$500 application fee. So, they set up a "lifeline" where students must have \$500 in their bank account. They think they're learning about finances but it's really getting money set aside to deal with this issue. Nunnelly teaches them the discipline.
- 0:35:10 Last father's day, Nunnelly got 67 texts or cards, even though he's been disassociated from the program for 4+ years.
- 0:36:00 Nunnelly talks about where his self-protection started.
- "It was started at a time when they said I was bright. And, that didn't work well for me because it separated me from my friends. It separated me from everything. It was like I had a heaven-blessed plague. You know what I mean? It was like [clap], you're smart. Nobody seemed to - so I learned that if you're going to be bright, you're probably going to be by yourself. But, and it was also at a time when, when it's right in the middle of a war but also, I mean they had all but concluded that blacks couldn't learn. And,

so, therefore, you've faced this certainly in, in the world. But anyway, that's that part of kind of learning to protect myself with me accepted but at the same time knowing that I'm unique and I have to do what's best for me."

When the offer to move to Kansas City came up, the decision to move was quick. He says he just knew that it was better for him there. He says he doesn't announce his decision because it's not up for debate.

Track 2 (38:02)

0:00:00 Nunnelly says his disposition doesn't mean that he can't get along with people. He's never had anyone contest any of his management decisions. His "bull-headedness" is complimented with his being a hard worker.

He tells the story of signing off on immunization paperwork for a group of children at a nearby elementary school when their parents, who were on drugs or on the streets, were nowhere to be found. He says half of the 400 kids were sent home with the first few weeks of school starting. He went out on the streets to try to find some of them, with no luck.

He went to his board and told them he wanted to sign for the immunizations.

"I know that they would be better off if I sign and then they get to go to school because the longer they stay in school, the less entitlement they have but more importantly they're sort of giving away their education by no fault of their own."

The board sat on it. He went ahead. Over 200 kids were immunized. Nunnelly says he waited for the police to come get him but they never did. He says it affected how they went about getting kids ready for school - they got permission for 2 or 3 years at a time.

0:03:35 Nunnelly grew up in a four room house. One room wasn't used because it was too cold. There was no central air or heating. It was heated by a coal stove. The family had coal delivered and the coal man wasn't always reliable. Nunnelly says there were a lot of cold nights.

All of the kids slept in one room. His parents slept in another.

Nunnelly remembers going to school one day and finding a photo of his house on the front page of the Tribune. "It said this is an example of what Urban Renewal will address." Nunnelly says there was a big tire in front of the house. It wasn't picturesque at all.

In order to deal with how he was going to internalize and deal with any comments made about the photo, he came up with the phrase "Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin. This is just my calling."

Part of his "defensive network" involves building an escape hatch in his mind something that makes the awkward comfortable for him. Nunnelly says his liberal arts training provides material for him to do so and helps him move through that process.

0:06:54 The house was located on the Douglass Park property. It sat way off the street, just north of Douglass school, near where there used to be a baseball field (where the swimming pool is).

The house had outdoor plumbing. There was a living room/bedroom, where his parents slept. The kids were in the bedroom. There was a kitchen. One room was left unoccupied. It was the cold room in the winter and the hot room in the summer.

0:09:43 Nunnelly describes the kitchen. It had an old 1920s wood-burning stove that they cooked on. There was a small table.

"But we never went too much in the kitchen. Only, just a little bit."

Nunnelly says that he didn't really have an attachment to the house: "I didn't have a real affinity for it. I always felt like, it's like, not what I would've put together. So, I kind of lived but I really didn't live there, you know what I mean, in my mind. I didn't ever give my parents any trouble, whatsoever, any sass about it or whatever but, you know, in my mind, I was like, you know, there's gotta be something better than this."

0:11:00 Nunnelly describes his relationship with his parents as "good, distant" because they didn't see things the way he saw them. "I didn't see them as much help. I mean, they were - my mother was quite insistent on an education. My father was totally illiterate. And I don't want you to think that I didn't admire them or love them. It just, when I looked at them, you just, there's not much you could help me with."

- 0:11:55 He shares about a young lady in the Generation Rap program named Taylor Brown, who wanted to do a show on parents who use drugs. She got a prosecutor to come on the show to talk about it.
- Nunnelly says he classified his parents as those who had no clue about how to navigate the process of getting to where he wanted to be.
- He shares about Melisa Johnson, a current MU law student, who went through the Generation Rap program.
- Nunnelly says that a lot of the kids he worked with wore the same chip on his shoulder that made them think "How did somebody mess up my life for me? How did that happen and who did it? And how can you think that some of the things you're doing are going to help me?"
- 0:14:36 Nunnelly says he never depended on his parents. He worked every day since he was 14 years old.
- "I knew that I couldn't depend on them for any assistance - and not that they were unwilling. I believe that they were willing - just couldn't do it. I mean, they had no idea."
- 0:15:14 Nunnelly describes his relationship with his siblings. He says that for a while, he was the youngest, so his siblings poured into him the preparation which they had. He knew his ABC's and could count to 200 before he started school - and found himself ahead of everyone else in his class.
- His sister is 10 years older, so they were mostly gone during much of his youth. He remembers that his sister was in charge when his parents were gone and looked after them.
- "In many ways, I grew up with siblings but I was an only child."
- 0:17:00 There were a couple classmates that Nunnelly liked and did things with. He says he didn't really develop a close friendship until he met John Carl (Kelly) and Charles Allen. "The only thing I wanted from them was 'don't judge me'."
- He says they were also struggling in their own world so they shared a common bond.

"Generally, I didn't bond too well in the early, early parts of my life but I played basketball and football and whatever. I mean, I had a good life as far as that's concerned but, you know, personally, I just didn't, didn't, um, I just didn't know how to be social. And that's because of this, you know, this, kind of like, is it good for me or is it not good for me.

0:18:47 He met Charles as a freshman on the football team (when he was a sophomore). He met John around the same time. Nunnelly played basketball and football at school. He doesn't remember doing so in the community. He remembers wandering around the area by himself.

"I used to tour the university, probably, when I was 8 or 9. I'd come out and look and see all the buildings and whatever."

0:19:41 His paper route (age 8-10) was around the black neighborhood. He was on TV for winning an award and was asked what he thought the most important things was. He said, "dependability and responsibility. I think people ought to be responsible, above all. Part of being responsible is to be dependable." Nunnelly remembers the reaction was that he was "so smart."

This was in the 40s when times were not great regarding the image of black people.

He talks about wanting to travel with his grandkids to a "black country" in Africa or the Caribbean so they could see where they fit into the world as black people - in a world that doesn't necessarily have to have white people in it or running it. He completed a write-up of the trip that gave a bit of their family history. The grandkids treasure it.

"I guess I wish someone would have done that so I could, I could kinda understand where I fit. But more importantly, fill in that void in my own life by not allowing it to happen in theirs."

0:22:33 Nunnelly doesn't remember a lot of the black business, which he says were largely unlicensed. He describes a time just after the Korean War and World War II when the nation hadn't really dealt with social issues. "Everybody was on a hustle," he says.

The Blue and White Cafe seemed to be a landmark of the time. Miss Jenny's and Helen's Cafe were also around. There was also Sharp End and

a lot of "don't go's" that were adult places. A place called Monty Ralph's catered to a white clientele, even though his business was situated in the black community and the owner was black. He didn't allow black people into the restaurant in order to serve his white clientele.

0:24:20

Nunnelly tells the full story of being tossed out of the Minute Inn. It was in May 1960. The next week, at graduation, the Kiwanis Club gave him an award for citizenship.

Nunnelly doesn't remember why they went inside but he remembers being tired of having to stand outside to be served. A university professor, John Shoppe, was with them and encouraged them from afar. Eight or 10 young people went in with Nunnelly who felt that the practice was wrong.

It was around 8:30 p.m. when they went in. Nunnelly was closest to the door. The restaurant was small, with maybe 10 seats in it, which all of Nunnelly's group occupied. The owner, who Nunnelly didn't see come in, picked him up and threw him out into the parking lot.

Nunnelly says this ushered him into another arena of involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, even though he was more of an individualist. Nunnelly's picture ended up being in the paper as someone who was righting wrongs. He got elected as head of the NAACP at 17.

From there, he became involved in the community.

"I think the indignancy of segregation really bothered me. You know, I didn't mind segregation. I just minded that it was indignant - somebody else determining who you are, where you go and whatever. And, I just, I ain't going for that."

He said he thought he was too much of a "quirk inside of my own head" to be leading this fight but others felt differently.

0:28:52

Nunnelly shares some of the things he did with civil rights in Columbia:

He integrated the bowling alley (Town and Country). They carried signs outside and wouldn't let anyone in. Nunnelly' says that segregation was easy because if you walked up to a business and you were black, they just told you that you weren't allowed in. In college, he was the first black in the city to be hired to work as a clerk at a white grocery store. It was near campus, right next to The Heidelberg.

He remembers that they were amazed that he could add and sack groceries fast. He says they had low expectations of blacks.

0:32:02 Nunnelly shares about a bank (Boone County National Bank) that didn't hire black tellers. Nunnelly says that the guy wouldn't even talk to them and told them to get out of his office. At that time, they'd just implemented a "walk-up teller" where customers could do their business street-side.

Nunnelly says he found three of the biggest winos and promised them a bottle of wine if they'd just stand on the corner right where people would walk up and do their banking and do nothing. He says that little old ladies would drive up and see these "God-awful black guys" standing there and would drive away. Two days later, Al Price called him and asked, "What do we have to do?" He hired three tellers and worked them into rotation.

0:34:47 They had the exact number of credits at Douglass - no electives.

"I really felt like I didn't have a whole lot of competition as far as the academic part goes. Uh, there was one young lady who I still visit with and she keeps wanting me on her, on her LinkedIn thing and I refuse to do it. She was my, she was my academic nemesis. I mean, she was sharp - no question about it. She made it interesting."

There were only a few bright kids. The others were average. Since Douglass was a small school, the "bright stars" shone brighter because it was small. His graduating class was 24 people.

"It was just enough structure to make me happy. You know what I mean, as far as someplace where I could go and learn and, but it was structure there. You went in at 8 and you left at 3 and, I mean, you did things - you went from this class ..."

0:36:54 Nunnelly's fourth grade teacher told him he could get all good things if he would change his attitude. He asked her if he ever gets a chance to evaluate her. The teacher thought he was being a smart aleck.

"Being smart had it's ups and downs and mostly, it was kinda down - for me, at least, socially."

Nunnelly learned to be quiet and stand back and had to learn not to let the academics stand between him and his peers.

0:37:52 "At one time, you could have it all and still not have very much, you know, in the way of friends and stuff like that."

Track 3 (39:17)

0:00:00 If you're going to be the smartest kid in school and get the best grades in school, you're going to stand out. For Nunnelly, this also meant social isolation.

"There were times when I didn't get the best grades on purpose because I didn't want to be there. The second part is, when it came to test scores, I finally found out that test scores, you know, like, meant something. And they meant something to somebody. So, I would do well. My approach to it was more like, 'I've gotta show these people that black people are smart or they can learn. That's why - and yet on the other hand, the co-existing conflict, I don't want to be too far from my friends and whatever. So, I finally resolved the conflict, so I just did well on the exams, you know, especially the standardized tests and I just, kinda, would occasionally loaf every now and then."

0:01:06 One teacher (Ms. Wiggins) had him teaching his classmates in the 8th grade, working with the slower students. They couldn't read the book, so Nunnelly got 1st grade readers from the library and taught them to read the pictures. They eventually caught on that the words were a reflection of the picture, so whenever you hear words you can draw a picture in you mind and get the reading down.

It helped Nunnelly develop as a role model.

0:02:39 Nunnelly said Mrs. Wiggins seemed unmoved by how bright he was. She wanted to know what he was going to do with that. She challenged him.

0:02:57 Nunnelly worked at the swimming pool during the summer, where he had to take a test to become a lifeguard. Before that, they'd let just anybody be a lifeguard. People thought the change meant that only white people were going to take the job from there on.

"I said, 'I'll be damned if that's so.'" It wasn't easy or hard. Nunnelly got the job and did that for two or three summers. He said it was "good money" at the time.

- 0:03:37 He says he doesn't think he's bright. He paid attention, studied, watched and immediately "saw" things.
- With his kids at the radio station, he pointed out to his students that when you're interviewing a person there's always something available that has some emotional attachment or distinction that will tell you more about them. Most of the time, people are afraid to ask.
- He says he wasn't afraid to ask questions.
- 0:05:04 Nunnelly once gave a testimony in English class on what it would've been like to have been a slave. He used "Gone with the Wind" as his backdrop.
- He says he didn't just want facts in his head. He wanted it to mean something. This was his edge.
- 0:06:03 Nunnelly says the teachers at Douglass were victimized by a changing system.
- "The more integration took hold, the less hold that any black teacher had." Nunnelly says they were in transition and came to Columbia for opportunities in the midst of the change. He says some teachers commuted (drove) every day to school.
- They took their struggle and brought it to classroom to prepare students for the future.
- The teachers endured animosity and hardship personally and would "pass it on to each of us, you know, like 'When this world opens up, you gotta be ready.' So, it was always like, we walked around like we were, we were gonna save the world or save our race. And, I mean, I didn't like that because I - it's too much of a burden for me to carry."
- What they imposed on students was the world's going to change and the only way you can be part of it is to be smart. Nunnelly rejected that totally because he thought it was "indignant" to place that type of responsibility on someone else's shoulders. He says the white kids he played with don't feel like they're holding the world, so why should he?
- 0:08:00 Other teachers: Mr. Harrison, the typing teacher, was the best teacher Nunnelly says he had. To this day, he can still type 120 words a minute with no problem.

At the time, teachers felt like office work was the "next echelon of moving up." Nunnelly says he could self-direct in his class and set challenges for himself. Harrison didn't want people looking ahead in the book and told Nunnelly that he wasn't ready for the advanced lessons. Nunnelly tried anyway. When he didn't quite succeed, it let him know what was ahead.

Nunnelly says he taught him inner achievement.

0:10:39

Mr. Logan taught art. Nunnelly describes him as a nervous type.

Nunnelly says he had lots of issues with the principal of the school, Mr. C.B. Walker. Nunnelly felt that he was a "Yes man" who only paid attention to the white people who came down from the administration. He believes he was sent there by the school board because he could be told what to do rather than have the education of the kids as his priority. Now that he's looking back, Nunnelly sees that maybe it was effective because he got what was needed for the school. He concedes that maybe it had to be that way at that time.

"He was big and bad when they wasn't there but then he would just kinda cower around [when they were on campus pointing things out]."

0:12:20

Nunnelly also felt like Walker dumbed down the education process.

He tells the story of asking why the school didn't have a foreign language class.

"It the same reason you don't have a basketball goal outside. Because - priorities. You know, you have to have one thing or the other."

Nunnelly asked if life really was that way - you have to choose one or the other. Walker said, "You'll understand better by and by."

0:13:13

In regards to keeping Douglass open and not transferring, Nunnelly says that:

"Giving away what little he had to somebody who may or may not receive me like I want to be received, that was one part. The other part is that, just, I think education was a personal thing. Um, and maybe we hadn't grown enough to make it personal. I don't feel like it was a sociological thing. I hated that education had turned into a political football but it doesn't

surprise me but I'm just saying, I mean, no one else had to go through all this, so why is this? I mean, they kept us in abeyance for six years, you know, from 1954 to 1960, like, wouldn't even make a decision. And most of the part was on the part of a, a wrinkled school board who hid behind the fact that they would not put the money necessary into Douglass but would rather slowly, incrementally fuse the kids into Hickman. And I just thought, there's something wrong with that."

Nunnelly thought they should've made the curriculum work and bring Douglass up to par. Closing Douglass was the easy way out.

"I just know that while they were celebrating, you know, this gradual approach or whatever, that it really was chicken on their part."

0:15:35 It was common knowledge that the schools were going to be integrated. Nunnelly says it probably came from teachers but everybody knew about the 1954 Brown v. Board Supreme Court ruling.

Nunnelly says he also went to the library and read three newspapers (Columbia Tribune, Columbia Missourian and St. Louis Post-Dispatch) every day so he was aware of what people were saying.

"I guess I just had this low flame burning inside'a me at all times about unfairness and indigna- and I'm not so sure, I think I probably tried to get smart or at least tried to compete academically to not let that happen to me. But I think there's probably a lot of anguish and anger in there too - just straight out indignation."

0:17:25 "I just, I mean, again, I just went down the list - okay, we need a new gym. Okay. We play at a cracker box. We play on somebody else's football field with out playing. We don't have a foreign language. We don't have any elective courses. I just went down the line.

And while, I was like, some people were looking toward Hickman as being panacea - you know, 'You're gonna get a good education!' What do you mean? You can get a good education right here. Education has nothing to do with the place. Have you seen some of these big colleges and whatever? They're old and whatever. It ain't the place. You know, it's like, it the people and what happens. So, I was just suspicious of the whole thing and it allowed me to be kind of a, I would say, an anomaly in the sense that everybody else was looking forward to it but I didn't. I thought

it was, I wasn't going to trust myself to anybody that I didn't know and certainly in no mass kind of thing.

I felt that the education I was getting was just as good a education as I got anywhere. And so, I couldn't digest it. And that made me sort'a ill equipped and afraid to come to the big university once I left because, I mean, I wasn't very smart by holding on when they, I was going to accept this scholarship to this university. And, it didn't do me very much good 'cause again, I didn't have much social skills and whatever to deal with it but, but I made up for it by, you know, I wasn't that harmed. I'm saying that maybe I should've seen it as a prelude to the inevitable but I didn't. I stayed right there."

0:19:35 Before the Minute Inn incident, Nunnelly took the Ohio Psychological Test, which was then the ACT of that time. He took it and scored 99 out of 100. They (he doesn't know who "they" were) made him take it again because they couldn't believe that a black high schooler could score so high. He took it the second time in Parker Hall under observation. He scored 98. They made him take it a third time in shorts and a tee shirt and scored 99. (He feels the outfit requirement was because they assumed he was cheating somehow.)

"People say the payoff for what they did to me was the scholarship but I don't believe that - or at least I don't want to believe that because I achieved that scholarship. That's always been a conflict in my mind."

Nunnelly believes he earned the scholarship and was able to achieve what he was looking for - a level playing field.

He doesn't think the incident was racially motivated. He thinks it was just "odd" for the administrators - an outlier that needed to be investigated further. He calls this his "positive spin."

0:23:18 When Nunnelly says that education is a personal thing:

One thing is, you cannot discount who you are in the education process. And by that I mean everything that happened to you, everything that will happen to you and you want it, didn't want, didn't get is wrapped up in your education. The second thing of being personal is that, achievement is so relative. And, so, I mean, I don't know if, gosh, I was trying to think of that guy from South Africa that ran in the Olympics with the legs, with - was is Pasternek? (Oscar Pistorius) It's like that - it's like, I have no legs

and yet I can run. So, it's personal. It's what you bring to your education and you allow somebody to teach you."

He thinks trying to infuse another world into yours is confusing, conflicted and cantankerous.

0:25:12 "At the time I came I didn't feel like I was being educated. I felt like I was the first respondent to the Civil Rights Movement and I didn't really want that tag. I didn't even appreciate that tag and as a result, I think I compromised my education as a result of it. Because I was more black and more sociological than I was trying to learn something or trying to see where I was gonna fit in this society."

0:26:05 It didn't take much - the integration of the bowling alley is one example, for him to be viewed as one of a group of people who would be the forerunners who destroyed the myths of black people. "Whether you liked it or not, it was going to be upon you."

He was going to go to UAPB. He chickened out at the last minute and elected instead to go to MU. Everybody in town said he ought to go because there was a time when you (blacks) couldn't go there.

0:27:40 His relationships in school were always leadership roles. People see him as a spokesman. "You'll tell'em off."

He recalls that the students wanted to have dances during the lunch hour. It would be a great time to be with your girl or just socialize with the other students. The principal said no. Nunnelly said, "Have you ever thought that you would increase school attendance if you just had just one half an hour of the day. You'd be surprised how many people are here. If you would just, just let it happen for a week and see what it does to school attendance."

Nunnelly says he didn't know the principal was interested in school attendance but later found out that they're paid by the number of students in school. It was implemented and people who slacked off an attendance showed up.

Nunnelly says he was "set aside, somewhat revered" in the school setting. He wouldn't hang out with people, though.

- 0:30:00 Nunnelly was president of the student body for a long time. In his junior years he liked the election process. The teachers would choose who they liked. Nunnelly made them count the votes, which they didn't like.
- 0:30:38 Nunnelly played quarterback on the football team but he says his soul wasn't on the team. He was a little better at basketball. He just liked to go on the trips. It was strictly an "anti-boredom" tactic, so he did the bare minimum to be part of the team.
- 0:31:09 He laughs as he tells about the time he was playing in a football game and his pants fell down.
- The hand-me-downs and cast-offs that students at Douglass wore for sports uniforms was a real problem. The uniforms would be washed and no one really paid attention to who got which uniform. He was a small guy who showed up late for the game and got the last pair of pants. He told the coach the pants were too big but the coach told him to "Hurry up and get on out there!"
- On the field, he was constantly pulling up his pants. At a critical point in the game, tied 7-to 7, he was supposed to receive the pass and take it to the endzone. Someone got a picture of his pants around his knees, the ball almost in his hands and him tripping up. The score remained 7-to-7.
- "Suck it up" was the mantra of that era. Complaining was pointless, even though Nunnelly did a fair bit of it.
- 0:34:06 Students were only allotted and offered 17 credits at Douglass High School. No more, no less. There were no recreational programs at the school. It was only used for school. There was no kind of tutoring program to help those who were struggling.
- Nunnelly was seen as a smart aleck in school but he maintains that he was simply asking questions. For example, he asked why the school didn't have an advanced Algebra course. The response he received was that most of the students couldn't do it. He says that the "calculated, defensible position that our kids can't learn" seeped even into the minds of the teachers. He says that Mrs. Turner told him "Nobody would be able to pass that."
- She taught him a couple things. She was surprised that he could handle it. Another student, Wanda Sue, took it and did well.

Nunnelly believes some of this comes out of a religious base. Jesus came out of Nazareth, which Nunnelly equates with the slums of the time. People believed, even in those times, that the slums cannot produce talented people. It's not true. You're probably ahead of the game because you're having to be aware of how the world works.

He talks about collective farming being a thing in his neighborhood, long before it was being studied.

"I think that people are born out of conflict. I think they, something ain't right and that's where you make your mark by changing it. And if you take that away from me or you just accept it the way it is, then I think you've taken away the existence for living.

That goes back to the way I felt about the school. I mean, I felt that the school was the only social structure I had and it was important to me. And I used to wonder what would happen to those kids who were not, uh, who were not going to make it and I just felt like they would be lost in the system. To some degree, that happened."

0:38:23 School was Nunnelly's introduction to the world. There wasn't much to the church structure and he didn't have much of a family structure to rely on.

"The school was the only place to go. There was no place to do - I mean, the school was the only place that I knew of that halfway delivered some set of services for or some sort of improvement in the lives of the kids. And being a small town in the 40s or whatever, there was no attempt to do anything for black kids."

Track 4 (35:48)

0:00:00 Nunnelly was involved in "adult church" growing up. He got put out of Sunday School because he asked the teacher about Jesus's profession. He was around age 10 at the time. He says this old lady, Ms. Audralia Jones, made him out to be a bad kid.

0:01:34 His family was in and out of the church. For the last 35 years, Nunnelly has been in church every Sunday. He talks about wondering why he does it. He says he does it so that he can embrace something that he doesn't know anything about and believe that it must have some sort of answer because it's lasted.

"Maybe they were the one people that we didn't have to respond to white people for, if you know what I mean. Maybe it was the independence that, I don't know."

He attended Russell Chapel as a child.

0:04:13 There were no immediate changes in the community that Nunnelly feels can be attributed to the desegregation of schools. He says this was his first lesson in understanding policy versus implementation. It takes a long time for change to happen.

Some of the things that did not happen was the nerve center of the black community was going away. Where people congregated changed. The school yard was the chosen locale for social events - good and bad. There was always something going on there.

Baseball diamonds and the swimming pool went in and the area became kid-friendly. He says that when integration took hold, that began to dissipate and you could tell that the vibrancy was going to go. People started moving away.

0:06:08 The black businesses that were around shut down. He mentions the closing of Cozy's candy shop and the Blue and White Cafe. Nunnelly says the economic impact was great because people weren't congregating in the same area.

"I do jadedly believe that people knew that integration would melt unmeltable people into another world and therefore, were destroying the world that they came from. And, um, so, um, I think I saw it firsthand at that point. It just literally destroyed everything around it."

0:07:14 "I just think that our race of people are unmeltable. I mean, we don't - I don't think we melt very well. And I think it's for good reasons. I think our history is a part of it. But I also think that the crudeness of the world has never been quite our cup of tea. I think we've been rather humane, fair. And I think that we run up against the worst of the worst."

Nunnelly talks about reading "The Great Gatsby," whose theme was the greed of America. He protested this in class and said that he felt it's a Darwin's jungle out there and we try to make it seem like it's so nice. Professor Yost wanted to hear more. "It's kind of funny that the person

that's successful, is successful because they have been able to withstand all the torment and whatever to get here and they must step on people to get here and all this ... I said, 'I just don't think we're that kind of people.'

He talks also about reading Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," which was about the time after the Civil War when white people still had slaves, even thought they no longer had the money or social elitism after the war. One guy, who was a butler, stayed with the family he served afterwards. Nunnelly said this characterized how blacks feel about America, even though America was not a great place to them in the past.

He says the cutthroat, competitive world of whites that seeks to keep people pushed down is not one that blacks naturally want to engage in.

This "inoperative pleasantness is bittersweet, I guess you would say, but to me, going out into that world was not exactly something I wanted to do. I wanted a better world."

0:12:13

Nunnelly describes the community's response to the closing of Douglass as "passive." He believes that they knew that they were "killing the very thing that united us" but were concerned about their jobs.

They didn't stand up and say, "No, we're not going to do this." They didn't fill rooms in protest or tell representatives what they thought. It's not something that was done in that day. They talked about it in private.

Nunnelly says one of the concerns was about all of the trophies from that era. No one knows what happened to them.

Beulah Ralph, he says, did an excellent job of chronicling some of these things as secretary of the school.

"I mean, it wasn't much, but it was ours, you know what I mean?"

0:14:06

Nunnelly talks about going before the school board at that time and telling them what he thought. At the time, the die was cast and the school's enrollment numbers were dwindling. He told them that he felt they were making a grave mistake and used a few bad words (which people remind him about) to tell them they just didn't want to make the decision to put the necessary resources into Douglass to bring it up to par.

"I've read history. Integration doesn't work anywhere. It didn't even work in biblical times. I mean, people are people. They congregate because they are the same kind of people."

He told them they were trying to sell that blacks would get a better education and therefore their lives would be better. He called it an incorrect syllogism. He said that liking where he is, doing well and having all of the necessary resources means that he will do well in the future.

"You can't squeeze me at all levels and expect me to be happy. I just hated this social guinea pig kinda thing."

Nunnally believes partiality will always be with us but at least if you don't destroy the institutions that make up what we believe in, we'll have a better chance to survive without displacement.

0:17:00 In 1971 Nunnally was called before Congress because he was the only black family who refused to bus his kids to another school. He didn't want to send his kids to a school that was 40 minutes away to be taught by people he didn't know.

"It was like, just reliving Douglass all over again."

He repeatedly asks why he had to be the one to move.

0:19:28 Nunnally says students who made the transfer to Douglass are to be lauded because "they showed up well under some difficult circumstances." The inner part of him - the protected part of him - says they would've done well anywhere.

He told them, at the time, that they didn't know what they were going to get over there (at Hickman). They'd tell him he was a little radical.

Nunnally thinks they did a service that somebody had to do it. He's glad that somebody could do it in both worlds. He's amazed that it has to take black people being displaced in order to achieve this.

0:20:50 Nunnally is involved in an effort in Kansas City to spend all of your money in black businesses. This awareness, he says, bring a certain level of pride.

"I just don't feel like you should reach over a whole race of people to get something from somebody else. I just don't believe that."

He says that he taught his children that they don't need anyone's ordination or blessing to succeed. Everything they need is right there inside of them.

"And I think that's what I felt, like, all the way down and maybe there was - to go to this school was considered a privilege and whatever."

He says John and others who went did very well, and he's proud of that.

0:22:00 The relationship didn't change at all between the three men. Nunnelly says they came right back around at MU when they walked to school together every day.

"And that's part of that first-respondent thing. It goes on and on. It never quits, you know, you're always - or at least, for those of us who came along in that period - were always the first one, always the only one, always whatever. It just was one continual, endless, ceaseless, introduction to social trauma."

0:23:02 Nunnelly thinks the quality of education he received at Douglass was great.

"But I think it was because they inspired me to look inside of me for the answer. And, and I embraced that totally. And I think, I don't, I don't, I'm wondering if that can be taught or if that can be embraced or encouraged or whatever. I don't know what that is or where that - but I know that's a part of education. That you've gotta get, you gotta make this thing so personal to me that I'll want to do it. That I'll want to do it in the way that I can best do it and do that. Then you really don't have to worry about me."

Nunnelly believes the answer isn't in the government or what people say. It's all about what you're turned on to be. If you can turn that on, you don't have to wonder whether they'll go.

0:25:15 Nunnelly's thoughts on desegregation in Columbia over the last 60 years:

He's not intimately acquainted with Columbia since he lives in Kansas City.

All over the world, we keep hearing the test scores are down. Education isn't about test scores. Those are about disqualifying people. When you find what people are turned on to do, everything else falls into place. The educational system does a poor job of this.

Nunnally believes that the '54 decision is still wreaking havoc on America.

If I had a chance to talk to Thurgood Marshall today, I would say to him, 'You know, Thurgood, it was nice to argue this against the Supreme Court and maybe it was a good thing for you that you became a justice but it was not the right decision. It was a 5 to 4 decision which ought to give you a hint that it wasn't the best thing to do.'

Nunnally says he didn't take any job that he got a 5 to 4 decision on. He says he needed more than that.

It signaled that it would cause more trouble, which we're still talking about today.

0:27:28

Nunnally believes it was the right decision for Linda Brown in Topeka because she had to pass several schools to get to her black school. That, he says, was wrong. What's wrong is to make social policy based on that for everybody.

He draws an example from Chicago's DeSable High School, which was an all-black school ranked #1 at the time. Social policy should not be set on one issue.

"I just think that some things ought to be protested and that should've been one of'em."

0:29:04

What was gained:

"The only thing positive that might've come out of integration was a reduction in the fearlessness of the other race. I, um, that they weren't afraid of us. That they really learned that maybe we're all right."

He thinks that white were very surprised to learn about the Oprah's and Quincy Jones's of the world.

Another positive is that education is something that's not limited to the classroom. It occurs at home, in the community.

He tells the story about meeting a girl named Phaedra who was the head of optometry and the only one operating at a local hospital. He asked her where she got her name. She didn't know. He looked it up and noted that it stemmed from Greek mythology and meant "brilliant." He went back and pointed this out to her because he felt like she needed to know that her folks must've been looking for something more than a cool name. They must've been looking for more for their little girl.

"I'm hopeful that it raised our expectation a little bit and maybe that is really the best part of what happened. But I do wonder, or am of the firm belief that we could've done it ourselves. I really do."

0:33:18

What was lost:

Quotes Robert Browning, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp; Or what's a heaven for?"

Nunnally believes "the fight that is necessary to exist and sustain in this world. It has to be hard in order to be meaningful. And maybe what they really talk about with integration - they took away our fight, our unity or the ability or likelihood of being that."

He learned more by tutoring than he would've learned on his own because he learned how people learn, what they don't learn and what they learn.

Nunnally says the white culture is very competitive and individualistic.

"Collectively, we might have been victims of that."

David Ridge – Hickman High School Class of 1960

David Ridge remembers a fun-loving childhood, living in a brick house near Boone Hospital, spending his days playing basketball and football and his weekends away, working on his family's farm. He admits that he may have been a bit mischievous in high school, recalling an incident where he was sent to Principal Chevalier's office for scaring one of his teachers half-to-death. He and a friend dangled a classmate's boots out of a second-floor window, with only the heels and soles visible from inside, then waited until his teacher reappeared in the classroom and to yell, "Hold on Clarence! We'll pull you back in!"

Chevalier was gracious about the whole thing, Ridge says. He calmed the teacher down and convinced him to go back to his classroom, then laughed and told them, "That's the funniest thing I've ever heard. Don't you ever do anything like that again."

According to Ridge, the world of sports offered a place for blacks and whites in Columbia to disregard the strictures of race politics in the 50s. He played basketball on the Douglass courts with blacks, went to Douglass football games and was a lifeguard at the public swimming pool, where he says integration wasn't a problem. There were also blacks on the American Legion baseball team he played with in the summer.

The blurred lines of sports led to Ridge being blindsided in one of his first encounters with racism. It was the summer of 1957 and Ridge was driving his old, hand-painted '47 Chevy through town after a baseball game one night. He saw Dave Jefferson, a guy he played ball with, walking down the street and offered him a ride.

Once Jefferson hopped in, Ridge suggested they grab a bite to eat along the way. The duo stopped at the Old Wigwam Café, went in and ordered. The waitress said they couldn't eat there. When Ridge asked "Why?" she said, "They don't want him to eat here." Only then, Ridge says, did it dawn on him that his friend was black.

When Ridge became adamant about them eating at the table, the waitress told him that the other patrons didn't want his friend in there and that blacks were served out the back window. Ridge finally got her to acquiesce to letting them eat in the kitchen.

"Boy, that hurt," he choked out, with tears in his eyes. "Just really made me mad. Just made me mad."

When the plan to desegregate Columbia's schools appeared in the media, he says it didn't phase him.

"To me it was no big deal. I mean, I had known people that were not of the same color as me and I didn't think anything about it. We played ball together. To me, it was just, the person that they were that was more important than what they looked like."

This, he says, was a common sentiment amongst his friends at Hickman. The only place he noticed (and continues to notice) negative comments and attitudes towards people of other races was with older generations who'd been raised with a segregation mindset. As perspectives shift with each generation, Ridge thinks that issues with race, desegregation and inequality will evaporate.

"It will be something in the past that future generations will say, 'Pfft. Wow.'"

Audio Log of interview with David Ridge
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project

Track 1 (33:13)

INTRO :23

Name: David Ridge

Date of birth: January 29, 1942

Birthplace: Higginsville, Missouri. He was born on a front living room couch in a house with the help of Dr. Basket.

Parents' names: Violet Marie Ridge and Almer Ambrose Ridge

Parent's occupation: father was a teacher and ended up becoming the superintendent of schools in Hannibal. He was in charge of CCC camps at the end of World War II. He worked as a special agent for the Internal Revenue Service (Kansas City and Chicago markets) primarily with fraud and gangster cases.

Sibling(s): James (killed in a tractor accident 7 days after returning from serving with the military in Korea in 1947), Helen, John, Bill (John William; handyman in Columbia), Tom (younger brother who lives in Columbia).

He went to Lee School around 1947. He walked to school every morning from Anthony Street/Cliff Drive. It was probably about a mile.

Then, he went to Jefferson Junior High. His mother drove him to school that first day because she wanted to make sure he would get there. He thinks she was afraid he wouldn't go. It had a huge bicycle rack outside of it. From the second day on, he rode his bicycle to school.

After Jeff Junior, he went to Hickman High School, which was the only high school at that point in time. He graduated in 1960. After this, he went to university for a short while, then transferred to Northeast Missouri State Teacher's College (now Truman State). His degree is in history.

Ridge went to work for Florida Tile Industries after college and got into the carpet business. He moved to St. Louis and worked for Atlantis Corporation after FTI decided to

get rid of their carpet division. When his father passed away in 1981, he moved back to the area to help his mother run the family farm. He also bought an existing carpet retail operation and has been running that and the farm ever since.

The farm is 12 miles north of Columbia on 63 and 124 (500 acres). The other 500 acres is, “as the crow flies” about 3 ½ miles north of that in the country. They grow corn, soybeans and wheat on half of the acreage and raise cattle on the other 500.

His wife is Mary Louise Ridge. They met at Kirksville and got married 48 years ago. She was a homemaker while raising her children and was a school teacher in St. Louis. When they moved to Columbia, she taught at Oakland, then taught English at Jefferson Junior High. She retired 7 years ago.

0:08:12 Ridge tells the story of meeting a little girl at his carpet store and asking her where she went to school and who her English teacher was last year. When the girl said she had Mrs. Horton, Ridge said, “Well, it’s a shame you didn’t have Mrs. Ridge.” The little girl asked, “Did she teach you too?”

0:09:05 The Ridge’s have two children: Heather, who has three children – Emily, Kate and Joseph. His son Brian spent 20 years with Compaq and Hewlett Packard. He was the youngest director ever with Compaq. He’s now retired and lives in Tampa, FL.

0:10:05 Ridge said he had a bit of an unusual childhood. They lived in town but his family owned a farm. They'd spend weekends working on the farm. It's where he believes he learned about hard work and getting ahead. School taught him to get along with people.

0:11:27 They didn't have a TV. In the early 1950s, they went to Montgomery Ward's and ordered a TV. There was no TV station yet. The University of Missouri had a tower up but it wasn't on. For about two weeks the kids in the neighborhood would gather to watch the test pattern. It was just a circle that had a number in it and there was a crackling/gurgling sound that emanated from it.

He thought the TV cost about \$60, which was a lot of money back then.

The kids: Heath Jay and Anna Laurie Merryweather. They went to the Catholic Schools. Ridge says that H.J. went on to study journalism and became an editor at the Miami Herald.

0:14:00 Ridge's house was a one-story frame house that was probably built in the 1930s. They added a couple bedrooms to it as the family got larger. It was an "old, quiet neighborhood." Ridge says some of the professors lived out on the other side of Cliff Drive.

There was a Stephens College professor who drove a sports car. Ridge says each evening he'd come home with a different girl in his car. He says there was also a professor Wrench who taught at the University.

"Professor Wrench was an interesting fellow. He had long hair, um, looked kinda like a beatnik but had, just, long hair. He actually came out to our farm one time on one of our pieces of property, there was a, there still is a matter of fact, a Indian burial ground. And he dug into the burial ground to find some Indian artifacts, which is kind of interesting. The most, one thing that I do remember about professor Wrench, though, one of his neighbors called, complained to the police because he was out mowing his lawn in his underwear. And indeed, he was."

Ridge says he was probably 7 or 8 when this happened.

0:16:08 Around this age, Ridge became interested in Boy Scouts. He spent a lot of time at the Columbia public swimming pool, which was near the university. He later became a lifeguard there. He took several trips to Canada with the Boy Scouts and became an Eagle Scout at 12.

His family attended First Christian Church in Columbia.

0:16:45 He went to Jefferson Junior High where he played football. This is where he met Raymond Hayes, who didn't go to Jefferson Junior. They met on the football field. He became the student body president of his senior class at Jeff Junior.

He later went on to play football, basketball and track, where he was a pole-vaulter, at Hickman. He held a record of 13'6" for a number of years with the old steel poles.

0:17:50 Raymond Hayes was playing at Douglass. Ridge says they met playing (maybe) basketball, on the field.

0:18:18 As a kid, Ridge enjoyed working on the farm. They leveled fields for cultivation. There was a dirt basketball floor that was put in when they were kids. He used a pit of sawdust to practice pole vaulting.

The Merryweather's had a ping pong table set up that they would play. Mr. Merryweather ran a printing company and, during the winter months, he made a "special" eggnog. When he was around 7 or 8, Ridge drank a lot of it without realizing that eggnog has a lot of rum in it. He got really sick and doesn't drink it to this day.

0:20:42 He played games like "Red Rover" with the kids in the neighborhood.

0:21:12 Ridge gives a tour of his childhood home. He describes the layout, including the wall telephone, which was a two-piece affair where you had to stand on a chair to talk.

"If you didn't really like the conversation, you could take the earpiece and put it over the microphone and the other person would hear this 'EEEEEEEEEEEEERGGGG!'"

Just off the kitchen, there was another area where, when his nephew and cousin came in to attend university, they stayed. Two more bedrooms were added for his two brothers. His sister lived in a bedroom up front.

He talks about being embarrassed by his sister when he accidentally barged in on her in the bathroom.

0:22:33 On the farm, there was one occasion where they were hunting squirrels and knocked a nest down. They brought them home. The squirrels remained pets for about a year and a half.

0:23:04 They usually had a dog - a mutt. Ridge tells about going on vacation for a week and coming home to the new carpet his family had just laid down. It was infested with fleas - so much so, that their socks turned black as they walked around. The dog brought them in.

All of this was the house in Columbia. They never lived on the farm.

0:23:55 His parents moved from Cliff Drive to western Columbia around 1958. He lived there during his high school years.

The kitchen had a formica-topped kitchen table with rounded edges and refrigerator in it. It wasn't until much later that they got a freezer.

0:25:30 Laundry was done in the basement, which was about four feet high. They had a washer with a hand-crank wringer on it. They hung the clothes to dry on ropes that were strung in the basement.

When he was a junior, they added on to the back of the house. Ridge decided to make a shop downstairs. It meant hauling dirt, re-pouring concrete in a 12'x20' space. It meant that his mother could actually stand while loading clothes into the washer and dryer (which they'd purchased, by that time).

0:28:01 Ridge's yard was narrow with a driveway that was shared with another neighbor. On the other side, there was a neighbor who raised homing pigeons. The back yard was unlevelled ground with a concrete pad where there used to be a chicken coop. This is where Ridge raised a basketball goal.

Near what is now Broadway, there was a vine that he cut off that he would swing from the ground through the trees (like Tarzan). It was the beginning of his pole vaulting interest. He broke his foot at one point, so he didn't swing on it for a few months. The vine died. He took it out for another swing and it broke. So did his other foot.

0:30:27 Ridge's older brother, Bill, who was three years older, was interested in cars and mechanics. His younger brother, Tom, who's 5 years younger didn't really connect with him. Ridge says he spent a lot of time with his mother, who quilted while she waited for his older siblings to come home from dates and outings. As a result, Ridge is a pretty good quilter.

He didn't see his father until late Friday evening and would leave late Sunday evening. The family would take him out to the bus station, which was originally on Highway 40 (Business Loop 70). They'd go to the Wigwam Cafe, which was also a bus stop. There was later a bus stop close to the Methodist Church on Ninth Street where they'd drop him off and pick him up.

Ridge would go to the farm with his father. His mother would stay in town. They put in crops, hauled hay, fed the livestock. A sharecropper lived on the farm during the week. There was lots of work piled up for the weekend.

Track 2 (37:38)

0:00:30 Ridge talks about doing chores like straightening up his room and helping with the dishes as things that had to be done around the house. He also helped cook, home maintenance, mow the lawn.

"You just pitched in and did what had to be done to make life livable."

"I can make a mean breakfast, I can tell you that."

"Ham and eggs, take care o'ya legs. Milk and whey, fret all day."

For lunch, it was whatever you could put between two pieces of bread - ham, bologna, fish, peanut butter and jelly. If they were home, his mother would bake. For the evening meal, she would prepare a full spread. "Mom was great on roast beef, potatoes and gravy and carrots and everything that went along with it. Their heavier meal was in the evening.

On occasion, they would go out to eat. Bresch's Restaurant, at the corner of Ninth and Locust, had an all-you-can-eat special for \$1.25. He once had silver dollar pancakes there for breakfast. On the farm, they'd go out to a local service station that had a convenience store where they'd have sandwiches.

0:05:00 Ridge talks about being mistaken for someone else at a filling station near the farm. He and his dad stopped by for sandwiches and Ridge went into a chest cooler to get a root beer. The only thing that was sticking out of the cooler was his backside when the shop owner came by, grabbed him by the britches and shouted at him to "Get outta there!" because he thought it was grandson.

0:06:18 Occasionally, the wife of Jack Lipscomb (the sharecropper who lived on the farm), would make them great meals. On days when they were hauling hay, she'd bring them amazing food and drinks.

0:06:50 Ridge talks about their family buying the farm in 1947. Lipscomb had just come back after World War II. He ended up staying and raising a family on the farm for about 25 years.

The adjacent farm that Lipscomb currently lives on (in his 90s) belonged to his father.

- 0:08:54 To celebrate birthdays, his mother would bake a cake and maybe make homemade ice cream in the hand-crank maker.
- Mom made biscuits, baked meat (they had access to a lot of beef and pigs). The garden always had lots of vegetables. Ridge says his father was a bit "different" in regards to his gardening skills. He didn't really tend or weed. He just dropped seeds and hoped for the best. They'd have watermelons that cropped up in the corn fields.
- They also grew tomatoes, beans and musk melons. They'd use them for their own family.
- They would go to a little grocery store on the other side of Lee School for food. There were grocery stores every five or six blocks, within walking distance of every neighborhood. Ridge says it was a "shocker" when A&P (?) opened up on Broadway. It was a huge store for the time.
- Most of their food came from the farm, though.
- 0:12:45 The family rented a locker in a "locker plant" on Broadway. They rented heavily insulated locker spaces to families. You'd have a lock on your compartment inside a room with a giant door that you'd push back and it was frosty inside. They also manufactured ice there.
- They'd butcher and process the meat from the farm, then store it there. There was originally no freezer at home.
- 0:15:10 They also canned the produce that grew on the farm. Ridge's mother made homemade jellies. He remembers helping to can tomatoes, green beans and corn.
- One time, his mother purchased canned asparagus. It looked terrible and was soft and mushy. Their dog, Penny, was sitting at his feet, so he tried to feed it to her. She wouldn't eat it either. It wasn't until about 30 years later that he tried fresh asparagus and figured out that he liked it.
- 0:17:30 Ridge gives the location of the house he grew up in at 16 Cliff Drive.
- 0:18:40 Ridge walks through a typical day at school. Classes usually started with homeroom, then you'd go from class to class - math, social studies, English.

In P.E. they'd play games like dodgeball. They (boys) had a shop class and girls took home economics. Lunch fit in there somewhere.

0:19:39 Ridge remembers Mr. Sweeney, the shop teacher, who school lore says lost one of his fingers while trying to tell a students not to turn on the shop saw.

0:20:43 They started building on to Jeff Junior when Ridge was in 8th grade. They removed the bicycle rack and replaced it with offices. He says that to this day, they still play basketball on a stage. When playing, students had to watch out for walls, curtains and things like that on the court.

0:22:00 Ridge talks about playing football at Jeff Junior. The football helmets they had were not Riddell plastic. They were made of leather with no face guards. They also wore high-top shoes (most of their opponents wore low-top). The uniforms were hand-me-downs from Hickman.

Ridge tells the story of his first scrimmage in 9th grade when he tackled Ronnie Cox and when he helped him up, Cox's leg got caught underneath him and was broken. To this day, Cox still has a limp.

The school had an eighth grade basketball team. Jeff Junior was grades 7 through 9.

0:23:53 During approximately 1953-1956, Columbia was not integrated.

"At that point in time, even though, you know, the laws had changed, there was no integration of the races, although we played together, what have you, just, you know, well there was courts down at Douglass High School and we'd go down there and play basketball, hoops and what have you. But there was really no mention of color."

Ridge says they had no problems with integration at Columbia swimming pool (on Fulton Gravel). Blacks and whites swam together. Ridge was a lifeguard who taught swimming at Douglass.

There used to be another swimming pool behind what is now the Municipal Power Plant. The foundation wasn't put in correctly, so it leaked. It was eventually closed.

0:26:47 Ridge played basketball with black kids at Douglass Park. They had separate football teams, though. He mentions Rocket Richardson, a

halfback, who could outrun just about anybody. He tells the story of watching one of the Douglass games where a player was running around the endzone and the pants of his hand-me-down uniform was really loose. When someone tried to tackle him, his pants fell down.

White people definitely turned out to watch the blacks play.

0:28:43 He'd arrive in the morning, go to classes. There was a locker room where people checked out their books. Lunch was somewhere in the middle. At the end of the day, he'd end up in either football, basketball or track practice.

Ridge says he may have been a bit mischievous in school. The principal was Chevalier - a tough but fair guy. They had split lunches where half of the class would go to lunch, then the other half would go. Ridge got back to class before the second half was let out and the teacher wasn't there. One of the students, Clarence, wore boots all the time but was sitting in the rear of the room, out of sight. Ridge and a friend held the boots out of the second-floor window, with only the soles and heels visible. As the teacher came in, they said, "Hold on Clarence! We'll pull you back in!"

The teacher was furious. He walked them to the principal's office and demanded that they get kicked out of school for almost giving him a heart attack. Chevalier laughed and told them, "That's the funniest thing I've ever heard. Don't you ever do anything like that again."

0:31:57 Ridge talks about verse speaking choir with Mrs. Williams. When he was a junior/senior, he went on a school trip to New York with them to give presentations.

0:32:20 In the summer, Ridge played baseball. He tells the story of coming back from an American Legion baseball game. He had a pickup he rode around town in. At around 10 or 11 at night, he saw Dave Jefferson, one of the guy he played with, walking down the street. He asked him if he wanted a ride. Jefferson hopped in. Ridge was hungry and suggested that they grab a bite to eat.

They stopped at the Old Wigwam Cafe and went in. They ordered, only to be told by the waitress, "You can't eat here." When Ridge asked "Why?" she said, "They don't want him to eat here." Only then did it dawn on Ridge that the color of his friend's skin was the issue.

"I'd never thought of Dave being black."

He said, "We're gonna eat here." The waitress replied, "Those fellas over there don't want you here. We normally have to serve you out the back window."

Ridge asked if they could eat in the kitchen. She said yes, so they ate in the kitchen.

"Boy, that hurt." Dave was ready to go outside. Ridge told him they were gonna eat inside. "Just really made me mad. Just made me mad." This was around 1957.

0:35:45 Ridge talks about Muriel and Eliot Battle moving into his neighborhood, about four houses down from where his family moved after living on Cliff Drive. He recalls some people making comments, complaining about the "negroes" (polite word) moving into the area.

"Well, these were good people."

Eliot Battle called him "Dave."

Track 3 (39:54)

0:00:05 Ridge talks about the black students who were at Hickman during his time there. Raymond Hayes, who played football with him was one. Celestine Guyton (Hayes) was another, who he says graduated summa cum laude at the head of the class.

0:01:44 Ridge started attending Hickman in 1957/1958.

0:02:22 Ridge doesn't remember how he first heard about the plan to desegregate schools. It was on the news and in newspapers, he says.

"To me it was no big deal. I mean, I had known people that were not of the same color as me and I didn't think anything about it. We played ball together. To me, it was just, the person that they were that was more important than what they looked like."

0:03:09 Generally speaking, he feels like his friends felt the same way.

"There's always some yay-hoo that, you know, wants to mouth off but it wasn't like - I don't think it was like it is today, or like it was, maybe, 10 years after that. I head nasty stories about the races not getting along. It's very upsetting. Just with this recent fiasco down in Florida (Trayvon Martin). I don't understand. It's a tragic - whatever happened is just tragic - but there seems to be more, maybe reverse discrimination. I don't know what it is but you hear about it."

"I really fault our news people more so than anything. I don't trust newscasters like I used to, certainly, and I'm not sure I trust what you read in the press either, that much. It seems to me like everybody has their own opinion and they use that forum to form their own opinion."

0:04:32 "I assume that there was some racial tones. I mentioned the fact, what happened at the Wigwam Cafe. Those were older people. I have no idea who they were. They were, you know, 11 o'clock at night they were probably some bar crowd that got hungry after hanging in a bar. I don't know, I don't know who they were and I don't care were. But as far as, never, I, and the people that hung around with the ball players, I don't know of anything that was -"

"There was a big to-do with the Missouri football player that was black. He's gone on to become a doctor. The first basketball player, by the name Al Abrams, transferred from some other university. Um, yeah, likeable fella. I played basketball against him just in take-up and what have you but - I remember first time on the court he dunked the ball. Everybody was "Whoa!." [Laughs]

0:05:53 Ridge says the response of the team was "Nothing" when Raymond Hayes (a transfer student from Douglass) joined the football team. He says Hayes may have a different story but from his end, he didn't notice any discrimination or attitude.

Hayes and Ridge's wife get along very well because they spent a number of years working together at Jefferson Junior High. Ridge says that both Raymond and Celestine Hayes were at the 60th class reunion.

0:07:35 Ridge recalls that there were a few other black students but he doesn't remember them. They weren't active in the same areas and he didn't have classes with them.

0:08:08 Ridge says he had a pretty good relationship with the students at Hickman. He was elected vice president of the student body. "I had a lot of them fooled, apparently," he says and laughs.

Ridge says he had a pickup truck that people would pile into after football games and head down to Muggs Up for root beers and root beer floats.

At one time he got an award for safe driving. [He laughs at this.] His old pickup wasn't in the best of shape. Ridge says he paid \$50 for it and painted it with a paintbrush. When he went to get the award, the students started laughing at the thought of his old truck. Ridge said that the presenter thought they were laughing at her and they were both embarrassed.

0:09:47 Ridge didn't have a lot of time outside of athletics to spend on clubs. He went on to university on an athletic (track) scholarship. When he broke his leg, he lost his track scholarship and ended up transferring to Kirksville.

He also participated in the Olympic tryouts for the decathlon in 1964.

0:10:57 Teachers that stand out:

Ken Tolsen, choir director: very energetic

Helen D. Williams, verse choir

Coach Roarke, football

Coach Jim McCloud, basketball: just inducted into the high school hall of fame. As a senior, Ridge was on the team that won the regional finals. The year after he left, Hickman won the state championship.

Nellie Kitchens, math: Years later, Ridge ran into her in a receiving line. She looked at him and said, "Dave Ridge. Have you learned how to do trigonometry?" She was short, probably about 4'10."

Coach Bruscoe, track: went on to Park West in St. Louis.

Each teacher would have a program they went through. Some of the history teachers Ridge had were great about telling stories and making history interesting.

In one of the classes - maybe health, his junior year? - Coach Roarke taught the class.

"Coach is a coach. He wasn't really a good teacher. And, his idea of getting through that particular class was to open your book and read. One of the students got tired of reading, propped his head back and started sleeping with his mouth open. And Coach Roarke took some tissue and wadded it up into little bitty pieces of paper. And for 10 minutes, was trying to hit his mouth. [Laughs] Larry was sleeping. Of course, everybody else in the class was going, "Hoo, hoo, hoo" until he finally got one in. Choked him about half to death but woke him up."

Ridge doesn't think he learned much in that health class.

0:15:51 Ridge can't think of any teachers in high school who greatly impacted his life. In college, however, Ridge recalls that Flash Poler, who taught history classes at Kirksville, was a super teacher. Ridge says he always had a comment ready and would tell stories that were a little off color. Ridge tells a story about a group of girls from his class who'd decided to walk out the next time Poler started one. Poler heard about it and started one about some prostitutes and when the girls decided to leave, he told them, "Wait a minute, girls. The boat's not leaving 'til tomorrow."

Ridge tells the story about a presentation he had to do about China. He focused on a group of monks who were, at the time, setting themselves on fire in protest. After his presentation, Ridge says that Toler told him, "Well, Dave, you know, that's very nice presentation. However, there's a monk that lives right down the street from me and every day I'd take 5 gallons of gas down there and set it beside him and he never would use it." [Laughs]

0:18:35 In high school, Chevalier was a good teacher and administrator. Bob Shaw was also an excellent administrator, good friend and teacher. "Hammering" Hank Steer, who was a left-handed pitcher in high school, was also a good teacher, according to Ridge.

When Bob Shaw became superintendent of schools, he ran into Ridge and offered Ridge a job teaching history. Ridge realized that teachers don't make a lot of money, so he decided against it.

0:20:03 Outside of school, his relationship with the teachers and administrators stemmed from his involvement with sports. They were the people who

drove the buses to games and events. On the weekends, he was working on the farm, so he didn't have a lot of interaction with them.

You'd see them in town occasionally but he didn't have a lot of interaction with teachers and administrators, even if they lived in the neighborhood.

0:22:05 Ridge lifeguarded and mowed lawns in the summer. He paid \$102 for his first lawnmower - a rotary mower. It didn't have a motor on it - he was the motor. It cut a path about 18" wide. Ridge said it would take most of the day to cut a small yard. He charged \$1.25 a yard.

0:23:45 Ridge tells the story about his father taking him to the black barber shop on Friday nights to get his hair cut as a 7 or 8 year old. He thinks the son of the barber's name was Al. His father was also a barber who, when he was 6 years old, was a slave.

"A former slave cut my hair." [Ridge tears up again when he thinks about this.] As the barber got older (he was in his 90s), he got so shaky that Ridge's mother told him he wasn't going down there anymore to get his hair cut. "It was a nickel cheaper than the next place. It was 25 cents, the other places were 30 cents. And they gave good haircuts. Nice people, very nice people. The son was old - hell, he had to be in his late 70s."

Raymond Hayes could tell you the name of the barber.

0:26:18 Ridge tells the story about Mr. Handsborough, the typing teacher, having class on a day when it had been sleeting. Mr. Handsborough didn't have a scraper, so he was tapping a hammer on his windshield. It shattered and class erupted.

"He was not our favorite teacher."

0:27:40 There was no air conditioning in the classrooms. There were school chairs with arms and desktops, in rows. Some classrooms had a second level in the back where students could see over the tops of other students. The teacher's desk was usually old, heavy wood and sat at the front of the room and the chair was usually old and wooden.

There were blackboards. Occasionally, there was a green board. Depending on the class, there were pictures on the wall.

- 0:30:00 The only equipment they had was in the science classes. There were usually Bunsen burners and a couple areas where you could light things up. There were sinks.
- Books came from the class themselves. Ridge would occasionally go to the library and borrow books or buy them. Most of the books were classroom books, however.
- 0:31:46 Ridge tells a story about a conversation about how corn is planted to enable multi-directional cultivation with the group of "old codgers" he has breakfast with at 4 a.m. every morning. He says it's called "slip-knots." One of the guys typed "slip knots farming" into the search engine on his phone and the information came up.
- "And I thought, somebody had to put that in there to think that that is something somebody ought to think about. That is just totally amazing to me. Where else can you find - you couldn't find 'slip knots' in a dictionary. You couldn't find it in 2500 books that you looked at. And there it is at a breakfast table, showing a damn picture of a tractor. I don't know what they world's coming to. It's going to get worse."
- 0:34:21 Ridge apologizes for getting emotional during the interview. "It makes me mad. Martin Luther King. It's not the color of your skin. It's your character that makes the difference."
- 0:35:32 During high school, Ridge wore jeans, white socks and tennis shoes. A lot of the kids wore black and white Bucks. In junior high, the in thing was a 1/2" thick white belt. The girls wore bobby socks with their flared out dresses. They also wore the Bucks with a ribbon in their hair.
- Athletes wore their letterman jackets. Ridge says the FFA (Future Farmers of America) jackets were also pretty neat.
- For gym, they wore white shorts, white socks, tennis shoes and a white t-shirt. Students were responsible for furnishing their own. The class period varied.
- "You were really King Tut is you had ... Converse shoes. Invariably, they were high top unless you're really cool and then you had some low-cut Converse shoes on. There weren't many of those running around."

Track 4 (33:30)

0:00:08 A teacher would help students choose their classes. They'd figure out what classes you needed to have enough credits to graduate and what your interests might be. This counselor would direct you on classes to take.

There were two or three who were assigned to helping figure out schedules, making sure that classes weren't too crowded or too empty. Ridge says there were probably 30 students to a classroom. The science classes had fewer.

0:02:02 Ridge saw no changes at Hickman once black students started attending there.

“I noticed more outside of school than I did inside of school. I didn't notice anything inside of school. You know, with the general public, what have you. I think whites and blacks hadn't gotten over the fact that we're all one at that point in time. There was, well, I mentioned the black barber shop down there. Well, I'm sure there are still black barber shops down there today, certainly, or white barber shops or whatever. I don't think I every recall seeing white fountain and black fountain in Columbia. In Kansas City, I'd seen'em. In St. Louis I'd seen'em. In Chicago I'd seen'em. I don't think I'd ever seen'em here in Columbia. It was, maybe, an unspoken thing.”

Ridge says it was just general comments from the older generation that gave him this sense that people who had been raised with the segregation mentality had issue with desegregation.

“It was kind of back-door comments that you hear.”

0:05:38 Regarding the changes Ridge has seen over the last 60 years. Today, schools are integrated. Generally speaking, people get along better than they did then.

“There's less of the talk jargon that went on – not as kids but as adults.

I fault the adults. I still hear some of the old codgers out there, you know, refer to racial slurs and what have you that just – and I don't think you hear that with the young generation because I think they accept it.”

0:07:04 Ridge doesn't think desegregation had any influence on his life. "I've always felt the way I feel now."

Ridge says he has no tolerance for the "crap" that exists and thinks it's disgusting.

0:08:09 Providence Road wiped out a lot of the, whatever we would call is the "low-end" black families. There was a lot of shanties down there that was, frankly, just wiped out with Providence Road when it was built through there. There was a creek that ran down through there and most of the area down there was houses that were heated with coal – no gas heat. I think the black community lived down there primarily.

Today, I think that society is more integrated because you may have a purple and green family living next to ya. Prior to that time, I think you had areas within, probably all communities that were considered, uh, a black area and others that were – I'd mentioned before that we had a neighbor that moved in three houses down from us. You know, that was unusual. It was a dynamite family. I would guess that if it happened in other areas in town that probably would've been upsetting – and perhaps some of the neighbors were upset then. I don't know. I didn't experience it."

Ridge thinks it's changed for the better, even with his concern about the gangs and shootings that have sprung up in the area that he believes came from other areas (Kansas City or St. Louis).

Ridge sees the drug problem as transcending race.

0:12:44 Ridge thinks he got an excellent education at Hickman, although he believes it could've been tougher, harder. He thinks the teachers are better quality than they were 50 years ago. He doesn't get the teachers who attract their students sexually because he says his teachers were old with double elbows.

I think basically, we had very good teachers. No question about that. There were some that were just putting in their time. I think today's teachers are probably better teachers because they really want to have the students learn. Unfortunately, teachers today don't get parental support.

He tells about a friend whose daughter was a teacher for years. She would send notes home with students to set up an appointment because the child wasn't doing well. The parent wouldn't show up.

“I think the parents have a great deal to do with how much a kid learns. And all kidding aside, my parents both were very educated mind, wanted to have their children become educated.”

0:15:53 Ridge's parents weren't really involved in his education. They stressed the fact that he ought to be educated. His mother didn't go on from high school. His father got a degree from MU and a master's in journalism in 1926/1927. None of his brothers and sisters finished college.

“I was the only one who went to college. It was very important to me.”

0:17:50 How Ridge's education at Hickman prepared him for the future:

Teachers stressed things getting done on time. He's very punctual to this day. The teachers were able to instill a willingness to learn – how things happened, why they happened and how to do things.

For example, when Ridge purchased his carpet business, there was no software available to do accounts receivable and inventory. The one software that was on the market cost \$50,000 but didn't work. He purchased an Apple computer and created a program – with no knowledge of computers – that worked for a year. He switched to a PC and figured out how to write another program that he eventually began to sell. He now has 675 customers that use the software (Carpet Merchant). It's still used at the store.

He says that he used skills he learned from teachers at Hickman to figure out how things work mathematically.

0:20:43 Ridge talks about a national postcard marketing campaign he did for the software in 1986 that yielded a phone call in 2008 from a guy looking to purchase the software. The guy was thinking of “buying a computer one day.”

0:23:00 What was gained with desegregation:

“The realization that we’re all equal. To think that somebody is a slave or somebody that is beneath you is, oh, that makes no sense to me whatsoever. If nothing else, desegregation brought people together.

Before that, we had blacks and whites and Chinese – they had their own little deal and what have you – and we’re all God’s children, regardless of your faith. We’re all homo sapiens.

I don’t know that it’s cured anything but it’s certainly opened up a lot of eyes that – then of course I wasn’t here when slavery was active but I can’t imagine it. I mean, the brutality that existed. So, I think that it’s not an end-all but it’s, it’s helped. It’s helped. It’s helped bring the races together.

I think that prior to that time, if you look at the older people, 50s and 60s back then, the 80s and 90s, you still hear the comments that are uncalled for and, uh, what have you. I don’t see that today. You know, occasionally, I would guess but, yeah, so I think it’s helped.”

0:26:08

What was lost:

“Whatever was lost, I think was worth losing. I don’t think that there was anything worth keeping that prevented integration. I will say that, if it continued on like that, Douglass High School would probably have the same britches that would fall off when they got tackled. [Laughs] I think that – I just can’t imagine that. I don’t know that anything is lost.

There’s so much that’s gained. Whatever’s lost, should be lost.

I think a hundred years from now, it won’t be of consequences. I don’t think that it will be a questionable. It will be something in the past that future generations will say, ‘Pfft. Wow.’”

0:28:51

Ridge thinks that as each generation’s thinking about things changes, so will this shift in mindset. He talks about his granddaughter going to teach in India and his wife and son going to China. His grandson spent part of his summer in Milan.

It’s amazing what they’ve discovered and found. When I was in high school, we might go to McBaine to steal a watermelon. And that was a big deal!” [Laughs]

Ridge talks about his dial-up modem that they were impressed with a few years ago. Now, he marvels at the fact that we can pick up our cell phones and can find out anything we want to know.

James Turner – Hickman High School Class of 1961

Jim Turner grew up as the oldest of his parents' 10 children in Cemetery Hill, a black neighborhood that had 15-20 houses in it where kids rode bicycles, played football and baseball against the other black neighborhoods, and had their own playground in the cemetery. There were two white families who joined in the mix - the Bakers and the Foleys. Both had large families with 10 kids each and were considered "poor." Turner says they were part of the community, just like everyone else.

Turner started working at age nine when he delivered 20-25 copies of the Columbia Daily Tribune per day to homes in the area. He also had a route downtown, where he served businesses in buildings he couldn't enter due to segregation. His clients met him at the front door.

He says he didn't care much for school, though. He was more interested in cars and girls and had a propensity to skip class that would land him in the principal's office.

At age 15, he purchased a 1951 Chevy BelAire for \$125 cash. Once he got his license, the school also entrusted him with the driver's education class's car, which he would use to take student body president, Jim Nunnally, wherever he needed to go. Turner also had the privilege of driving the homecoming queen in the parade every year.

Turner only attended Douglass School through grade 11, when the high school closed and he was required to transfer to Hickman for his senior year. He says being forced to transfer to Hickman for his senior year was a blow.

"It was hard to accept because ... the activities that I had with the student body president and all that, it was different. It just wasn't the same and there were a lot of things that went on that they didn't involve black kids in at the school."

His first day at Hickman, Turner says he and his friend, Terry Palmer, decided that they were going to go and if they didn't like it, they would join the service. They ended up staying and he completed the two classes needed to obtain the 17 units required to receive his diploma.

About that first day, he says, "You were kind of afraid and not afraid. It was kind of like starting a new job. You know you was goin' to face difficulties but you had accepted to be there. I knew some of the kids [especially the boys, from playing sports] before I got there. It made a difference."

For the most part, students were accepting or indifferent to his being there, he says. However, there were a few ripples in the transition. Turner talks about getting in trouble for walking out of an school assembly where, for a play, white students painted their faces black to portray black people. He walked out of a gym class because a white student threw a ball at "his privates." A few students made racial wisecracks about Aunt Jemima or Buckwheat. Some called him "black" and "nigger." There were a few he says he had to fight.

"There were a lot of things that was said and we were called and stuff like that that the newspaper or other people never, never knew about," he says. "You had to be there to know this."

**Audio Log of interview with James “Jim” Turner
Desegregation of Columbia’s Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project**

Track 1 (38:57)

INTRO 0:03-0:22

Name: James Turner

Date of birth: February 27, 1943

Birthplace: Boone County, Columbia, Missouri. Turner was born in Boone County Hospital, which is now called Boone Clinic.

Parents’ names: James and Margie (Lewis) Turner

Parent’s occupation: Father worked on the railroad. When his mother worked outside the home, she did housekeeping and childcare.

Sibling(s): Ten siblings, seven brothers and three sisters. Dave, John, Carl, Robert, Ken, Floyd, Joe, Jackie, Cindy and Linda. Turner is the oldest child.

0:01:53 Turner talks about attending grades 1-11 at Douglass High School. He attended Hickman High School from 1960-1961 and graduated from Hickman May 29, 1961.

0:02:52 After high school, Turner worked as a mechanic for Nichol's Buick (61-63), then went into business for himself from 1963-1965. He says he was one of the first black guys to work as a line mechanic at the dealership. As a kid, he always tinkered with bicycles and cars. After high school, he was trained at the GM training center and worked for Nichol's on and off for a total of 28 years.

0:05:00 Nichols opened his own restaurant, at the encouragement of others, on July 1, 1989. T&H (Turner & Hickem) was a soul food restaurant located near Garth and Linn, in an old paint store, that many considered a well-known "hole-in-the-wall" nightspot. His partner was Harold Hickem but the establishment had a lot of side-names, like "Tits and Hips." It catered to an older crowd, where DJs played blues music. It closed on June 1, 2001.

- 0:08:19 After the restaurant closed, Turner did nothing. When he got bored, he went back to work at a girls' sorority (Kappa Kappa Gamma) as their cook, preparing breakfast and lunch for the 89 girls who live in the house (located at 512 Rollins). He's been working with them for 11 years and is currently still employed with them during the school year.
- 0:10:45 Turner talks about the catering work he continues to do on the side - weddings, Christmas dinners, New Year's parties, retirement parties, etc.
- 0:11:25 He and his wife, Sandra, manage a total of nine rental properties in town. They started managing properties in 1985.
- 0:12:27 Turner and his wife were childhood and high school sweethearts. They have six children - three boys and three girls - Tyrone James, Deronda, Karri, Tina, Patrick Alan and Christopher. They have 13 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren (with one on the way).
- 0:14:18-0:15:10 EXPERIENCING TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES.
- 0:15:11 Turner talks about growing up in Columbia, starting with the paper route he had at age nine. He delivered 20-25 copies of the Columbia Daily Tribune per day to homes in the area but also had a route downtown, where he served the post office, Walter's Plumbing, the donut shop called The Bakery and Schwinn's. He talks about how hard it was to accept at that age that there were several places he was told he could not enter due to segregation. His clients met him at the front door.
- 0:17:30 By age 11, Turner was working in Gordon's Restaurant washing dishes. By age 13, he was their breakfast cook, serving up eggs, bacon, omelets and different types of salads. Raymond Lindsey, Hano Douglas, Henry Daniels all worked at the restaurant and lived in the neighborhood. They brought young kids in and gave them jobs.
- 21:41 Turner talks about his home on Cemetery Hill, on Second Street near Broadway. It was a brown, four-bedroom, two-story house with a clothesline in the yard. He talks about the foot-tub they used to wash clothes - "the same tub you washed your clothes, you took a bath in" - with the same soap ("Trend" washing powder, sold at 39 cents for two boxes).
- 0:25:30 His family raised chickens, his grandmother would kill a chicken every morning, fry it and serve it with fried potatoes, biscuits and gravy for

breakfast. Lunch was leftovers from breakfast. His grandfather lived in the country (Pierpoint), where they raised hogs that provided other meat. Everything was hung in the smokehouse year-round. No refrigeration needed.

- 0:26:50 Turner's father worked on the railroad for the MKT (Missouri, Kansas and Texas) repairing tracks for 27 years, then went to work as a janitor at MU until his death at 57. His mother did housework for other families when she wasn't having children. He tells that Shiloh's Bar & Grill and Wabash bus depot used to be train stations. People would come through these points for football games on the weekend.
- 0:29:07 The Cemetery Hill neighborhood had 15-20 houses in it and was all black except for two white families - the Bakers and the Foleys. Both had large families with 10 kids each and were considered "poor trash." The community as a whole knew each other well and would all sit around burning rags at night to keep the mosquitos at bay.
- 0:30:40 Turner talks about how the kids spent their free time. The "Cemetery Hill Kids" rode bicycles, played football and baseball, had their own playground in the cemetery. Kids who lived across the highway were called "Highway 40 Kids" and the Douglass School area kids were the "Douglass Kids." While the kids from Cemetery Hill and Highway 40 didn't cross into each other's territory, all of the kids converged at Douglass. Each area formed teams that played one another in sports - especially in baseball and football.
- 0:32:37 The kids made their own golf course in Fred Gordon's back yard by burying tin cans in the ground and play with homemade sticks and golf balls. They also put up a basketball court and strung together lamp lights so they could play at night. Basketball goals were made out of old wooden baskets that apples or potatoes came in - no strings or nets. They had basketballs.
- 0:34:32 Bradfords, Gordons, Douglas, Edwards, Harveys - names of some of the kids from the neighborhood that Turner played with.
- 0:35:20 Girls and boys would play the same games. "Some of the girls were some of the boys we played with." Anna Douglas, Mary Edwards, Wrights, Jordans - all girls who were great athletes.

0:36:00 Turner describes going to school at Douglass. Until you reached high school, students stayed in the same classroom. There were about 15 kids in a classroom. They taught you writing, spelling, about Presidents. Students had their own desks with a storage area, called a "school chair," which was made out of wood and metal, and looked more like a bench. The top and bottom opened. There were four rows of four or five seats. Classrooms were approximately 12' by 12' - and haven't changed in size.

Track 2 (39:22)

0:00:00 Teachers sat at the head of the classroom, at a sturdy oak desk, with a blackboard mounted on the wall behind them where they wrote out lessons.

0:01:08 School was from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Students had an hour or 45 minutes for lunch, in shifts. You'd get one or two 15-minute breaks during the day. In high school, when students went from class to class, they had 5 minutes to move around the building.

0:02:15 Turner talks about teacher's equipment. He talks about Mrs. Wiggins and her books, Mr. Morris and his experiments.

0:03:26 Each class had their own books. Turner didn't do much homework - "If it wasn't something I was interested in, I wouldn't do it. I had to be interested in it to do it." It would be things like doing 15-20 math problems. In class, the teacher would ask you to tell the class how you figured it out to make sure you actually did the work yourself.

0:05:12 Turner was actually raised by his grandmother, who would prepare breakfast for him, his grandfather and brothers - fried chicken, fried potatoes, biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs. Every day! She was raised in Stephens, Missouri (now Millersburg) on a farm. The tradition of a hearty breakfast stems from her upbringing.

0:06:43 Turner would walk to school with a group of kids from the neighborhood - from where Skagg's currently is to Douglass. They played games along the way. In bad weather, they would take the underground tunnel from the hill that ended at Park Street with a group of 10 or so kids. (The tunnel was basically on Third Street (now Providence Road) and Broadway.

0:09:19 Students would eat lunch in the cafeteria. Lunches were cooked food, served on plastic trays, not packaged or sweet stuff. It was only about 10

cents then. The cafeteria itself seated approximately 70 people. Tables were made out of pressed wood and metal. Chairs were folding chairs. There was no designated seating - you sat where there was room and you knew everyone in the room.

0:12:13 For gym class/physical education, students went outside and played games - baseball, kickball or handball. The football field was far from the school (approximately five blocks away). Volleyball and basketball were played during the winter months when you couldn't go outside. Shorts, tennis shoes, socks and a shirt were gym attire. Dressing for gym class and showering afterwards were part of your grade.

0:13:42 Turner wore "regular clothes" to school. He was a neat freak who stayed up all night washing and ironing his outfit because he had to have a "crease in his pants and a shirt that would cut your finger." He basically wore the same clothes every day, washing and ironing it at night. He had two pair of khakis and a few button-front shirts. He wore loafers - and only had one pair. He was able to wear stylish stuff because he started working early and bought his own stuff.

"I did my own washing and ironing because we were - it was so many in the family that you, if you wanted something you done it yourself."

0:16:11 Turner talks about John Prince, a local guy who cut hair in his house. His dad would take all of the boys to him and he'd use his electric clippers to give them all the "bowl cut." "They would take a bowl and put on your head, and you'd cut around this bowl. That's how you got your hair cut. He didn't take much off the top. He'd just cut around the sides. If he took any off the top, he took it off with a pair of scissors."

0:17:27 Teachers at Douglass taught students tools and skills that were necessary for a successful life. Turner highlights Ruth D. Wiggins and tells why he thought more of her than any other teacher at Douglass. He also mentions George Brooks (coach and gym teacher) and talks about Russell Boone (band teacher), who would call everyone "Bird" and would pluck people in the head with his long fingers to get their attention.

"You had to gain their respect in order to learn something."

0:19:20 Turner says he wasn't coordinated enough to play an instrument but remembers that Mr. Boone made students create a song and sing it in front of the class. Mrs. Wiggins would call students "young man" and

encourage her students to excel by making them want to learn. Turner considers Mr. Brooks the "player" of the teachers at Douglass.

0:21:11 Turner talks about his interactions with C.B. Walker, principal of Douglass, that stemmed from his propensity to skip class. They got along but weren't "friendly." Turner talks about the reasons he skipped class - he was older than other students, had a car (a 1951 Chevy Bel Aire that he purchased at 15 for \$125 cash) and was more interested in cars and girls than his schoolwork.

At this time, Chevy only made one model of car.

0:23:56 Turner's mother was a supporter of the teachers but his father was not involved with his education or in building relationships with his teachers. His mother didn't have a lot of interaction with the teachers and principal, though, because she had so many kids.

"If she had, I mean, she would've been – with as many kids as she had – she would've spent her whole lifetime right at the school."

0:25:07 While discussing his relationship with the other students at Douglass, Turner talks about the drivers' training class and car. James Nunnally was student body president at the time and whenever he needed to go somewhere, he would enlist Turner's help because the school trusted him with the drivers' training vehicle. He also drove the homecoming queen in the parade. Everyone knew him because of this.

0:26:30 Since Turner worked after school, he didn't have a lot of time for after-school activities and extra-curricular activities. He did play basketball in high school.

0:27:22 Turner talks about schools in Columbia being integrated in 1955, when a few black students transferred to Hickman. He says they knew in 1957 that Douglass was going to close even though 1959 was the last graduating class.

"It was hard to accept because ... the activities that I had with the student body president and all that, it was different. It just wasn't the same and there were a lot of things that went on that they didn't involve black kids in at the school."

- 0:28:33 Turner talks about an assembly at school where one of the black girls (Lila Stimmons) was nominated for an office and all she received was the black votes because no one knew her. He also shares about a play that had black people in it and the white students painted their faces black to get into character. He and Terry Palmer walked out of the assembly and later got in trouble for it. His parents were called in before he was let back into school.
"There were a lot of things that was said and we were called and stuff like that that the newspaper or other people never, never knew about. You had to be there to know this."
- The news and the schools made it known to the whole town that the school was going to close - it was just a matter of time. Turner says that people in the community were mostly concerned with how students were going to be treated.
- "There was people who didn't want it to happen but what can you do?"
- 0:32:02 Turner says that he thought the boys got along better than the girls because of their involvement in sports. Girls, he believes, didn't have the same level of interaction because they had no reason to associate with one another.
- Turner didn't decide to go to Hickman. Douglass closed just before his senior year and he was required to transfer.
- 0:33:05 Remembering the first day of classes, Turner and his friend, Terry Palmer, decided that they were going to go and if they didn't like Hickman, they would join the service. He only had two classes to attend to obtain his 17 requirements for to receive his diploma and was doing C.O.E. (which was a work off-campus class). He didn't spend a lot of time on campus during his senior year.
- "I got one but it ain't something I'm proud of. My school years, I'm not proud of because there was so many things that I think if I had'a prepared myself I could'a been a lot better."
- 0:34:42 There were things that Hickman offered that Douglass didn't have - including more people to relate to and more interest in some of his coursework - that made him settle in and complete their senior year.

- 0:36:01 Mr. Battle helped with the transition by telling them what to expect at Hickman. Turner says that some of the students weren't as friendly as others, some of the white girls didn't treat them nicely because they thought he was only flirting with them. The guys who did accept him, he got along well with; the ones who didn't would call you names and treat you poorly.
- "You could tell whether you were accepted or not accepted by the actions of the way they were."
- 0:36:57 Turner talks about Fred Faurot's as a teacher who wasn't "for" blacks and his use of "you people" in the class discussions. Faurot would say things like, "You people want this," or "You people want that." Turner says he asked, "Well, what people are you talking about?" Faurot would never clarify.
- 0:37:33 Mr. Battle would prep students on names that they may be called and how students' study habits had to adapt to the teachers' teaching style.
- 0:38:15 Turner shares about some of the things students at Hickman would say to him - asking who Aunt Jemima was and whether Buckwheat was from Kansas or Missouri. Most of the comments were racial wisecracks but some would come out and say racially charged things. Some would call you "black" and "nigger" and things like that but Turner would threaten them and wouldn't hear more of it. There were a few he had to fight.

Track 3 (28:13)

- 0:00:00 Fred Faurot stands out as the one person who made him feel most unwelcome. McCloud, the gym teacher was another. He walked out of his class one day because one of McCloud's favorites threw a handball at Turner's private parts. McCloud took up for his ball player when words were had - which Turner said he understood but wouldn't stand for.
- "They did it in a way to where they were trying to protect theyself but yet you still, you know that you wasn't wanted."
- 0:01:40 Turner talks about his family's response. His mother told him if he got tired of putting up with it that he could leave. If you raise hell with one, he said, you earned a reputation as a troublemaker and they lose respect for you. His dad, he says, didn't really care.

- 0:02:25 Turner often stayed with friends in town while attending Hickman as a senior, so he bought breakfast on the way to school. He says he wasn't home much as a senior.
- That first morning he probably picked his girlfriend (now wife) up in his car and took her to school.
- 0:03:35 During summer orientation, students who were to transfer to Hickman were brought to the school and shown around. They didn't get to meet the teachers at that time but as they figured out their schedules, they were showed where to go. The counselor at Douglass (Mr. Battle) sat with students and helped them figured out what courses they needed to take in order to graduate.
- 0:05:08 In response to what it felt like going into class that first day:
- "You were kind of afraid and not afraid. You know, with the new, it was kind of like starting a new job. You know, you know you was goin' to face difficulties but if you had accepted to be there. If you wanted to, you know, get along wit'em, you know - and, as I say, I knew some of the kids that, before I got there. It makes, it made a difference. If it was all new environment then it might've been different. And it was a new environment, don't get me wrong. But it was like some of the kids, a lot of'em I knew, you know, because of, especially the boys because of, uh, over the years that you played ball, different balls with'em and stuff like that."
- 0:05:58 Turner describes the classrooms at Hickman. They were a lot bigger than at Douglass with between 40 and 50 students per class. Gym class consisted of students from all grades. The same was true in other classes as well. In his art class, students had lockers in the room where they could store projects they were working on. The gym class had lockers as well. Students were assigned hallway lockers and keys for storing other items. If students didn't clean out their lockers and turn in the key at the end of their senior year, they would not get their diploma.
- 0:08:24 Books were also assigned and students had to turn them in at the end of the year.
- 0:09:05 Turner only went to school from 8:30am-11:30 am because he was in C.O.E. and had a job in the afternoon.

- 0:09:43 Turner describes teacher John Ritter as a down to earth guy. Fred Faurot, however, was a hall monitor that Turner didn't get along with. McCloud, the basketball coach and Turner's P.E. teacher, was another with whom he didn't get along. Bob Roark seemed like a pretty neat guy based on what he'd heard from peers who played football under his leadership.
- "I don't think there's any black kids that were, that went there their senior year, because that was it ever, you know, involved in - I don't think any of them, uh, I think they might've joined the National Honor Society or whatever, but by being seniors, they didn't give us a lot of time to do a lot of things and you wasn't - if, if you wasn't well-known by the kids and that's how you got elected in different things."
- 0:11:40 Turner's parents had no interaction with teachers or the principal at Hickman.
- "I can't say that, I don't know if there were many black kids that, that parents did. My wife's mother, she was the president of the P.T.A. at Douglass for years and, but by the time that she had got up there, uh, most of her kids were almost out of school and I don't think she participated with any activities. She might've went but I don't think she participated in anything."
- 0:12:30 Turner discusses the changes he saw in the community with desegregation. A lot of black parents weren't as involved in school activities as they were before. He says one reason could be because a lot of the kids didn't get to play. A few kids were involved in the band but it was nothing like the Douglass band.
- "They didn't give the community, other than the school, things to be thrilled over."
- 0:14:17 Turner talks about the response of people in the community to those who voluntarily chose to transfer to Douglass. His comments center on the general reaction to the mistreatment of students in their new environment.
- "Some of the kids, the parents didn't like the way they were treated at some of the, the places they went and stuff like that but what can you do?"
- 0:15:25 Turner keeps in touch with Terry Palmer, his good friend from high school. He shares about Charles Allen, another student who kept to himself and did what he had to do. Turner describes him as "above us." He says that Allen and John Kelly were closer to one another and "different

people.” He describes Kelly as one who wasn't that active in the black community who "didn't communicate with the black folks a lot." His brother, Rod Kelly, was more of a down-to-earth guy.

He sees three or four of his white peers from Hickman occasionally: Wes Fuel, Terry Gibson, Bob Lamone (deceased), Jerry Cook and Charley “Blackwell” (Blackmore).

Regarding Blackmore: "It ain't like we hug and kiss. We get along but we don't do that." [Laughs]

0:17:36 Turner concedes that the quality of education he received at Douglass would've been great if he'd been more interested in school. “I went to school but I wasn't at school, if you know what I mean,” he says. At Hickman, all he wanted to do was get out.

"I just wanted to go there and do my time and get out. I did what I had to do and that it." He counts his time at Douglass as his "best training.”

"Even though my diploma says I'm from Hickman High School but I give all my credit to Douglass."

0:19:13 "I would say that, probably, I would say that it has got better but I think that in the last, in the first - my first years of integration, I think that I had, you had more freedom but I think the quality of doing things is a lot better than they are now. Because you still having people telling you what you can't do, what you can do, where you can work and all this. That there's uh, integration to me is not over. It's still going on. You know, it's just that people are, I say, they've accepted it the way they want to accept it. But there are some that still, there's only certain places that you can go, do and feel free doing it right now and it's been that way for the last 60 years. It has gotten a little bit better but not a whole lot."

Places that he believes blacks are still feeling restricted include the job market and movies - "sometimes I don't feel comfortable sittin' watchin' them." He couldn't elaborate or give examples, though.

0:21:42 This was recorded after I'd put my equipment away after the completion of the interview:

Turner talks about his 50th Hickman High School reunion. He was the only black student at the reunion. He said that his peers were friendly the first

day but when they read what he'd written in his biography about the mistreatment he felt he endured during his senior year, their attitude changed.

The night of the dinner (during the 50th reunion), Turner left early due to the hostility he felt.

He tells of a play that students were not "allowed" to participate in in which white students painted their faces black to portray blacks. Turner and Allen walked out. Other black students stayed and sat through it.

David Holsinger wrote a letter of apology after the reunion that Turner shared. Turner talked to him on the phone but feels that Holsinger's response was due to his desire to maintain a good image with blacks in his community since he is a retired real estate agent in Hallsville (?).

Pete Kempner told Turner that he was unaware of all of that occurred (as referred to in Turner's letter). Turner maintains that they all knew it and that he and Kempner were "hot-rodders" who talked regularly about things.

"They supposed to do this every 10 years," Turner said. "If I'm still around I will not attend another class reunion because of that."

Sandra Brown Turner – Hickman High School Class of 1963

Sandra Turner grew up in a tight-knit community just north of Highway 40 (now Old 63) where families were large and most people were related. They had huge gardens, raised farm animals and were mindful to stay away from the neighborhood goat that stole clothing off your laundry lines. There were white families in it that were just as much a part of the neighborhood as anyone else.

Her mother was an activist with 10 kids who organized a community park, was head of the PTA at Douglass and brought the families from the area together on a regular basis. Kids made their own fun by playing in the woods or making go-carts out of orange crates. She says their lives were so full that they didn't know they were poor.

Her first personal experience with racism and prejudice occurred around age 10. She went into a five-cent shop in downtown Columbia and sat down at the fountain. She was thirsty and wanted to buy a soda, so when her older sister told her to get up, she argued with her. A lady who worked there eventually told her they didn't serve blacks. It was when she really became aware of race – and why she had to walk past Hickman, Jefferson Junior and Ridgeway to get to Douglass School every day.

"I asked my mother one day and she said, 'You have separate things and that's where you go. And, it's nothing you've done. You just can't go there.'"

Turner describes teachers at Douglass who "didn't take no mess off nobody," who were eager to ensure students got a quality education and knew that success in the world was possible with hard work and discipline. She started playing in Douglass's marching band, which she says brought a lot of pride to the black community, in sixth grade. The band took trips to black schools in Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas, which opened students' eyes to a world outside of Columbia.

Turner describes the decision to close Douglass in 1960, just before her senior year, as "kind of a blow" for the community but says she was excited about the chance to take classes that weren't offered at Douglass. She believed her parents when they said it meant better opportunities for blacks. Her sister, Marva, was already in her senior year at Hickman at the time.

An unplanned pregnancy deterred Turner's plan to transfer to Hickman in 1960 and graduate with her peers. She went back two years later to complete her last few credits and says she didn't have much interaction with the teachers or students because she was only there to get her diploma and move on.

In Turner's eyes, desegregation brought with it many opportunities but great losses for the black community. She counts the connectivity of the black community, tangible role models for black youth and an entire generation of young adults who are only interested in what today can bring them among the casualties.

"My mother said that integration was a progress that needed to be done but now that I look back, I don't know that it didn't destroy our heritage, our identity and what we stand for."

**Audio Log of interview with Sandra Brown Turner
Desegregation of Columbia's Public High Schools (1954-1961)
Oral History Project**

Track 1 (39:22)

INTRO 0:00 – 0:23

Name: Sandra Brown Turner

Date of birth: June 29, 1943

Birthplace: Columbia, Missouri (Born at home - 1501 North Providence)

Parents' names: Madge and Sherman Brown

Parent's occupation: mother – homemaker and housekeeper; father – “straw boss” supervisor of janitors at Stephens College for 47 years

Sibling(s): 6 sisters, 2 brothers – Barbara, Shirley, Marva, Elaine, Nathalyn, Janice, Sherman Jr. and Daniel. Sandra was number five.

0:02:27 Turner talks about her brother who died as an infant when blacks were not admitted into the hospital. A cow knocked her mother off the front porch while she was pregnant and injured the fetus. The child was born with a breathing problem and when they finally received clearance to bring him to the hospital, he'd died.

0:03:29 Turner attended Douglass from Kindergarten through grade 11. She attended Hickman for her senior year, two years after she was supposed to because she got pregnant her senior year. When she graduated from high school she was already employed at Boone Hospital Center as a secretary. She went on to become a histologist and cytologist. She worked at Boone for a total of 37 years.

She moved over to the University of Missouri, doing the same thing in the vet school, in order to get medical insurance after retirement. Boone Hospital didn't offer this to long-term employees but the University did.

She attended Columbia College while trying to care for her young family but had to quit because it became too much. She never went back.

- 0:06:02 Turner is married to James Walter Turner. They will have been married for 50 years on October 6, 2013. They were in school together the whole time, from kindergarten onwards, and high school sweethearts. They have photos of her standing next to him in the 4th grade.
- 0:06:49 The couple had six children - three girls, three boys. One boy passed away in 1990. Their names: James Tyrone, Deronda, Kerry, Tina, Patrick and Christopher. They have 13 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.
- 0:08:05 Turner was one of the Highway 40 kids. She explains that Business Loop 70 was Highway 40 and her family lived on the north side of the highway. It was a close-knit community where most were related to one another.
- 0:08:40 Mother was an instigator. Her house was the place where people gathered. People in the community shared everything. Her mother made an effort to keep her kids active. She started a playground for the kids in the neighborhood and went to Parks and Rec and got equipment for the kids.
- Sold popcorn balls, divinity and homemade fudge to equip the playground.
- 0:09:46 People visited one another more back then. "If someone was new in the neighborhood, everybody made sure that they took something to get to know that person. If you needed an egg, you know you could go next door and borrow egg, even though my mother was always against that but she was always willing to give to anybody that came."
- Everyone had their own garden and a lot people raised chickens, ducks. Turner says she was raised on a type of small farm because they had cows, pigs, a goat - the neighborhood goat, who chewed clothes off the line and scared all the kids.
- 0:11:24 Kids would get up early in the morning to go blackberry hunting and picked whatever grew in the woods. Her mother would make jelly and canned fruit. She cut and cured her own meat. She made her own tomato ketchup - with green tomatoes, onions and green peppers - and people in the neighborhood loved it. She also made her own lye soap.
- 0:12:30 Turner's family would start washing clothes at 5 am. They didn't have hot water, so they would use big iron kettles over a fire to heat the water to wash. She remembers them using a scrub board, then moving up to an electric washer. The clothes would be in the washer for about 15-20 minutes, then went through two rinse tubs and a wringer before being

hung on the line. They had four 20-foot lines but it was never enough. Clothes ended up strewn on the grass and on the fence.

"Everybody knew when the wash day was in the neighborhood 'cause everybody did it. Because most people had large families. So, when they didn't have enough room on the line because on the days you washed your bedclothes, the sheets and blankets and things took up most of the line, so you'd have to spread this stuff all on the lines and the fences and the grass. Wherever you could get it. And they would dry."

She says this is when clothes smelled good to her because they had the "outdoor aroma."

In winter, they still hung them out to dry. She calls it "freeze dry." "You let'em freeze and let'em hang there for a while. Then you bring them in and we had these lines - you throw'em over doors and you had these wood stoves that you had, with lines going behind them. And they would finish drying there."

0:14:40 She tells how her older sisters would get upset when their panties were drying on the fence when their boyfriends would come to see them.

0:15:14 Turner says her parents were always around. Her father played marbles and basketball with them. She says he cheated a lot. He would often make their toys, so they didn't know what it was like to have a toy purchased for them.

Kids would look for pieces of glass to play hopscotch with. They'd play in the woods, kicking cans or go crawdaddy. They'd make their own fun.

"That's one of my favorite times. We'd get up early in the morning and go to the creek. We would get crawdads. We'd come back and we would steal corn because the man that had the goat? He had a cornfield and we would go steal his corn. And then by - we had somebody watch because he had this noisy truck. And, so, we could hear him coming. And so, somebody would watch and say, 'He's coming!' So, we would get the corn and sometimes, by the time he got there, we would be sitting on the front porch step eating his corn and he would say, 'How you all today?' And we knew he knew that we had stolen his corn because we'd be eating it."

She calls these the joyous times.

- 0:16:58 Turner explains how they made their own go-carts from orange crates. They'd have competitions for whose ran the fastest or looked the best. This was their entertainment.
- 0:17:25 There was one hill where kids would ride tires or old tubs when it snowed.
- "We never knew we were poor. We never heard the word 'poor'. Now that we look back, we knew we were poor."
- 0:17:45 Clothes that children outgrew were passed down to whoever could use it in the neighborhood.
- "My father took six bicycles and made us a bicycle. My mother's theory was, if it's yours, you share. So, everybody learned to ride on our bicycle. We had to take turns - the neighborhood was full of children. And she would make us take turns. Everybody learned how to ride on ours."
- She says that by the time that the bicycle was torn up, all of the kids had new bicycles and their parents wouldn't let them ride. It was heartbreaking but her father would say, "Don't worry. God will provide." Then he'd take six more bicycles and make another for them.
- 0:18:40 Turner explains that there were three neighborhoods in Columbia: the Highway 40, the Douglass School area and Cemetery Hill. They would have baseball tournaments where each area would play the other.
- 0:19:10 The black community had their own community. They weren't allowed to go downtown. They had their own coal company, restaurants, barbershops - everything was there. The policeman, preachers and teachers all lived in the neighborhood.
- 0:20:12 Clarifier: the playground was right across from where they lived. It was near the corner of I70 on the Joe Machens property. There was a baseball diamond, slides, swings and a couple picnic tables. People would lay blankets out have picnics.
- Her mother would make a big basket of food - with fried chicken - and they'd have picnics there.
- The baseball tournaments brought vendors who sold hot dogs and things. It was small scale.

- 0:22:22 The baseball tournaments were once a year. Douglass Park was the other place where tournaments were held.
- "That was kinda like the entertainment, the biggest entertainment, of black people. And, you know, to see that there's no - if you go to most of the games there's not too many black kids participating in baseball any more. That used to be a big thing in Columbia."
- 0:23:14 People from the three communities would play against one another. Sometimes there would be all-female baseball teams and all-male teams. They would play against each other. Her sister Nathalyn was a really good ball player.
- 0:23:58 Turner explains how her mother made soap out of lye, grease and water. She would save her old, used grease and use it in the soap. Her mother would sometimes add scents to it, like lavender. People at that time used it to wash their skin as well but Turner's family only used it for washing clothes.
- 0:25:00 Turner shares that Christmastime was a great time when her mother would gift butter the family churned and set in decorative molds along with a piece of cured meat or jar of jelly to family and neighbors. The kids would pull a wagon full of packets of these goodies and deliver them on Christmas morning.
- 0:25:40 She didn't know what a loaf of bread was until she was around 15 because her grandmother would get up in the morning and make enough homemade biscuits for the day.
- "Our staple things were, we would go to the store to buy sugar, flour, um, toilet paper. Stuff like that. We never knew what it was to go to the store to buy milk."
- Turner talks about how she used to love drinking warm milk, straight from the cows as a kid. When they strained the milk, she loved drinking the foam off of it.
- 0:26:56 Turner's mother would make skirts, blouses and dresses for her girls out of the flour sacks. Tea towels as well.
- They ate everything on a cow, hog and pig. Nothing was wasted - including the feet and brains. She taught Turner how to make hogs head

cheese. Turner remembers well her mother's warning: "Be careful whose hog head cheese you eat because if you don't clean the nostrils, the mucus out of the nostrils, she said, 'You're eating snot.'" [Laughs]

Turner quickly explains how to make hogs head cheese.

Turner's mother made sure they had some kind of craft - crocheting, sewing, making candies, etc.

"Her theory was an unoccupied mind is the devil's workshop"

The kids all had chores - they had to get up and help feed, get water, make sure everything was done.

0:29:05 When they got back from school, they had three outfits: two for school and one for church. They would alternate outfits for school. They had school shoes, church shoes and work shoes. Everything was kept separate. When you wore your work shoes out, then your school shoes became your work shoes. They got two pairs of shoes a year - one at Christmas and one when school started.

0:30:10 "I thank my parents every day. You know, I used to pray for them to die because I thought they were so strict. [Laughs] Now, I realize where they were trying to get me to. My father used to make us work for a nickel and you, if you had that nickel he expects you, by the end of the week to have two pennies of that nickel left. He says, 'You do not ever spend all you have.' So, I appreciate him for that."

0:30:45 "My parents always said, 'It doesn't matter what the color your skin is, you can always excel if you're willing to work and deprive yourself of the things that you want. Instead of getting everything you want and not having what you need. My father's biggest thing was, 'don't beg for what you need and get what you want' was a big thing with my father."

"You take care of your needs and if there's anything left, then you take care of a few of your wants. You never take care, you'll never be able to take care of all of your wants. But you can have a few if you're patient and you want to sacrifice to get that. And I thank him for that."

Back then you could get three pieces of candy for a penny, so you had plenty. A loaf of bread cost 25 cents. She said her father wanted them to know what the dollar was worth and what you could do with it.

- 0:31:54 Turner's mother would clean people's houses and got the kids jobs where they would clean as well for \$5 on the weekends. Out of that \$5, they had to buy school supplies, pay to get their hair done and make their lunch money. They had to budget that week. She says that if you wanted to go to the movies that Sunday and didn't have money left over, you didn't go. It only cost 25 cents and other parents gave their kids money. Turner wondered why her parents couldn't afford it. They learned to take care of their needs.
- 0:32:47 Turner had to pay for her own prom dress that she chose from a wedding book. She had a teacher who was a seamstress who helped her figure out how much the lace and fabric would cost. Out of her \$5 a week, she saved and paid for most of it. Near the end, her mother stepped in and said they would help pay for the last bit.
- "My mother never did anything without my father's approval. I used to hate her for that. [Laughs] 'We have to talk to daddy.' That's her main, 'If daddy says it can be ...'"
- Turner said he gave her grocery money. If she wanted the kids to have something that she thought they couldn't afford, she would pinch it from the grocery money to give them part of it.
- 0:34:20 As kids, they were never allowed to stay at other people's houses. He wanted to know where his kids were and what they were doing. Other kids could come to theirs, but they didn't sleep in other's homes.
- 0:34:54 She says she thinks the prom dress cost around \$100. The woman sewed it for her for little to nothing because she was her teacher her junior year.
- 0:36:26 In their garden, they grew corn, green beans, tomatoes, cabbage, okra, peas, potatoes. Apple trees and pear trees were also on their property. They would go into the woods for wild plums, hickory nuts, persimmon, walnuts, crabapples, blackberries and gooseberries. Part of their fun would be to race to gather these for the family.
- They'd have to hull walnuts but they had to be careful because the squirrels would steal them while they were drying.

0:38:41 They would also play with big, green hedgeballs (a.k.a. Osage orange, hedge apples) on trees. Apparently, they're poisonous but they would try to hit people with them. The goal was to hit it and not to break them.

Track 2 (39:03)

0:00:00 Turner would bring her mother flowers and her mother would rave over them. "She always made everything great anyway."

0:00:36 As kids, they would with groups of women to hunt wild greens - like dandelion greens and lamb's quarter - in the woods. They would bring them back to the house, clean them and cook them, especially for special functions.

Her family also grew mustard greens.

0:01:20 The older women in the church society would quilt together and give them to people in need. Turner would go for the cakes and cookies.

People would also go house to house and help neighbors kill and cut up hogs in the fall months. The men would kill the hogs and the women would cut up the meat. There was lots of good food to be had there as well.

0:02:30 They would also do this with chickens in the neighborhood. Turner explains the process. All of the women would get together and help so they got a lot done in a short time span. "Those were when I knew that people come together for a common goal. I mean, they would laugh and tell old tales, you know, just have a good time. I miss all of that."

"It was clean fun. People were busy all the time. You didn't have - I mean, I remember playing and making mud pies but you got up and got your work done, then you played."

0:03:40 Her parents stopped farming when she was 14/15. The entire family was up at 4 am and went to clean the office space of KFRU before school.

They walked to school, even in the winter months. She'd arrive to school sopping wet and the teacher would have her take her clothes off, put her coat on and place her wet clothes on the register to dry. Then, she would put them back on.

Her mother didn't drive until she was 14/15 years old. Then, they only had one car. Her father walked to work.

- 0:04:49 She tells the story of watching her father walk to work one morning when the snow was up to his knees. She says it was pitch dark outside. She remembers her mother saying, "Please make it to work."
- 0:05:40 When they would do the mass slaughtering, some people had freezers but many had a shed that was built to hang meat on their property. Her father won a freezer "My mother refused to let'em bring it in because she thought it was a joke. [Laughs] My father had forgotten that he signed - he won a freezer, a TV and a refrigerator. And my mother wouldn't let'em bring it in. She says, 'You've got to be kidding. You can't bring that in here! My husband and I cannot afford that.' My father had to go to the place. He finally remembered that he did sign up for it and they went down there and said he had won it. So, that really helped my mother out a lot."
- After that, she blanched stuff and froze it instead of canned.
- 0:06:54 Turner recalls having an old ice box for which the "ice man" would bring you a block of ice twice a week that went in the bottom. It would keep milk and things cold.
- 0:07:36 Turner talks about chores she did with her mother: washing jars and lids for canning, grinding vegetables, help put items away. Cans were stored in a shed until her father added on a basement, for storage.
- 0:09:34 Turner gives a tour of her house. It had 4 bedrooms, a living room and a back porch. They raised nine children in this home. Turner says there was a time when her father added on to the home because he felt the girls needed their own space. She laughs as she tells stories of sleeping two to a mattress on bunk beds and the fights that would ensue.
- There was a time when they had to "empty the pot" because there was no indoor toilet.
- 0:10:47 The family always sat around the kitchen table at night time, talking about the day or telling stories of the family. Her mother would always have a snack ready with something to drink for this time. Turner tells of saltine crackers with cheese that were broiled - a favorite thing to eat back then.

"People that remember my mother remember that kitchen table because they never invited anybody in their house that they didn't offer them something to eat. If it wasn't no more than a cracker and cheese, you had to eat while you sat and talked."

0:12:13 The Turners would invite random strangers to stay at the house when they lived on Highway 40. She says they would always supply strangers with food. Their home was called "the house by the side of the road" by strangers. When they got older, the children fought to move their parents away from the highway because they viewed this as a dangerous practice but she says she cherishes her parents' generosity.

0:13:08 Turner describes her family's kitchen. The cabinets were specially made but weren't any better than anyone else's. Her mother loved them. There was a refrigerator, stove and kitchen table.

0:14:19 Anytime people would see the family in the lower part of the hill, they would come. There were no strangers to her family.

0:14:53 They started out with a wooden refrigerator with the ice in the bottom. The huge block of ice sat at the bottom. They moved up to an old square one with the freezer at the top and the fridge at the bottom.

0:16:30 The started out with a wood-burning stove. It was a four-top with metal plates and a warmer up top. Her grandmother got up every morning at 5 and would make the fire. The next thing she'd smell was the coffee pot. This was her wake-up call. Her mother didn't want the kids to drink coffee but her grandmother would tell her "You have to plenty of cream and sugar in it because if you drink it black it'll make you blacker." [Laughs] She made Turner drink the coffee before her mother got up because she wasn't supposed to have it. Turner's grandmother would start the biscuits and the next thing they smelled would be eggs and bacon. She cooked breakfast every morning.

0:17:35 On Sunday, they would sometimes have special items like fried apples, sausage or fried chicken, fried potatoes, etc.

"Breakfast was a big thing because they always felt like if you had a good breakfast, then you could work all day."

Dinner might be a leftover piece of chicken from breakfast and something to drink. There was always a green vegetable. It was lighter. The family

didn't eat until her father got home. They sat down at the table and passed food around in bowls - not in pots and pans. Her father got his plate first and the best piece of meat, then the kids were given theirs. He sat at the head of the table and "was the king of the roost."

"My mother always felt like your daddy's a hard worker, so we have to take care of him."

0:19:00 They had a chore list - someone had to wash dishes, someone dries, someone had to take the trash out, someone brings in the wood, another brings in water.

Turner tells the story of being awakened at 2am because no one cleared the table. All of the kids had to get up - not just the person who didn't do the chore - and clean the kitchen. Another time, her sister didn't want to wash the pots and pans so she stuck them in the oven. Her mother took all of the dishes out of the cabinets and made her wash them all.

0:20:38 Kids from the neighborhood: Patricia Buckner, the Hattons, the Matthews, Turners, Dyvers, Keyes, Logans - a lot of them, mostly relations.

0:21:20 There were white families that lived in the neighborhood. The Perkins, who would send their son, Sunny, over to his "black momma" for breakfast. The Bakers also lived in the neighborhood and played with everyone. The Chicks turned their dogs on the black kids because they would fight over the blackberry patch. These kids played baseball with everyone as well. These families still live in Columbia.

"They were poor people but they were good people."

Turner says they had their issues and the kids would call each other names. "It wasn't a one-sided affair," she says. "But when we played, we played."

They used to work on racing cars with the other kids in the community as well. As they got older, issues arose but they were eventually resolved.

"Naturally, you're more friendly when you're younger because you don't pay no attention to color but once, you know, as they got through that little teenager thing and they got over that, we were friends. We played together, did things together. Yeah, there were white families in our neighborhood."

0:23:51 She went to Friendship Baptist Church - where she still attends to this day - as a child.

"You were required to go to church in my day. You didn't have a choice. For most families, you'd go to Sunday School and you'd go to church and you'd be in church probably, at least, three days a week."

Whole families would go to church together at least once or twice a month.

"One rule that my mother made in our household, if you didn't go to church you didn't go - 'cause you know, the big thing was going to the show in the afternoon. You don't have time to go to church, you don't have time for socializing afterwards."

Turner thinks there were more activities built around the church, like ice cream socials, basket dinners, revivals, etc. The church was the grounding place for the whole community. People gathered when the church gathered. It was the center of the neighborhood.

Pastors didn't get salaries. They usually were fed by the community, walked the community and visited with families.

0:26:57 The Hall Theater, the Missouri Theater had special doors for blacks to enter and sections in the balcony where blacks could sit. She doesn't remember blacks being allowed to buy popcorn or concessions. There was one on Fifth Avenue that eventually became black-owned that people went to as well.

0:27:53 Turner's first experience with racism was around age 10. She went downtown with her sister and sat down at a soda fountain in one of the five- and 10-cent stores (Ben Franklin, Natalie's were examples given). Her sister told her to get up. The woman working there came and told her they didn't serve blacks. Her mother and father would talk about places they couldn't go but this was her first personal experience dealing with racism and prejudice.

Turner says it was eye-opening because she'd always wondered why she had to walk past Hickman, Jefferson Junior and Ridgeway to get to Douglass School - and sometimes fight with white kids along the way to get there.

"I asked my mother one day and she said, 'You have separate things and that's where you go. And don't, you know, it's nothing you've done. You just can't go there.'"

0:29:53 Turner recalls the girls from Stephens College sending boxes of [clothes], sometimes brand new. Things that were too big were altered to fit the girls. "That's how we stayed in style because Stephens College girls supplied us with what we need."

There were always hand-me-downs.

She tells a story of wanting to do a fashion show with the kids from The Intersection (an after-school program). The kids weren't keen on using second-hand clothes.

0:31:20 "We were never allowed to turn anything down. She said, 'If you don't want it, you accept it if it's offered to you. Then, if you go home and find that you can't use it, find someone who can. So, do not waste, you will not want.'"

0:31:59 Played dolls and cooking with other girls. Her parents would give them old pans and things she wasn't going to use anymore with mud or flour (they'd make mud-cakes). Mother would make her own starch.

0:32:56 They used to iron with the ones you put on the cook stove. They eventually got an electric iron. They used to use kerosene lamps for the relatives but they didn't use them.

0:33:46 Black people did hair in their homes with straightening combs and curling irons that would be placed on the hot stove. It was \$2 or \$3 to get your hair done - no more than \$5. She had a cousin who started a salon in her home. There were plenty of barbershops - at least three, nearby.

0:35:00 Turner talks about a typical day at Douglass. They had 30 minutes for lunch and most of the cafeteria food was made on the spot. When she got older, the high school kids would go to Monty's on Fifth Street or the Blue and White restaurant for lunch. There was also a little convenience store (Cozy's) where people purchased snacks like penny candy, soda and chips.

0:37:11 Turner was part of the band (from 6th grade on), choir and cheerleading squad. Practices were after school. She played oboe in the concert band

and saxophone, tuba, trombone and baritone to fill the season in the marching band as Douglass' enrollment dropped. Sometimes the band traveled every year - to black schools in Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas. These were highlights of being in the band.

"It was an opening for me to realize that people were doing, you know, that everything wasn't just like Columbia. I think that's what our instructor wanted us to see - that there's greater and higher things than just Columbia's area."

Track 3 (35:25)

0:00:00 Turner talks about her frustration with not seeing black children in today's society being encouraged to pursue playing a musical instrument.

0:00:40 Students had to pay 25 cents a week to buy instruments and uniforms for the band. Students couldn't wear their uniforms all the time. They had to perform, come back to the school, change out of uniforms, hang them up and place them in bags. Three times a year, the uniforms were cleaned. This was all included in the weekly cost.

The band booster club helped provide what was needed to keep the band going as well. They were well known in Columbia as being a good band, which brought a lot of pride to the black community.

0:02:16 Everybody knew everybody's family back then. If you acted up in school, the teachers knew your mother and would call her if you didn't get in line.

0:03:44 Turner had a good relationship with most of her teachers. She says she did "perform on some of them" and her mother showed up later and she paid the price for it. Her mother was president of the P.T.A. for a few years and was very active in her children's learning.

"I think they were a friend when they needed to be a friend and a disciplinary when they needed to be."

0:04:49 Music director Mr. Boone, Edith Williams (history) were teachers who stood out.

0:05:11 Mrs. Ruth Wiggins (English) was "dynamic." Her main thing was, 'Young lady, you can be what you want to be, and make sure what you want to be is what you be. [Laughs] She was always on us about

penmanship. If anyone that was under her, you could tell that you had been taught by her - penmanship - because everybody writes the same. My mother, my father were under her. Um, and any, my uncle - all of them - that same, perfect penmanship."

She called students, "Young lady." If she called you by your full name, it meant you'd agitated her and were about to be reprimanded.

0:06:08 Mrs. Emma Mae Turner (Math and physical education) threatened to put her out. "She didn't take stuff off of anyone."

0:06:36 George Belcher (Industrial teacher and hall monitor)

0:06:48 Turner says there was discipline with love at Douglass. The teachers were people of her "own kind" who were examples of the fact that you can achieve and be whatever you want to be.

0:07:24 Turner feels that there were some teachers who didn't give them what they needed by in general, they made sure the students got an education. They taught students by doing, in a hands-on manner. They worked to make sure that students got the full concept. Turner gives Emma Mae Turner as an example of a teacher who would pull a student aside after class and try to figure out what they don't understand and try to figure out what she could do to help them get the concept.

Teachers would make them go to the board to make sure that you truly got a concept. Some embarrassed you but it made you strive not to be embarrassed again.

They made students explain how they got a concept and coached them on ways to be more effective. They'd let you know if you weren't working hard enough on something and suggest you take home practice work.

"It wasn't like they were trying to do it for you but they let you know that if you need help, I'm here to help you. But first, you gotta do your part. I'm not going to do it for you. You have to work on it."

Teachers would tell students when they had a problem - with attitudes or laziness. They wouldn't hesitate to put a student who was trying to disrupt the class out.

"Sometimes I thought they were harsh but now I see where they were trying to get all of us to go."

10:31 Turner talks about May Day - a day when people got to sing and use their talents. They practiced for weeks to wrap the May Pole. Girls would color coordinate their dresses with the string they were holding. It was a big highlight.

0:12:17 Teachers helped students find jobs, write papers, dream about where they want to be in 10 years or accomplish over a lifetime. They would invite students to their houses - they lived in the neighborhood. They would see you on the street and stop to talk and encourage you.

0:13:00 If you didn't go to Lincoln University, you didn't go to college because the universities and colleges in Columbia were all or predominantly white.

0:13:50 Turner describes the process Ruth Wiggins taught people penmanship. Everyone went through the same repetitions and process. She expected your papers and assignments to look neat and correct.

"She said, 'Be cute outside of my class.'"

0:15:32 The classrooms at Douglass were square rooms with desks that were chairs with a desktop made of wood and metal. There were 36 students per room in elementary school and ranged from 15-30 in high school. There were either shelves or a closet in each room for storage. In high school, there was a supply room. Students had to buy books and supplies - paper, pencils, rulers, etc. - in high school.

0:17:30 In the classroom, there was a blackboard, chalk, eraser, desk for the teacher. Turner says there were tables that had her mother's name and people from her mother's era's names on the equipment. It was passed down from the white schools, old and still in use.

The science teacher (Amos Morris) was always looking to repair or piece together things to do experiments. They tried to make do with what they had.

0:18:45 Students had homework every night, in just about every subject. Turner describes the types of assignments she had in each class every night, especially English, math, science, history and band. Students were expected to hand them in at the beginning of class every morning.

- 0:20:38 Turner says she had a good relationship with the other students. Her hardest time was sixth through eighth grade. The adolescent stage was hard.
- 0:21:10 She was a cheerleader in sophomore and junior year. She says she wasn't good at it but a friend of hers was doing it and she wanted to do it. There were 10 girls.
- She didn't play any sports.
- 0:22:04 She hung out on school ground after classes. Sometimes she would go to Sharp End, where a lady opened a restaurant for the teenagers across the street from where the adults would hang out. Turner's parents didn't want her there but she would sneak and go anyway. There was a little jukebox and she served food - cakes and pies, hamburgers and hot dogs. She thinks it was called Miss Vy's.
- The Dew Drop Inn was another, in the lower end of Ash Street where she went infrequently because she didn't like the atmosphere. A lot of the kids did, though.
- 0:23:22 Turner didn't work during high school apart from cleaning on Saturdays.
- 0:23:32 They played baseball and basketball during gym. They ran track. Turner says they did square dancing as well. Students wore a uniform of blue shorts and white shirts. It was part of your grade. Students before her wore one-piece jumpers.
- 0:24:40 Girls weren't allowed to wear pants to school. They wore skirts or dresses. Black and white Buck's or tennis shoes were the hot thing. She polished her shoes everyday.
- Turner describes dress styles that were popular in her day - and why the boys like them. Girls wore heels and stockings to school as well. Daisy Dukes were in style then as well, but they weren't allowed to wear them to school.
- 0:26:49 Turner had a group of friends that she hung with for lunch.

- 0:27:18 Turner heard about the plan to desegregate schools through her mother. Her sister, at the time, was already attending Hickman. Regarding the closing of Douglass:
- "It was kind of a blow. The newspaper talked about it, uh, the radio talked about. TV talked about it. And, the community talked about it. Some people were for it, some people was not. Uh, what's gonna happen to our teachers? Uh, what's gonna happen to our students? Some people thought it would be better for the black student because they would be exposed to more. Some people thought we would be left out like we are. It was just, um, varied opinions."
- Because Turner's parents thought it was a good thing, she though it was too. She'd be able to take classes that weren't offered at Douglass. She was excited about the change because she thought it meant better opportunities.
- 0:29:05 Turner says she didn't notice a difference in how boys responded to the news versus girls. Students who didn't do well at Douglass wondered how they were going to fare. Everyone wondered how they would do in this new environment and whether they would be able to participate. This, she says, was the biggest fear.
- 0:30:05 The adults, like her mother, reinforced the message that they can succeed in the new environment.
- "My mother always says, 'Don't ever let no one else identify who you are or what you are, you have to do that for yourself.'" Messages like these, along with a lifetime of encouragement, enabled Turner to feel like she could succeed.
- 0:31:00 Turner had no choice but to go to Hickman after her junior year.
- 0:31:27 She says she didn't go to Hickman when she should have (due to an unplanned pregnancy). In those days, you didn't go to school when you were pregnant. Her parents said that was no reason not to finish and made sure she finished, one way or another. She waited two years and went back for the two classes she needed to graduate.
- "When I went, it was a nervous wreck. Number one, the halls were crowded. I knew no one. By the time I went to Hickman, all my friends

had graduated so I was kinda like the older child in the midst. And so, I was very uncomfortable, very fearful."

0:32:32 There was a drive there to finish. When she walked into the first classroom, a law class, people broke out in laughter. She's not sure if she was laughing at her or if there was some conversation that she walked into. She took a seat, quickly. No one reached out to her, so she stayed to herself and did what she had to do to finish.

There were no other black students in the class. She says there were approximately, maybe 200 in the whole school of 600 kids.

0:34:28 Turner was driving at this point, so she drive to school that day. No one showed her around or helped her get to class. There was (apparently) no kind of orientation for her.

"You got a room number. You got a diagram of the school and you just had to figure out where your class was. The halls were so crowded. I'd never been in a school with so many kids in all my life and so it was very devastating for me the first day."

Track 4 (30:27)

0:00:00 Turner only needed two electives to graduate so she chose two subjects she was interested in. The other was a political science/government class. She says her biggest dream was to travel the world and play her oboe. Her dream to become a concert oboist floated away with the birth of her baby. Instead, she dreamed of pursuing her oboe Her other dream was to be an advocate for people who are less fortunate than her to fight the system.

0:01:24 Classes at Hickman were large, probably 36 to a class. Desks were newer and arranged six or seven to a row and eight or nine deep. Seats weren't assigned but rather first come first served. She didn't sit in the same place for every class. The teacher took roll at the beginning of every class.

People paid a fee for books and brought their own supplies. The equipment was pretty much the same.

0:03:02 She didn't have the same relationship with the teachers at Hickman. If she had questions, the teachers were approachable but didn't really carry on conversations with her as a student. Turner felt the teachers she had at Hickman tolerated a lot more foolishness and distractions in the

classroom. The students were part of the Ross family, who, Turner says owned half of the city.

The teacher in the other class was a man who lectured more than anything else. Turner says he was boring.

Turner says that she didn't see any effort on the part of the teachers to push her to achieve. Her parents had no interaction with the school. Turner was the only one of her mother's children to attend Hickman during the time she was there.

0:06:08 She didn't receive any help from the counselors at Hickman while she was there. She had no interaction with the students, either.

"I went to school, did my work and left." [Laughs]

0:06:31 Turner says she was there for a purpose, older than most and had nothing in common with the general population at Hickman. She had to do her work and go back to work. She was only there for one semester.

0:07:07 She went to school in the afternoon, so she didn't do anything with them for lunch. She wasn't involved in any extra-curricular activities her senior year.

0:07:46 After desegregation: "I saw the black community destroyed. There's no such thing anymore. I find that, um, black businesses do not exist. I think, I find our children are at a point where I don't think they have something to identify with. Um, and I'm not sure whose fault that is. I think we as a community have lost our connection with each other. Uh, I think it also, we've lost a generation. I'm not saying that it's all from desegregation, but I'm thinking desegregation has a part in it."

"I think so because we have separated our community, for one thing. The other thing is I think we have become a race of people who, number one, doesn't have leadership. Number two, I think we are waiting on somebody else to take us where we need to be. Uh, I think we have also lost our identity. Now, what that identity is, uh, I'm a little - I ask God sometimes what is my place in the community of Columbia. And, number one, I see us taking on a lot of issues, but I see us solving nothing. I see us as divided as we've never been before. Uh, in the school, I feel like we as a black have no say in the schools, in the city, uh, even in the community that we live in. And I don't know if that's all because of our connections - our loss

of connection - but I think most of it is because we don't have strong leadership. And, who is that? Whose fault is that? That's our fault, I think. I blame us as a race of people for not coming together for a common goal and I think the city is getting ready to separate us again, even more than what we already are in trying to get us on one accord to fight some of the issues is kinda what has happened. I don't think we have that connection anymore."

0:11:14 Turner believes schools should be the main thing that blacks should be worried about. There's also black real estate that's not going to be anymore. There are things being cut that won't benefit the poor or blacks.

"It's all about the growth of Columbia, no matter who it hurts, who it disconnects, whatever. And I'm all for progress but I think we as a black race are not included in this progress and I don't know if it's the white man's problem or the black man's problem. I think it's a combination of both."

The area around Douglass used to be nothing but blacks and Turner sees the area being cut more and more. Turner says that Columbia Public Schools took a lot of Douglass memories and threw them away when they took over there. She believes black people didn't push to get it before it was lost.

She believes that the city has plans for the area and she can foresee a time when there are no blacks in the area.

0:13:36 Turner talks about the lack of effort in the black community to preserve the Blind Boone Center. She talks about the naming of Muriel Battle High School and the fact that the Battles aren't from Columbia but moved here from elsewhere. She feels that Ruth Wiggins' name should be on the school because of her contributions to the black community and the community at large.

0:14:57 "I don't know how to get us as a black race back on preserving what we, our generations, have worked for and that's the problem I have with integration. My mother said that integration was a progress that needed to be done but now that I look back, I don't know that it didn't destroy our heritage and our identity and what we stand for. And we have allowed it to happen, so, I'm not blaming anyone. I'm just saying we have allowed it to happen."

0:15:56 Turner points to the black identity and the contributions of blacks in helping Columbia become what it is. She points to the concept that all blacks want to shoot, kill and party is a disservice to the community. She believes a whole generation was also lost in desegregation.

"We haven't pushed to make sure that our children get accepted and that our children - some of it is our home life has been destroyed, number one, and we, uh, I look at the job situation in Columbia. I don't know whether to blame us, but I do know there are people qualified for some of these jobs. I'm happy to see that there are blacks in the courthouse, at last, but what kind of jobs do they have? In our city, operation, how many leaders, how many people have top jobs that are black?"

She believes that the youth are in the position they're in because they really have nothing to identify with. She believes the university controls Columbia because they get what they want. They could contribute more. Turner also blames the local churches for falling short of what they need to do in communities.

"I think it has starved us of some of the things that we already had but it destroyed it when integration came about."

0:19:03 Turner thinks the generation in their 20s to the 30s is lost.

"Maybe they have different ideas of what they want. Maybe that's what I should say. I don't think they are concerned about the past, I think they're only concerned about the present and they're not concerned about the future. There are few that are concerned about the future. They don't see the need of what - the past has happened and they don't - all they care about is what the present has to offer them. I don't think too many of'em are thinking about what the future holds."

0:19:54 Integration caused a loss of connection to the community. This generation focuses on "me" and taking care of themselves. There is no sense of taking care or having concern that past generations had.

"The role model is gone. And whose fault is that? I don't know if it's ours. All of us don't live together anymore so we don't see the, we don't see the progression or we don't see the role models like we did in my generation. And we don't live - once we make it, we want to move away from - and I'm not knocking anybody for wanting to better themselves. But we don't want to pull back and help somebody else to come up to where we are. We

seem to move out and it's all about me and I've got mine and it doesn't matter whether the next generation has theirs."

0:21:52 Turner feels she got a good education - and moral standards, guidance and a drive to better herself - at Douglass. She doesn't feel like she was at Hickman long enough to comment on what she received. There was no urge to be the best she could be there.

0:22:50 Douglass gave her a drive and taught her to be the best she could be. They gave her an example of how she should live and taught her that she is important because she's black.

Hickman gave her what she needed - to graduate.

0:23:47 The closing of Douglass saddened her. She was hoping that more of the black teachers would be hired. She felt that they were good enough to teach black children but not good enough to teach others.

"I was very hopeful when they integrated the schools that it would make a better life for all of us. And I think that was a disappointment. Now that I look back, I don't think that happened."

0:24:35 Turner stays in contact with people from high school. A lot of them have died. She's attended a few Douglass reunions but none of Hickman's.

She's a little withdrawn from the Douglass people because she didn't graduate with them (due to the pregnancy). The ones she was really comfortable with are deceased so she doesn't really go anymore.

0:26:03 Things that were gained with desegregation: people are living better and opportunities are better. She feels that blacks have not learned how to take advantage of those opportunities.

Before desegregation, a lot of blacks were living in shotgun houses and shacks. Even though a lot of people lost property with Urban Renewal, a lot of people are living better. They have indoor plumbing, live in better houses with paved roads. Their quality of life is better.

Turner says her children had the opportunity to go to any college they wanted to go to. Seeing a black president at the University of Missouri and black professors was something she thought she'd never live to see. The

same with having a black President of the U.S. blacks can work anywhere, eat anywhere, travel anywhere and not feel threatened.

0:28:52

“What I’m afraid’s gonna happen, as jobs and things get less, opportunities get less. And, I think, if we aren’t careful, I think we’re going to be right back fighting for the same things. Because when things, when jobs and things are not right, then people forget the kindness on both sides – I’m not saying it’s just a one-sided thing. But I think that my race of people will take what they once took and I’m proud of that because they know that they can have better.”

An Overview: Oral history in the journalism classroom

Oral histories can be comprised of anything from video sessions with veterans, talking about their experience in World War II, to grabbing a cheap tape recorder and sitting with your grandma, asking her about growing up during the Great Depression. For oral historians, the thing that separates what they do from any other type of interview – including the journalistic interview – is going the extra step of obtaining permission for the raw recording to be archived in a location where it is accessible to the public.

To understand how and why some journalism professors use oral histories or oral history methods in their classrooms, I spoke with five of them from universities across the U.S. Some only have their students listen to interviews that were conducted by experienced oral historians. Others train their students to conduct oral history interviews and use the material gathered for multimedia storytelling. One professor only uses oral history-type interviews as a starting point for finding hidden stories.

Although each professor has a different method and outcome for using oral histories in their curricula, they all say that somewhere along the continuum of their journalism career, they fell in love with learning about and understanding the past. They feel that engaging with history helped them gain a better understanding of the here and now and present those connections to their audiences in a deep and meaningful way. They feel it is important to train their students to do the same and view oral history as a vehicle to do so. In the process, their students also learn valuable skills designed to make them better storytellers.

Skill 1: Dig deep in research

The professors talk about the importance of having students do extensive research in order to provide context for oral histories. Whether students only use oral histories as a supplement to primary documents or if they were building up a knowledge base in order that they may confidently go out and interview people themselves, the professors stress that their research has to go beyond typing in a few words in a search engine and reading a few articles. It is history, after all. Most of the professors assign extensive readings on the topic or period of history in question in order to help their students build a solid foundation of knowledge. For some of the professors, the research spans an entire semester, at the end of which students produce a comparative analysis between the information contained in oral histories and their study of primary documents by looking for parallels between past and current trends, events and issues.

For those professors whose students actually conduct interviews, the research period has to be condensed to fit the first few weeks of class and focuses on a broad overview of the topic at hand. Assignments generally include reading history books, having class discussions and organizing sessions with guest speakers so that students can become as familiar as possible with the subject matter. Their students may not delve as deep into the history as they would like but are equipped with enough knowledge to ask informed questions and raise points for clarification, if needed, during an interview. Given the time constraints of the semester within which they must work, it has to do.

Skill 2: Follow the conversation

Regardless of how the professor uses oral history in their curriculum, each believes that oral histories provide a platform for hands-on training in the art of interviewing. Most of the professors require their students to listen to and critique archived oral history interviews, making sure that students look specifically at things like the structure of the interview, the use of silence and the effectiveness of follow-up questions.

The professors whose students conduct oral history interviews themselves said the experience provides a rich yet safe environment for honing interviewing skills with interviewees both knowledgeable and willing to help students learn. These professors all mention how difficult it is to train students to develop a good list of questions and then determine when to deviate from the list. To help students become more comfortable with the process, some professors set up mock interviews in class with volunteers from their local community. One professor periodically sits in on his students' interviews and offers one-on-one coaching on how to improve their technique. Another professor listens to his students interview recordings and then evaluates their technique after the fact.

Skill 3: Find the hidden story

Rather than focusing on the technological aspects of producing a story, the professors turned their attention to helping students form the information they obtain from their interviewees into compelling, historically accurate stories. For the professors whose students actually conduct oral history interviews and use them for multimedia storytelling, the process is a way for them to bring shared experiences of history to the

attention of their communities. Students' edited work – in the form of material for interactive databases or voice-over slideshows – appears in museums, on the web and even on local PBS television stations in their region. One professor, Jim Sheeler, directs his students to conduct oral history-type interviews with the residents of a local nursing home as a means of gaining entrance into the lives of their story subjects. He says the location is a great place for students to establish relationship with people and be in place to capture the types of raw, intimate moments he loved documenting as a reporter.

Skill 4: Weigh ethical decisions

While most oral historians dispute the validity of including Studs Terkel in discussions of oral history because the raw interviews from his published works were not made readily available to the public, several of the professors mention including excerpts from Terkel's work in teachings on the ethics of editing and maintaining the integrity of stories that are shared during interviews. One professor even goes as far as doing side-by-side line edits and historical fact-checks with students on their stories before publication.

Skill 5: Explore “the other”

One benefit the professors hadn't anticipated with using oral history methods in their classes was that their students' perspectives would be enlarged through building relationship with groups of people with whom they would normally not choose to spend time – namely minorities, the elderly and war veterans. Most of the professors believe that prolonged exposure to these various groups open the door for their students to see and understand life lessons from another's point of view and build relationships with

members of the community. They hope that the experience will also diversify the voices represented in and depth of reporting of their students' future work.

The tension between the two fields

The similarities between oral history and certain types of journalism, like immersion nonfiction storytelling, make building a bridge between the two fields sound like an ideal endeavor. I, however, have found a few distinctions between them in my own research and experience with conducting oral history interviews that might create a bit of tension for journalism professors.

First, journalists and oral historians have different end-goals for their interviews, which may affect how they are conducted. For oral historians, the archival of raw material that can act as a supplement to historical manuscripts and data makes an interview oral history. For the journalist, however, the story that will be published based on the material gathered is usually the end-goal. Deadlines and time constraints are an additional layer of complication to be factored in as they can affect the quality and quantity of information gathered.

Second, the intended audiences for oral history and journalism differ, which may influence the type and scope of information gathered. Journalists are challenged in today's immediate information society to present interesting information for a specific, known audience. Oral historians collect remembrances of historical events, eras and trends for current and future researchers. If interviewers keep their audiences in mind – and they should – the information they obtain could widely vary.

Third, perceptions of who controls the information vary between the two fields. On the one hand, oral historians generally view the interview as a collaborative effort where interviewees, through conditions explicitly stated on the release forms that are necessary for archival, have the final say about how their stories are used. Journalists, on the other hand, generally maintain control of how stories about their interviewee are presented to their audience. The expectations arising from this point of intersection between oral history and journalism can create tension with questions about where responsibilities and loyalties lie.

Suggested future research

The interviews conducted with professors barely grazed the surface and provided an overview of how and why a few of them were using oral history in their curricula. For a more effective and in-depth understanding, I would suggest conducting case studies that involved actually sitting in on class sessions to learn how professors used oral history to cultivate interviewing technique and develop storytelling skills. These case studies would allow researchers to examine student-professor interactions and evaluate techniques used to teach the various aspects of research, interviewing and storytelling.

Another possible area of study includes learning how being attached to a larger oral history project affects a professor's involvement and investment in student participation and the collection of stories. Two of the professors interviewed for this project were directors of oral history projects at their respective universities. Questions to consider include:

- What similarities and differences exist between the goals of the classes?

- How these professors structure their courses and the journalism their students produce?

Third, I would be interested to hear from the students themselves. What motivated them to take the class? What perceived impact, if any, did learning about and conducting oral histories have on their storytelling? Specifically, I am curious to know how their experience with oral histories has been incorporated into their understanding of interviewing and the development of their interviewing style. Also, how did their encounter with history impact their storytelling? For an added layer of complexity, a researcher could also conduct a study with students from multiple universities and compare and contrast the findings between them.

In spite of this tension between journalism and oral history, journalism students have much to gain from engaging with communities and the past through oral history. Like many other fields of study, each field can benefit from learning from the other.

A Storytelling Training Ground:

Oral history in the journalism classroom

The idea of oral history can conjure up images of anything from conducting video recording sessions with veterans, talking about their experience in World War II, to grabbing a cheap tape recorder and sitting with your grandma, asking her about growing up during the Great Depression. Most journalists don't think of oral history as a rich training ground for newbies to learn the basic skills necessary for good journalism – research, interviewing and storytelling. I spoke with five journalism professors from universities across the U.S. who do in order to understand how and why they use oral history methods in their classrooms.

So, what is oral history? According to Dr. David Dunaway, professor of English and Communications at the University of Albuquerque and one of the editors and contributors to “Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology,” it’s “the tape-recorded reminiscence of eyewitnesses to historically significant events or trends.” Although this may sound remarkably like the work that journalists do every day in order to file stories on deadline, one of the key attributes that distinguish oral history interviews from journalistic ones is the archival process. “Oral history is not considered by oral historians to be oral history until it is accessible to the public in unedited, raw form - either tape or transcript or both,” Dunaway says. These first-person narratives of experience act as supplements to the “official version” of history. They are also a rich breeding ground for authentic storytelling. According to Dr. Earnest Perry, associate professor at the Missouri School of Journalism who was

recently recognized by the American Journalism Historians Association for his efforts in engaging students with journalism and mass communication history:

If done correctly, it's one of the truest forms of historical knowledge available. It can provide the narrative that you may not get from documents and archival materials – not saying those things aren't important; they're very important because you can use them to verify some of those stories. But the combination of those oral stories and the documents, including newspaper articles, that can back that up? Powerful.

Through courses with names like “Multimedia Storytelling,” “Oral History as Journalism” and “Storytelling and Civic Engagement,” this handful of journalism professors from around the country are using oral history techniques to invite their students to engage with history, communities and untold stories that are waiting to be shared. The focus isn't on learning how to create highly polished pieces for a public audience, but rather on obtaining valuable, transferable skills that enable students to dig deep and bring greater context to their storytelling. The skills – things like conducting in-depth research, learning to truly listen and crafting compelling stories – are part of every good journalist's skill set. Dr. Perry believes that the use of oral history techniques move educators toward training students to “tell their stories from the perspectives of the people living them,” rather than from “the narratives that we've created that fit into a nice, little, neat box where all we need to do is plug in the facts that don't necessarily fit this story of this particular person.”

In addition to providing a training ground for students to hone their research, interviewing and storytelling skills, the conversation about using oral history as a teaching tool centered on themes like community engagement, building historical-mindedness in students and exposing them to “the other.” Dr. Joel Beeson, associate professor at West Virginia University’s P. I. Reed School of Journalism who also directs West Virginia’s Veteran’s History Project, views bringing oral history into his journalism courses as an opportunity to encourage students to branch out into new territory. He says, “I don’t look at everyone anymore as, ‘You’re going to go to work in a newsroom.’ It’s not really about oral history being used in journalism in a traditional way. It’s [about], ‘How can that be used to fashion a new role for people [for whom] journalism is their calling?’”

Although each of the journalism professors had a different method and outcome for the use of oral history in their curriculum, they all use it as a method of encouraging students to engage with the past in order to understand the present. In the process, their students are able to hone the skills every journalist needs for authentic, in-depth storytelling.

Digging deep in research

Research is a fundamental skill that every student – especially journalism students – should learn to do well. Dr. Perry, whose research focuses on media and civil rights history at the University of Missouri, describes himself as an “archival historian.” During his reporting years, his interest in and knowledge of history helped him find sources, develop questions and churn out story ideas. Now, Perry

strives to communicate the value of understanding history to his students and encourages them to take more than a cursory glance at the history behind issues that capture their interest. He draws on oral historians' responsibility to know "the political, cultural, social and economic" factors of their chosen subject as an example of what immersion journalism could look like and why that level of interest is beneficial. Oral historians, he says, immerse themselves in the history of their subjects in order to ask multi-faceted, well-rounded questions and help narrators relive an experience, rather than simply retell an experience. When journalists immerse themselves in the history around the subjects they're reporting about, he contends that it enables them to help interviewees tell their story from their perspective and in that context, rather than explaining how they feel, today, looking back on those occurrences.

Since a semester isn't long enough for this type of immersion, Perry pushes for the master's students in his Historical Methods course to listen to, critique and use interviews that were conducted by experienced oral historians to complete research projects, rather than try to conduct them on their own. Through extensive reading assignments and topical research, students are able to produce a comparative analysis between the information contained in oral histories and what their study of primary documents has produced. By doing so, they learn to draw parallels between past and current trends, events and issues.

For the professors who do have students conduct oral histories, the research period only spans a few weeks of the semester and focuses on a broad overview of

the topic at hand. Assignments generally include reading history books, as well as participating in class discussions and sessions with guest speakers so that students can become as thoroughly familiar as possible with the subject matter. This enables them to ask informed questions and raise points for clarification, if needed, during an interview.

Dr. Beeson, who oversees the West Virginia Veteran's Oral History Project, also teaches his students to compare the official documents with individual and collective experiences captured through oral testimony. He provides scenarios and examples from his work with the veteran's project to show how the official record can be colored by social and political viewpoints. Speaking specifically about military records that were used to reconstruct history for the African American World War II Veteran's Project, Beeson explains that officers generally wrote reports for their superiors and would only include certain kinds of information in those missives. Beeson views oral history as a way to supersede the social and political purpose of the "official version" of history that researchers tend to rely on for understanding. He believes that neither should be taken at face value but rather both should be examined in context for a more comprehensive interpretation of the past.

Learning the art of interviewing

The professors viewed oral history interviews as an excellent tool for teaching in-depth interviewing skills. In general, the professors said they quickly move from the initial "fumble with the equipment" lessons to the meatier subjects of

developing questions and practicing the art of conversation through critiquing and conducting oral history interviews. These practices provide students with the opportunity to learn how to use questions as a guide for reconstructing memories.

One of the greatest obstacles professors face with asking students to develop a list of questions in preparation for an interview, however, is getting them to deviate from the plan of using them all. Before students come face-to-face with narrators, several of the professors said they provide ample opportunity for students to experience first-hand the nuance of interviewing. Dr. Beeson, whose students archive their interviews with the West Virginia Veteran's Project he directs, shares that he uses in-class demonstrations with volunteer interviewees to coach students through the interviewing process. He recalls one interaction between a Vietnam veteran and student interviewer in which the student simply started to go down the list of questions provided by the Library of Congress for its veteran's oral history project. In response to the first question on the list, "Were you drafted or did you enlist?" the veteran said, with much attitude, that he enlisted and wasn't a "draftee." When the student moved on to the next question, Beeson yelled, "STOP! What did he say? Ask him to define it. What do you mean a 'draftee'?" He says, "I'm always telling them, bring along some questions or topics but don't follow those. You want to listen to threads and encourage storytelling."

Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, associate professor at the University of Texas School of Journalism who directs the "VOCES" (which means "voices" in Spanish) Oral History Project she started in 1999 that seeks to capture the stories of Latinos

of the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War generations, is also a firm believer in what she calls “controlled practice.” Before sending her students out to conduct individual interviews, she has them listen to and critique interviews archived with the “VOCES” project. Students are asked to pay attention to the interviewer’s technique, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, as well as to draw attention to what information was missing or what points needed to be clarified. Students must also write a story from the oral history recording.

Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez also has students set up and break down equipment at least five times before going out on an interview on top of doing practice interviews with one another. “The reason for that is I don't want anybody getting to an interview and fumbling with their equipment, [then] starting to get flustered when the main thing that they need to really worry about is the interview.” Once students become comfortable with their research, equipment and interviewing skill level, they take part in a large-scale, day-long production called “M.I.I.S.” (“Multiple Individual Interview Session”). During these out-of-town events, six students conduct simultaneous, individual interviews with Latino veterans and civilians who contributed to the nation’s history. During each morning and evening session, another group of students are scanning documents, photos and records brought in by interviewees for archival.

Dr. Dunaway, who has produced several radio documentary series in addition to publishing books on history and biography, listens to student interviews on tape and evaluates their interviewing techniques after the fact. He says he’s

looking for things like their use of prompts, how they redirect narrators and how they build rapport before asking tough questions. These post-interview critiques are also useful in evaluating how they contextualize the information they receive during an interview.

In addition to deviating from a set list of questions, Dr. Perry, who teaches history of mass media courses at the University of Missouri, says he notices a couple trends with his students: they don't understand the importance of silence – the discipline of letting people process their thoughts before interjecting – and they tend to do more talking than listening. According to Perry:

Journalists have an innate inability to shut up and listen. That's what I tell them all the time: 'Sometimes you just need to shut up and let them talk.' Listen. Stop and listen to what they're saying. How does that fit in with the information that you've gathered, your knowledge of the issue?' And then, 'What are they saying about themselves that either matches that or does not match that?'

He believes this propensity to talk too much stems either from a lack of interest or not listening in order to ask meaningful follow-up questions – or both. To remedy the situation, Perry tries to limit the number of questions his students have written down. This, he says, means they'll have to listen and be engaged in the conversation, rather than rely on their predetermined agendas.

Crafting the story

When it comes to teaching storytelling, the professors said they focus more on the art of constructing stories and less on the technological aspects of the craft. They reason that technology changes rapidly but the strength of good storytelling never does.

Dr. Perry pointed out that journalism professors face more and more pressure to teach students how to put a story up as quickly as possible, and following that with multimedia content – a standup, audio piece, slideshow, etc. This, he says, makes it difficult to focus on teaching students how to place information in context and tell authentic stories. He believes it's a necessary practice, however, because without context and authenticity, journalism becomes shallow and loses credibility. "We tell the story in ways that fit the paradigms that we've structured and not necessarily the way in which people actually live their lives," he says, which fits a "common narrative" that journalists use to simply fill in the facts. Eventually, audiences will stop paying attention.

So, while it's generally understood that students need to learn how to capture clean audio, how to take visually interesting photographs and the basics of using editing software to do multimedia storytelling, journalism professors who use oral histories in their curricula tend to focus on the skills set needed to tell these stories rather than on technological mastery. According to Dr. Beeson:

Instead of trying to learn how to use a \$6,000 high-def video camera and

Final Cut, we focus more on how to create some kind of interactive narrative

that will contextualize the oral history interview. How do you contextualize someone's personal experience? What do you need to link it to? You need to link it to a document, a graph, someone else's interview or visual material.

His teaching focus at West Virginia University is less about "how to use that and make a product" than "how is the storytelling process created using database driven narratives" for the web, tablets and museums in the state. His students have even developed a manual to train people in the community to conduct oral histories and create content in an effort to have them join in the collaborative storytelling process.

At the University of Texas, Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez does a side-by-side, word-by-word edit with her students on the stories they write from oral histories collected for the "Voces" project or Oral History as Journalism class. Together, they look at things like fairness, word choice and accuracy. Students also have to do historical fact-checks before the story goes through an additional copy edit. She's currently working on a project called "PhotoVoz" (translated from Spanish as "photo voice") where students are recording audio of World War II veterans as they flip through archived photos on an iPad and tell stories based on those images. These hour-long interviews will be edited down to 5-minute Soundslides audio slideshows for public viewing as part of a collaborative project between the local PBS television station in Austin (KLRU) and the "VOCES" oral history project she directs.

For Jim Sheeler, professor at Case Western Reserve University who won a Pulitzer Prize for his immersion narrative nonfiction series titled "The Final Salute," about fallen military personnel and the people who notify families of their loved ones'

death for the Rocky Mountain News, an oral history-type interview is merely a launch pad for his students' storytelling. While teaching at the University of Colorado at Boulder, he found it difficult to create opportunities for his journalism students to immerse themselves in the lives of interviewees due to time constraints and lack of interest when publication wasn't guaranteed. The question, "Is it possible for me to get the students in those same sort of intimate, raw, special moments that I love witnessing and documenting as a reporter?" led him to build a relationship with a local nursing home. There, he says, the people have great stories and the time to tell them. They're patient and desire to help the students. It proved to be the perfect atmosphere for his students to immerse themselves in the lives of people who had hidden stories to share and learn how to uncover them.

When he moved to Case Western in Ohio, he took the teaching model with him and now encourages his students to use oral history interviewing techniques and questions as a gateway to life lessons held within. It is a means of finding the story behind the story – and the history. Sheeler says:

I tell them that I want them not to write about the story of who they are but why they are who they are. What made them who they are? How [did] those events in their lives influence them to become this person that they are at the end of their lives. That, for me, is the real lesson and that's what I want.

The students in Sheeler's immersion journalism/multimedia storytelling class spend an entire semester at Eliza Bryant Retirement Village. It is the nation's oldest continually operating African-American nursing home, situated in what he

describes as a “forgotten part of Cleveland.” Nurses at the home provide Sheeler with a list of ideal candidates and students spend an average of eight hours during the semester with each person. Through spending extended periods of time with the subjects of their stories, students are able to watch the story unfold in front of them rather than solely rely on interviews to build a narrative. As students record life histories, take photographs and just hang out with residents, they often gain entry into their inner worlds.

Sheeler uses Lynda.com or MediaStorm training modules as virtual textbooks for the technological basics of shooting video and editing. The bulk of his teaching and mentoring centers on finding and telling the story. Each student is required to produce a written profile with an audio slideshow and a two-to-three minute video story during the semester that not only lives up to the person’s life but also are pieces that people would actually enjoy.

Even though students from a wide range of academic disciplines take his journalism class – from nursing to biochemistry to engineering to English – Sheeler was able to cite example after example of how well the model has worked. He’s witnessed students go from being skeptical that they can produce a story worth reading to being excited about the amazing things people share with them. Over the course of a semester, he breaks students out of academic writing by using one-on-one critiques to help distinguish between a list of facts presented in a linear fashion and a real story. These individual coaching sessions help them shape stories into compelling profiles.

Considering ethics

No discussion of the intersection of oral history and journalism would be complete without addressing how the journalism professors tackle ethical issues, especially in regards to editing and archival. For many oral historians, Studs Terkel, the author, historian and broadcast journalist, is a controversial figure due to the fact that his published works were based on in-depth interviews that were highly edited and his raw interviews were not archived and made readily available to the public. Terkel himself didn't believe he was an oral historian, but rather an activist and "guerilla journalist" who cultivated a deep knowledge of the nation's history. According to a 2002 article by John DeGraaf and Allen Stein in the Oral History Review, his goal was to help the masses remember and not repeat America's greatest mistakes.

Several of the professors mentioned using the work of Studs Terkel as part of their students' introduction to oral history and the use of oral history interviews for storytelling. At West Virginia University, Dr. Beeson has students read excerpts from "The Good War," listen to files of Terkel's raw interviews found online and critique the editing process that led to the final published work. Beeson says that the conversation usually focuses on issues of representation and the ethical conundrum of editing and using interviews for journalism while maintaining the integrity of all of the information contained in those interviews. Where social scientists want to study the interviews in their entirety, weighing themes found within against theories, journalists seek to present the stories found within to their audiences.

“Nobody wants to sit and listen to 20 hours of raw ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’,” Beeson says.

“The journalistic thing is to distill it down to something that people would be interested in.” His role is to teach students to do so with integrity.

In addition to teaching students how to ethically navigate the editing process for radio and documentary production, Dr. Dunaway, who has produced several radio documentary series over the last 40 years, stresses the need for them to archive their raw interviews, thereby making them oral histories. He views conducting interviews within a community, then failing to complete the process of archiving those memories in a repository as “cultural theft” and using that community for academic gain. Unfortunately, getting students to complete this final step towards cultural preservation has proven to be one of his greatest challenges. In the busyness of wrapping up a semester, many students tell Dunaway that they will obtain the necessary release form and deposit their interviews. Many forget to do so.

Exploring “the other”

One unanticipated benefit of having journalism students conduct oral histories is that it pushes them to engage with and explore “the other.” For Sheeler’s students, spending time with the elderly residents of Eliza Bryant Retirement Village not only brings them face to face with members of another generation but also with those who are battling illness, facing the reality of death or carrying on after the loss of a spouse. The experience pushes them out of what’s referred to at Case Western Reserve University as the “Case bubble” where students tend to spend

all of their time and forces many to just “hang out” with people whose company they would not normally seek out.

Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez reports the same benefit in regards to the students who conduct oral history interviews for the “VOCES Oral History Project” at the University of Texas. “What I hadn't quite understood was how rarely my students have an opportunity to talk to somebody of another race and another generation,” she says. Many of her white students had never talked to a Hispanic woman in her 60s or 70s unless she worked as someone’s domestic, let alone had any kind of relationship with one, she says.

So, all of a sudden, these people are just relating to each other as human beings and my students who are, by and large, totally ignorant of segregation concerning Mexican Americans, all of a sudden their eyes are wide open and they're realizing, ‘Whoa! These people once did something that we never have seen before and they're not even bitter about it.’ That's kind of the most common thing that I would hear from them. ‘I can't believe they went through all this and they're not bitter about it.’

By introducing students to the diverse voices that she believes are largely missing from history textbooks, Rivas-Rodriguez seeks to encourage the inclusion of minority voices and perspectives in history. By doing so, she reasons that the predominant thought of the complexion of “our country” will begin to take on a different meaning. She hopes projects like hers bring greater understanding on a

national level of the contributions of the many diverse groups in America's history and changes how these groups are perceived on a national level.

Impact

Regardless of race, class or culture, people relay details about their life through telling stories. Social scientists use the framework of narrative theory to untangle the language of these stories and deconstruct the significance of meaning behind them, all in an effort to bring deeper understanding to why we live our lives the way we do and what makes us who we are.

Through providing opportunities for students to engage with history – the official written documents and oral testimony – these journalism professors are providing students with tools needed to decipher and re-tell these stories to the masses. Many of their students are becoming aware of a world they didn't know existed through oral histories that isn't presented in the popular media or their high school history books. Students are gaining the opportunity to come face to face with history and make linkages to the present. According to Dr. Dunaway, from the University of New Mexico:

Oral history, broadcast and used as journalism, can open up a broad, personal avenue into American history and culture. Driving down that avenue can be a whole new generation of recordists and interviewers dedicated to the idea that a community's history belongs to them and they should be the ones who collect it, use it and pass it on to another generation.

Through passing on this knowledge and experience, these journalism professors continue to train young journalists to create the kinds of stories that impact audiences while ensuring that the stories that explain, through personal experience, the webs of significance we've woven for ourselves for generations are preserved and shared.

Oral History in the Journalism Classroom

Roxanne Foster

University of Missouri, School of Journalism

Project Committee Members:

Jacqui Banaszynski, Chair

Mary Kay Blakely

Berkley Hudson

Introduction

When I entered the University of Missouri's journalism master's program in the fall of 2011, my goal was to learn more about the art of storytelling. I'd just returned to the U.S. after spending three years working with women and children whose lives were greatly impacted by abuse, neglect and the devastation of HIV in South Africa. Many of the people I met had powerful stories to tell that spoke to the greater issues facing South Africa as a nation. Most felt it was pointless to do so.

My coursework and research over the last two years have focused on various elements of journalistic storytelling. The news reporting and writing classes, especially the two I've taken that were taught by Jacqui Banaszynski, focused on immersion reporting and extensive interviewing in order to produce narratives around a particular topic. The Introduction to Radio, TV and Photojournalism class and the Intro to Photojournalism class both taught me to think visually and recognize when a story lends itself to being told in a way other than in print. Over the course of the past two years, I learned how to use editing software (Lightroom, Photoshop, Audition, Audacity, Soundslides and FinalCut Pro) to produce audio-visual stories. The research I conducted in the summer of 2012 focused on the subject of interviewing and provided a platform for a deeper exploration of the art of interviewing.

The possibility of conducting oral histories for an independent study piqued my interest while I was working on a story for the *Missourian* about the public library's 2011 One Read selection, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. During a discussion session,

people in the community became mesmerized by three black women who shared about their experiences growing up during the time of the book's main character and dealing with segregation and distrust of medical professionals in Columbia. After the story was published, I talked to John Schneller, my editor, about doing an oral history about the women's experience with segregation and integration. He was the first to suggest the integration of public schools in the 1960s, since the construction of Battle High School was high on the paper's agenda at the time.

Jacqui Banaszynski introduced me to Studs Terkel during one of her lectures for the Public Insight Network Reporting Project that focused on status of the American Dream with generation Y. Soon after, I met the feisty group of women who were among the last class to graduate from Douglass High School before it closed in 1960 through a couple of reporters in my cohort who interviewed them for stories they were working on. I realized that conducting an oral history of school integration for my journalism master's project could easily become a reality.

Professionally, the convergence of these experiences has pointed to the possibility of joining my two areas of interest – journalism and oral history. In the future, I'd like to conduct oral histories and use them as source material for stories that reflect on the issues we're facing today. While I hope to do so in a journalistic way, I also see the value of preserving people's testimonies and allowing them to tell their stories, in their own words.

I plan to conduct an oral history project in Columbia that is centered on those who lived through the aftermath of the Supreme Court's *Brown V. Board of Education* (1954)

decision and the mandate to integrate public schools. This is a universal experience that occurred in large cities and small towns across the U.S. that scholars from various disciplines have been researching. As the years progress, these memories of people who lived through it are growing dim and these voices are disappearing. The narratives collected for my study will add the experiences of those from Columbia to the nation's archives while providing me with hands-on experience that can inform my research about journalism educators who are using oral histories in their curricula.

The oral history project will officially begin on May 14 and be completed by August 16. The first week will be used for research and preparation – working through Baylor University's online oral history tutorials, determining topics and areas that must be touched on during interviews and assembling a list of possible interviewees. During weeks two through 10, I will seek to interview at least 10 individuals who represent a multicultural cross-section of students, teachers, community leaders, etc., who were part of the integration process at Hickman High School from 1955 to 1965. Once access is negotiated with each potential interviewee, they will be required to sign the Society's release form. Then, I will conduct between one and three two-hour sessions, depending on the significance of their experiences and the individual's ability to recall those memories. These interviews will be audio logged and coded immediately, according to the Society's guidelines. The last two weeks will be spent transcribing, making corrections, writing summaries and editing tape.

I fully anticipate that I will have to “sell” participation to some of the participants and may have to talk to 30 people to find 10 who are willing to have their stories

recorded for archiving purposes. Currently, I have access to a group of women who were among the students who were forced to transfer from Douglass High School to Hickman in 1960 due to low enrollment numbers and shrinking resources. From this group of women and other contacts who are affiliated with them, I will seek the names and contact information of other likely participants. I will also draw on the resources and community connections of Doug Hunt, English Professor at the University of Missouri and coordinator of a newly formed Historic Black Columbia coalition, for interviewees. At the coalition's invitation, I've volunteered to assist with the collection of oral histories at Douglass High School Alumni's nineteenth annual Black & White Ball.

The State Historical Society of Missouri has agreed to archive the oral histories and any artifacts that are collected in the process. In addition, Jeff Corrigan, the Historical Society's oral historian, has agreed to supervise this project. By May 13, I will have accompanied him on at least one oral history interview in an effort to study his method and style of interviewing. We will meet at the end of week one, after the preliminary research has been conducted, to refine the specifics of the project and make sure that I understand the historical society's guidelines. I've asked him to critique my first interview and offer tips for improvement. Thereafter, I will check in with him weekly via email with progress reports and visit his office as needed for additional guidance. Jacqui Banaszynski, my committee chair, has agreed to maintain contact with Mr. Corrigan for the duration of my project. Each member of my committee will receive weekly field reports on my progress with the oral history project and my research with journalism professors.

As story possibilities surface during the course of the oral history project, they will be pitched to a local publication. Separate, journalistic interviews will be conducted and excerpts from the oral history interviews will be used as a starting point for any stories to be published. In doing so, the archival and historical research purposes of the details obtained during the oral history interviews will be maintained. The Society has invited me to submit a short essay about my project to the *Missouri Historical Review*. The coalition has also requested a presentation of my work at the end of the summer.

Summaries highlighting the unique experiences communicated in each interviewee's narrative will be produced for submission with the master's project. Transcripts of edited interviews, photographs and edited, digital audio clips will also be submitted with the final project to meet the requirement for "abundant physical evidence" of work performed. Copies of any published stories will also be included.

The research component of my master's project will be conducted simultaneously with the oral history project. I plan to use in-depth interviews with up to five university journalism professors to explore the following questions:

- 1) How are university journalism educators using oral histories in their teaching curricula?
- 2) Why are university journalism educators using oral histories in their classrooms?

Theoretical Framework

The field of Cultural Studies draws from a wide range of disciplines and theories to understand the construction, communication and dissemination of culture. Primarily, I

was guided by Lynn Abrams's deconstruction of narrative theory as an evaluative methodology for oral history and Clifford Geertz's theory of "thick description" as a means of interpreting culture.

According to Abrams (2010), oral history is "a means of accessing not just information but also signification, interpretation and meaning" (p. 1). Narrative storytelling is a fundamental way in which people remember the past and, in oral history, the primary way in which people speak about their experiences. It is how people "make sense of their world and communicate it to others" (p. 106). Stories are a pervasive part of every culture, a universal means for connecting to the world and communicating who we are, what we know and how we feel (pp. 107, 109).

Narrative theory is a multidisciplinary concept that has experienced a rise in popularity amongst historians. Abrams attributes its ascent to wider recognition in other fields of study that accept that "the past is constructed by competing narratives" (p. 108). Since one of the goals of oral history is to diversify the voices that shape our understanding of the past, the acceptance and use of narrative theory can also be linked to the mid-twentieth century rejection of Eurocentric "metanarratives of superiority" which paved the way for alternative interpretations of the past (p. 109).

In order to reveal deeper meaning and significance of events, experiences or culture, narrative theorists strive to dig under the surface of the words spoken (p. 108). They propose the existence of embedded structures – beyond the elementary usage of characters, plot and a story arc – that shape people's storytelling. These structures, they

argue, must be explored and analyzed if we are to truly understand how people define their identities, live their lives and relate to the world around them (p. 110).

Similarly, Geertz (1983) writes about the pursuit of uncovering these structures through the “thick descriptions” obtained through anthropological ethnographies. He posits that social science is more than just the mechanics and methods of collection; it is also interpretive by nature. Geertz (1973) subscribes to the Weberian belief that “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun,” and concludes that culture is composed of those webs (p. 5). He also takes a semiotic view of these cultural webs, believing that people construct meaning around symbols, labels, titles and other social indicators (pp. 62-63). For this reason, Geertz (1983) argues that, in order to truly come to any deep understanding of culture and the significance of experiences, behavior, or concepts, researchers must seek to understand and detangle the web from the “native’s” insider point of view (pp. 57-58).

Geertz (1973) borrowed from the writings of Gilbert Rile, in which he examined how socially established codes embed themselves into culture and communicate a universal meaning, to form his concept of “thick description” (p. 6). He refers to these codes as “structures of signification” and defines them as factors that can be used to contextualize shaped behavior (p. 9). Researchers must dig their way through these structures in order to uncover deeper meaning and cultural relevance (p. 7).

In essence, the theoretical concept of “thick description” explains that without this deep probing and untangling of a self-composed web of significance, the findings of cultural study are merely constructions of people’s constructions. True meaning is

obscured because “most of what we need to comprehend a particular event, ritual, custom, idea or whatever is insinuated as background information before the thing itself is directly examined” (p. 9). This contextual information is needed in order to truthfully examine the subject being studied.

The importance of context in journalistic storytelling cannot be understated. In the reporting process, journalists turn to a vast number of tools and outlets to understand the necessary background information to accurately tell stories. These stories can be an exercise in interpreting culture in and of themselves, given the right actors, events and experiences. Through the use of diverse perspectives, journalists have uncovered hidden meaning, errors in perception and dynamic social trends.

One of the ways in which journalists go about uncovering the deeper meaning of communication and experience is through in-depth interviews. Unfortunately, depending on the timing and scope of the topic under consideration, those with first-hand experience may not be alive or able to share their experiences. In these instances, journalists can listen to and evaluate oral history as narrative and seek to detangle the webs of significance that individuals and societies use to make sense of the world around them, so these messages are not lost.

In-depth interviews and oral histories are used in academic research as a means of providing “thick” descriptions of events, experiences and culture. This can be done on a wider scale, as was the case with Edgerton-Webster’s (2007) examination of the cultural relevance of African American women’s involvement in the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964 through a series of oral histories. It also applies to the targeted, less

survey-like approach of Johns's (2008) study of how one photojournalist's experience can shape the media's perception of photo columns (p. 74).

Researchers in other fields have also seen the benefit of using narrative theory to expose the underlying meaning of personal stories and testimony. Johnson (2002) used narrative theory to explore six white teachers' attitudes towards race and racism in their multicultural classrooms. Ahmed (2013) examines the narratives of retirees from the U.K. who use "quest" or "voyage and return" typologies to explain their "lifestyle migration" to Spain in search of a better life. Narrative theory has also been applied to the study of medical patients' stories of dealing with severe illness, as in Lee's (2001) study of how illness impacted a cancer survivor's psychological development and Bingley et al.'s (2008) study of narrative analysis as a method for understanding patient, caregiver and health professionals' experience with dealing with terminal illness.

By interviewing journalism professors to understand how and why they are using oral histories as part of their curricula, my hope is that this study will uncover how the deeper probe into the constructs of history, personal identity and culture are used to teach students how to untangle and then share the "web of significance" weave around ourselves.

Literature review

Journalism educators are always looking for creative ways to teach technique and craft to their students. Reasoning that "experience is often the best teacher," Evinger (1984) frequently invited interesting, quick-thinking interviewees into her advanced reporting journalism classes to employ "dirty tricks" and used the sessions to train

students on how to efficiently handle their worst interviewing nightmares (p. 28). She is not alone in her hands-on approach to training. Magowan (1986) uses similar reasoning to argue for the benefits of bringing in public sector lawyers with journalism roots for beginning government reporters to interview and be critiqued by. In an attempt to remove the intimidation that journalism students often feel when faced with their first news writing assignments, Sneed (1984) used puzzles with phrases that explained the who, what, where, when, why and how of a newsworthy event as a way to link the visual and verbal.

Journalism educators have also used oral history as a teaching tool for their students. In his 1979 article, Schwarzlose detailed how his journalism history students welcomed the opportunity to collect oral histories of hundreds of Chicago's "old newsmen" as an alternative to a term paper. He found that the assignment not only increased their enthusiasm for their field of study, but also provided "an especially intimate look at students' intellectual and journalistic abilities" (p. 22). In addition, the oral history records were of great value to the city of Chicago since they preserved the experiences and perspectives of individuals who were part of one of the nation's most competitive media markets. In a more contemporary example, Gordon (2007) shows how collaborative projects between teachers and students motivated investment in the "process *and* product of writing, including research, oral history, revision, and an immersion in and commitment to community" (p. 63). One such project at a correctional facility's high school used the collection and editing of learners' oral history to teach the process of writing and editing personal narratives (p. 66).

Little recent research exists about how oral histories are being used in university journalism classrooms in the U.S. Preliminary searches revealed that a handful of professors are currently using them as part of their curricula in a variety of ways. In order to gain insight into the perceived benefits and real challenges of including oral histories in journalism curriculum, in-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to obtain answers to the following research questions:

- 1) How are university journalism educators using oral histories in their teaching curricula?
- 2) Why are university journalism educators using oral histories in their classrooms?

Through analyzing motives, perceptions and practices, I hope to add to the body of research concerning the intersection of oral history and journalism, while offering a fresh perspective on how oral histories can be used to enrich journalism students' training experience.

What is oral history?

Oral history, first and foremost, is a multi-disciplinary research method that capitalizes on in-depth, unstructured interviews focused on mining details about an individual's first-hand experience of the past. These interviews are generally centered on specific topics, experiences or periods of time. They are recorded, then transcribed, summarized and indexed for analysis and archival. The goal is to create new records of history from first-person narratives of experience. These records are a mixture of

“information sharing and autobiographical reminiscence, facts and feelings” that can be used to uncover deep meaning from an individual’s past experiences (Abrams, 2010, p. 10).

Ritchie (2003) contends that, although the oral history interviewer plays an essential role in extracting the narratives of peoples’ lives, the “ultimate value of oral history lies in the substance of the interviewee’s story” (p. 28). While the interviewer does determine the list of topics that must be discussed, the nature of unstructured interviews relies on the sessions being led by the interviewee’s recollection. For this reason, interviewers must do the research necessary to determine what information must be obtained through the interview, but they must also be “prepared to abandon carefully prepared questions and follow the interviewee down unexpected paths, always helping the interviewee by questioning, guiding, coaxing and challenging” (p. 28). Good oral histories leave plenty of room for the interviewee to speak their own minds, apart from any agenda or plan that the interviewer may have (p. 32).

Abrams (2010) describes oral history as “an octopus with tentacles reaching into a wide range of disciplinary, practice-led and community enterprises” (p. 2). Oral histories are used in studies of the humanities and social sciences, in fields that range from gerontology to media studies, as well as for community and educational projects. The recorded narratives produced, which are often referred to as oral histories, also have a wide range of uses. They frequently accompany museum exhibits, appear as source material for radio and television broadcasts and have even been used as oral testimony obtained by governments during significant shifts of political power, as was the case with

those presented to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission after the fall of apartheid.

The history of oral history

According to Ritchie (2003), records of oral history can be found as early as three thousand years ago during the Zhou dynasty of China (p. 19). In the United States, most texts cite the 1930s Federal Writers Project that sought to employ out-of-work writers and artists during the Depression years to collect the stories of life from ordinary American citizens as the birth of the modern oral history movement (Abrams, 2010; Dunaway, 1996; Ritchie, 2003). The second wave occurred during the 1940s, when journalist and Columbia University historian Allan Nevins created the first modern archive of taped interviews of the "great men" of society as a tool for orally based biographies (Abrams, 2010; Lohead, 1976). The archived interviews were to be used by future historians to study the past.

The next generation of oral historians sought to diversify collections beyond the elite interviews and write history "from the bottom up" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 23). They desired to include the "nonliterate and historically disenfranchised" voices that were largely ignored and absent from accounts of the past (Dunaway, 1996, p. 8). Early practitioners were often from outside the field of history and well known in their communities. Many were educators, activists or community organizers.

One of the most well-known oral historians of this era was Louis "Studs" Terkel, a writer and Chicago-based radio broadcaster who brought oral history to the masses through *The Studs Terkel Show* (1952-1997), as well as through books of edited

interviews on subjects such as the Great Depression, race relations in America and the everyday work life (Abrams, 2010, p. 4). Terkel was one of many who used oral history to explore the experiences of groups in society that were largely marginalized by history, including minorities, women, gays and lesbians, and the disabled. He saw this as a way to bridge the gap between “the anonymous and the celebrated” (De Graaf, 2002, p. 107).

This “recovery history” role that seeks to include the voices and experiences of the common folk dominated the 1970s and early 1980s (Abrams, 2010, p. 5). During the 1990s, oral histories became a more popular means of interacting with history as museums frequently included them as accompaniments to artifacts and exhibits. Libraries also recognized that oral history was a means of bridging “the gap between curriculum and community” and sought to work with schools and community groups to help educate young people and add to their collections (Dunaway, 1996, pp. 9-11). They found that oral histories provided opportunities for students to tap into “rich cultural resources outside the classrooms and textbooks” and provided teachers with “an effective way for motivating learning in general, and community-based learning in particular” (p. 11).

Although oral history interviewing has long been a part of certain fields of study – such as folklore, ethnomusicology and linguistics – historians have been slow to accept it as a “legitimate historical source” (Abrams, 2010, p. 5; Dunaway, 1996, p. 7). For many decades, it was viewed as a research method of “last resort – to be used only when all other archival sources are exhausted” (Lohead, 1976, p. 8). During the 1970s and 1980s, the push to legitimize history as a field of study through quantification using numbers and data placed oral history in opposition to the goals of academics (Yow, 1997, p. 59). Its

use in multiple disciplines outside of academia also played a part in its invalidation (Abrams, 2010, p. 4).

Oral history's gradual acceptance in this and other fields has been aided by a shift from being merely a means of collecting facts as "received wisdom" to a method of analyzing self-subjective narratives of particular times, places or societies (Dunaway, 1996, p. 9). As more scholarly literature is created around the fieldwork process, professors from a wide variety of disciplines are incorporating it into their post-graduate programs, in spite of the methodology's perceived shortcomings.

Subjectivity in a world seeking objectivity

As a research method that is based on interviews and subjective memory, which cannot be quantified, critics often raise questions about oral history's reliability. They argue that memory is fluid and can be impacted or diminished over time (Ritchie, 2003, pp. 26-27). Documents, they reason, are more reliable sources of historical record than oral testimony because they can also be counted and verified (Abrams, 2010, p. 5). Documents don't change, they argue, even though our interpretation of them may with the passing of time and revelation of more evidence.

Ritchie (2003) argued that since scholars have readily accepted other forms of potentially biased documents as documentation, such as correspondence, diaries and autobiographies, the same level of acceptance should apply to oral recollections of memory (p. 33). He asserted that most studies on memory tend to focus on the short-term, which doesn't account for the uncanny ability of the elderly to recount experiences and events that occurred in decades past with precision when they cannot accurately recall the

names of their grandchildren (p. 30). He contends that memory seems strongest when an event or experience has a personal impact on the narrator and experiences from youth tend to be richer and more descriptive than those from more recent years. For these reasons, he believed contradictory renditions of the past and the narrators' proximity to the center of the event should be taken into consideration, but their understanding of past experiences should not be discounted. Instead, representative samples of interviews from a wide selection of people should be obtained and narrators' stories should be corroborated in order to "piece together the puzzle from various points of view" (p. 33). Adams (2010) concurred, arguing that oral sources "must be judged differently from conventional documentary materials, but that this in no way detracts from their veracity and utility" (p. 6).

Critics also question the role of nostalgia in oral history narratives. They warn of the potential for creating oral history records that are merely recollections of the "good old days." Ritchie (2003) acknowledged that for some narrators, "dissatisfaction with the present makes the past look far better," which can create an inaccurate representation of history (p. 34). He noted that due to the circumstances of the past, some may not want to talk about their experiences or may have blocked them out because the experience was too painful (as is the case with those who have experienced traumatic events, like war or abuse) (pp. 35-36). In light of this propensity, he reasoned, interviewers must be prepared to probe the difficult issues – the rejection of a previous generation's values, the brutality of war and the ugly truth of racism – in order to obtain a fuller account of history.

Shircliffe (2001) concurred, noting that interviewers must become more critical of the information gleaned from sources because these narratives that “illustrate the construction of historical consciousness” should not be discounted (p. 84). In her study of how nostalgia can enhance, rather than detract from, the effective use of oral history, Shircliffe determined that while the “homesickness” for “the good old days” tended to gloss over the negative and potentially dysfunctional aspects of past experiences, they also were useful in uncovering how individuals invest meaning into memories that can have significant effects on current social commentary. Her interviews with 30 individuals who were part of the integration of Tampa’s Hillsborough County public schools in the late 1960s found that they focused on aspects of school-life they deem absent from today’s communities, especially “family-like atmosphere, strict and caring teachers, and parental involvement” – all themes that regularly appear in oral histories of segregated schools (p. 66). She contends that “nostalgia functions as a social critique of the discriminatory aspects of the desegregation process and the status of contemporary race relations after nearly thirty years of court-ordered desegregation” (p. 74). Nostalgia became the lens through which the narrators viewed the community’s issues with crime, continued economic decline and isolation from stronger, healthier communities.

Another noted concern with oral history as a methodology is the relaxed level of objectivity of the interviewer and their impact upon the historical information collected. According to Ritchie (2003), interviewers who are asking questions for archival purposes tend to be viewed as more objective than those who use oral history interviews to inform their own research because the latter sought to compile information in order to fulfill a

particular purpose or agenda. Some oral historians, like Allan Nevins, adhered to the position of a neutral, objective collector of memory to the point of removing themselves and their questions completely from archived records (p. 8).

In a study of the effects of oral history interviewing on the interviewer, Yow (1997) surveyed the multi-disciplinary paradigm shift that occurred during the latter part of the twentieth century that made the acknowledgement of subjective research possible and open for discussion. She found that, on the one hand, some historians argued that “value-free research which requires the elimination of researcher intrusion” was attainable and should be the standard of measurement for scholarly research (p. 56). Conversely, others argued that subjectivity is inevitable and must be incorporated into the process of analyzing history.

As oral history gained wider recognition as a valid methodology in academia, its practitioners have come to terms with the inevitability of subjectivity when examining and interpreting personal narratives (Ritchie, 2003, p. 28). Yow (1997) cited R. G. Collingwood, stating that “history cannot exist outside of human consciousness – a statement that puts the interpreter at the center of the process of understanding the past” (p. 59). Seeking some level of objectivity in the midst of a subjective practice, researchers in the 1970s sought to develop a reflexive, self-critical process and language for evaluating, analyzing and understanding their intrusion on the process of creating history. This included asking questions of themselves, such as how their “attitudes, demeanor, personality, and expectations shaped the outcome” (p. 66). According to Yow, oral historians have embraced the ideology to some degree, oftentimes incorporating into

their analyses how their race, ethnicity, gender or class seemed to have affected the narrator, as well as how these factors impacted their research – namely how the interviewer’s self-perception or past experiences impacted what they focused on and judgments made about the narrator (pp. 69-75).

The intersections of oral history and journalism

Although Studs Terkel is referred to as one of the greatest oral historians of the last century and was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Clinton for his “contributions to the nation’s cultural life” in 1997, he has stated that he does not consider himself an oral historian in the academic sense of the word (De Graaf, 2003, p. 88). He referred to himself a “guerilla journalist” with an activist voice who cultivated a deep knowledge of the terrain from which he told stories. Terkel maintained that he sought to tell stories about America’s history in an effort to curtail the nation’s “collective amnesia” – the “forgetfulness of the need for history” – in an effort to prevent the repetition of our greatest mistakes (p. 95). He believed that Americans suppressed portions of history as a coping mechanism in the past and it continues to be subdued due to advancements in technology that fuel the media’s pursuit of up-to-the minute news reports and the dominance of the 30-second sound bite (p. 95).

In spite of the similarities between the two fields, the intersections of journalism and oral history have often been riddled with tension. In his comparative study of journalism and oral history, Feldstein (2004) likens the two fields to “kissing cousins” who come from similar roots and have much to learn from each other in spite of their “different purposes, different standards and norms, [and] different techniques” (p. 5).

Interviewing is the tool of choice for both fields and the fundamentals of the process are largely the same. Both fields stress the importance of background research and preparing for the interview. Both teach techniques for establishing rapport to set interviewees at ease and asking single but open-ended questions that allow interviewees to give expansive answers. Both underscore the importance of critical listening, examining what is and isn't heard in the course of dialog and approaching questions from various angles to check for consistency in responses. Both fields use various elicitation techniques, such as the use of walking tours, artifacts and timelines, to jog memories and place the interviewee back in a particular space and time (Feldstein, 2004, p. 10; Ritchie, 2003, pp. 99-100).

Despite these foundational similarities, their disparate purposes lead to very different approaches to the information gathering process. Feldstein (2004) argued that journalists, in general, do not have the time or desire to conduct unstructured interviews in the same manner as an oral historian (p. 9). He states that they are taught to conduct interviews at a moment's notice, seek out the pertinent details, recognize the compelling components of a story and overcome "the reluctance of the subject with a combination of bravado, cunning, and persistence." Journalists – especially investigative journalists – may also rely on "reportorial rudeness" in order to obtain information when an "any means necessary" approach is needed (p. 13). In addition, broadcast journalists are often central figures of their interviews as the key, consistent players in an arena where showcasing their abilities and avoiding extended periods of silence are paramount.

Conversely, oral historians tend to take a more genteel approach to interviewing. Feldstein (2004) asserted that they utilize a more indirect style of interviewing that includes sympathizing with the interviewee and gently approaching sensitive areas in order to diffuse touchy subjects (p. 15). The overarching goal is to draw out extensive historical details through a series of slow-paced interviews, while relying on the cooperation of their subjects to achieve their goal – a “narrator-approved transcript” that will be archived for use by future generations of scholars. Ritchie (2003) concurred, stating that an interview only becomes oral history when “it has been recorded, processed in some way, made available in an archive, library, or other repository, or reproduced in relatively verbatim form for publication” (p. 24).

Tisdale (2000) takes the definition a bit further and makes a case for observational reporting in newspapers as oral history. By his definition, observational stories are based on a journalist’s first-hand observations, oftentimes written in first or second person, that give vivid descriptions on what it was like to experience a particular event. He proposes that these “impressionistic stories,” such as the first-hand accounts of journalists who witnessed the death and destruction wreaked by Hurricane Audrey in 1957, are equivalent to a “dialogue of expectation” with an interviewing public that seeks to know the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of catastrophic events (p. 43). Tisdale contends that these journalists’ observational accounts, along with the subsequent transcripts, fall under the description of oral tradition and add to the historical body of knowledge to be studied by future generations of researchers, even though they are almost immediate accounts of the events.

While both fields rely on the accuracy and credibility of interviews as primary source material, varying time constraints separate the two fields (Feldstein, 2004, p. 9; Tisdale, 2000, p. 45). Where journalism often reports on current events, oral history seeks to collect and analyze accounts of the past. For this reason, journalists generally tend to interview on deadline for a specific story they are trying to produce. They may be simply looking for background information and may only use a few quotations obtained during the interview in their actual stories. They also rarely archive their interviews for public consumption and research (Ritchie, 2003). It is important to note that, according to Tisdale (2000), although journalists' interviews may be less thorough due to time constraints, this does not necessarily mean that the information received is less accurate (p. 45).

The objectivity norm in journalism and academic research causes practitioners in both fields to wrestle with boundaries of empathy, ethics and evidence (Feldstein, 2004, p. 17). Feeling connected to an interviewee after spending extended periods of time with him or her is a natural by-product of the interviewing process. In oral history, these intense connections raise ethical questions that tend to revolve around the unequal relationship of the interviewer and interviewee. In contrast, where oral historians consider themselves part of a co-authoring process, most journalists believe themselves to be objective observers who speak to their audience about people, events and topics (Dunaway, 1997, p. 311). Feldstein argued that the ethical debate for journalists largely centers around "which means can be used to achieve which ends" in an effort to determine what will help or hinder their newsgathering (Feldstein, 2004, p. 19).

One of the biggest points of contention between the two fields exists due to their difference in purpose. Feldstein (2004) stated that the two fields ultimately do not have the same ends. Oral history focuses on the collection and interpretation of memories, not only from the “great men” of the past, but also from the forgotten masses who lived through significant periods in history. Journalists, on the other hand, focus on meeting their next deadline in an effort to “educate the citizenry” (p. 5). He argues that, while journalists seek to present truth, the fact that journalism is a “commercial vehicle for selling advertisements” ultimately affects what truths are chosen and how they are presented (p. 9).

Dunaway (1997) argued that the different end goals of the two fields signal that “different ends demand different procedures” (p. 310). Oral historians are generally looking for historical detail, while journalists are looking for their next story. Oral historians spend extended periods of time – even years – working on a project. Journalists work under strict deadlines. While oral historians lose sleep over “copyright, ownership, review, and storage of materials” issues, journalists are more concerned with libel and invasion of privacy issues (p. 311). The desired end-product of oral history is a complete, narrator-approved, transcribed account of experience that is archived for public use. Journalists tend to “telescope life” by producing a tightly edited, compelling rendition of a story that summarizes the person’s experience (pp. 312, 314).

In spite of these differences, the media has long been a leading outlet for publicizing oral history’s findings. These narratives have mainly found a home within radio, television and film (especially documentary film), where producers use archived

material to “raise popular historical consciousness, to broadcast ‘to the man [and woman] on the street” (Dunaway, 1996, p.15). These broadcasts became a way for narratives to be used, rather than simply buried in archives for future generations to (hopefully) unearth and examine (p. 16).

In order for the archived records to be used in storytelling, however, they must be edited. The question raised by oral historians is “how much is too much?” Examining the differences between the journalistic, academic and archival approaches to oral histories, Lohead (1976) wrote that it is “difficult to know at what point this editing process crosses the line of historical credibility into journalistic license” (p.6). According to Ritchie (2003), some oral historians have called into question the popular books of Studs Terkel, who “usually removes his own questions and sometimes reorders his interviewee’s answers” (p. 128). He cites as an example several sources for Terkel’s *American Dreams, Lost and Found* (1980) who thought the testimonies presented from them in the book were misconstrued versions of what they originally said. Ritchie also criticized other works by professional writers who created well-known “oral history” books, including Alex Haley’s *Roots* (1976) and Merle Miller’s *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (1974), claiming that many oral historians felt that literary license was taken in presenting sensationalized claims or fictionalized versions of history.

Oral historians believe that the editing process should “sharpen the meaning without putting words in the interviewee’s mouth or altering the essence of what was said” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 128). They assert that even when oral histories are presented to

the public in journalistic form, the industry standard of maintaining original meaning should be upheld.

Methodology

Interviewing is a forthright method for seeking to understand how and why journalism educators are using oral histories as part of their curricula. As a qualitative research method, it allows for the investigation and exploration of meaning by moving researchers beyond mere observation to understanding what people know, how they feel, and why they believe what they believe. Through in-depth interviews, the motivation behind certain aspects of human behavior can be uncovered.

Interviewing is also one of the most frequently used and most effective research methods for understanding perception, motivation and behavior (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 361). Common formats for interviewing are structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews are the most rigid in format, which enables researchers to achieve consistency across interview subjects through the use of a firm set of highly selective questions to which the interviewer must adhere (p. 364). On the opposite end of the spectrum, unstructured interviews are conducted in a loosely directed manner over an extended period of time. The interviewer keeps the general topic of study in mind, but allows the interviewee to address related topics without input from the interviewer (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 366; Whyte, 1982, p. 111). Semi-structured interviews are situated between the two extremes, providing a list of topics or questions that must be addressed while allowing interviewers the freedom to expand upon their questions and explore related areas of interest through follow-up questions.

In his study on borrowing interrogation tactics to teach journalism students about confrontational interviewing, Sheridan (2002) used in-depth, semi-structured – and sometimes informal – interviews with seasoned journalists and members of law enforcement (the Central Intelligence Agency, Immigration and Naturalization Services and local law enforcement) to create a handbook of interrogational interviewing techniques for journalists and journalism students. Similarly, Grochowski (2011) used in-depth interviews with reporters and editors who used crowdsourcing for investigative stories to understand how this new technique for mining information is being and can be used in writing news stories.

For my study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews will be used since they allow for some flexibility in regards to how questions are asked and answered, while providing some parameters for discussion. Following Johnson and Weller's (2002) suggested model, broad, open-ended questions will initially be used in order to establish rapport and understand the context in which the interviewee functions and makes sense of their work (p. 497). These will be followed by questions that seek to address the focus of the study – how and why journalism professors are using oral history in their teaching curricula.

Active listening and in-the-moment critical analysis will be used to develop follow-up questions as points for clarification emerge. The use of these and other elicitation techniques will move the research beyond the surface and create opportunities for the researcher to become the “student” of the interviewees (Johnson & Weller, 2002, p. 496; Whyte, 1982, p. 112).

While interviews for research purposes are an excellent way to uncover the motivation behind certain actions or shed light on an individual's beliefs, use of the method comes with its own set of issues. Common concerns include the degree of control the interviewer can have over a subject and possible inaccuracies that can result from poorly crafted questions. Other possible pitfalls of interviewing for research stem from the susceptibility of the interviewee to skew results by providing inaccurate answers out of a desire to please the interviewer, the inability to express themselves accurately or the desire to subvert their true feelings or ideas (Whyte, 1982, p. 115). The likelihood that these issues will surface with the target population of interviewees – university journalism professors – is negligible.

Preparation

The first step in preparing to execute this study will be to obtain a sample pool of university journalism professors who use oral history as part of their curricula. Since the target number of interviewees for this study is five professors, a list of 10 prospective participants will be compiled. Background research on the professors, their journalism programs and their teaching methods will be conducted. From this information, bios will be compiled for each potential interviewee.

Preliminary research provided several possible interviewees who have used collections of oral histories as part of their teaching method. These candidates include:

- Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, associate professor of journalism at the University of Texas,

- Jim Sheeler, associate professor of journalism at Case Western Reserve University,
- Mark Feldstein, professor of broadcast journalism at the University of Maryland,
- Joel W. Beeson, associate professor of visual journalism at the West Virginia University, and
- Kathleen Ryan, associate professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Letters requesting the professors' participation in the study will be mailed to their work address. The letter will present a brief overview of the topic to be discussed, information regarding the duration and structure of the interview process, as well as notification that the interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and included as part of the study's findings. Findings from the research conducted for professor bios will be included as reasons for why each individual is an ideal candidate for the study. A copy of the letter will be emailed to the journalist, followed by a phone call if no response is received within two weeks. Professors with personal connections to the journalists will be also asked to assist with making initial contact if no response is received.

Once confirmation of participation from at least five professors has been received, a more thorough investigation of their backgrounds, the journalism schools where they are employed and their published bodies of work will be explored. Interview time and dates will be set. A reminder email will be sent the day before the interview.

The interviews

The interviews will be conducted face-to-face, if possible, so that the researcher is able to note nonverbal cues such as the interviewee's changes in posture, eye contact and spatial orientation, as suggested by Fontana and Frey (1994, p. 371). They will take place in a location where the interviewee is comfortable with that provides space and time for uninterrupted, recorded conversation. Where face-to-face interaction is not feasible, interviews will be conducted via Skype or Google Plus video chat. Telephone interviews will be used as a last resort. A time frame of 60 to 90 minutes will be allocated for each interview.

A research guide of a pre-printed list of questions will be used in order to make sure that interviews are consistent and ensure that the interviewees (and the interviewer) do not deviate too far from the topic at hand. A sample of the questions for the research guide includes:

Q1: How do you define oral history?

Q2: How did you become interested in oral histories?

Q3: How are you using oral histories as part of your teaching curriculum?

Q4: How are you teaching your students about oral history?

Q5: How are you incorporating technology into the instruction?

Q6: What do you hope students glean from the process?

Q7: What challenges have you faced with using oral histories as a teaching tool?

Q8: How are the assignments received by your students?

Q9: What benefit have you received from using oral history as a teaching tool?

Q10: Who do you believe benefits most from these exercises?

In addition to recording the interviews, field notes will also be taken. The field notes will capture interviewee responses that speak directly to the research questions, as well as nonverbal cues and general observations. Further details – including unanswered questions, reflections of the interviewer, and emerging concepts and themes – will be documented directly after the interview in order to prevent the loss of valuable insights with the progression of time.

Analysis and findings

Once the interviews are completed, the recordings will be transcribed and prepared for coding. Next, the interviews and field notes will be analyzed in order to identify correlations and inconsistencies regarding the use of oral history in journalism curricula. A written summary of the findings will be created and submitted as an essay for publication in the *Columbia Journalism Review* or *American Journalism Review*.

Since the conclusions drawn from the interviews will be used as the source material for a professional analysis essay, rather than for publication as research, this project is not subject to the protocols of the University of Missouri's Institutional Review Board.

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Appendix B



THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

1020 Lowry Street
Columbia, Missouri 65201-7298

April 24, 2013

Dear Graduate Committee:

I am writing in regards to Roxanne Foster and her desire for my supervision of her summer project collecting oral history interviews on desegregation in Columbia, Missouri. Although Roxanne would be the first J-School student that I've supervised for a project I am a regular internship supervisor for the Department of History each semester, and I am currently supervising a public history internship for a graduate student at Lincoln University.

The State Historical Society of Missouri is the largest repository of oral history interviews in Missouri, with over 4,000 interviews covering a broad range of topics and individuals. We have agreed to accept Roxanne's interviews into our collection so that in the future they may be used by faculty, staff, and other researchers as they study this worthy and important topic.

I have met with Roxanne twice now to discuss her plan of action, given her helpful reading materials as she continues to plan her project, and have agreed for her to accompany me on one of my forthcoming oral history interviews. I have also agreed to review and critique her first interview so that she may improve her oral history interviewing skills as her project moves forward throughout the summer as well. I have enclosed a copy of my CV per Roxanne's request. I hope that I may look forward to working with Roxanne this summer as she documents an important part of Missouri's history and makes it a permanent part of this state's historical record. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to speak further.

Sincerely,

Jeff D. Corrigan
Oral Historian
The State Historical Society of Missouri
University of Missouri – Columbia
1020 Lowry Street
Columbia, MO 65201
(573) 882-0417

Telephone: (573) 882-7083 • Fax: (573) 884-4950 • E-mail: shsofmo@umsystem.edu • Web site: <http://www.umsystem.edu/shs>

Appendix C

Changes to the Original Proposal

Due to the time constraints that were placed on me by doing this project over the summer months, I was unable to provide the committee with edited sound bites from the oral history interviews. I also was not able to take portraits of the interviewees to include with the interview summaries.

Appendix D

Interview Transcript – Dr. Joel Beeson

Interviewer: Roxanne Foster

Date of interview: July 26, 2013

Duration: 01:07:45

Joel William Beeson is an associate professor at the WVU P.I. Reed School of Journalism. His areas of interest include visual journalism, race and ethnic studies, history, multimedia, new media and documentary studies. Dr. Beeson earned M.A. and B.A. degrees from the University of Missouri-Columbia and a PhD in American Studies from Union Institute. His research involves using ethnographies and oral histories in visual reporting and looking for new ways to link cultural studies, communities and visual storytelling.

Dr. Beeson directs [West Virginia's Veteran's History Project](#) and produced and directed the award-winning documentary, ["Fighting on Two Fronts: the Untold Stories of African American WWII Veterans."](#)

JB: Joel Beeson

RF: Roxanne Foster

0:00:25 JB: Hello.

0:00:26 RF: Hi, is this Dr. Beeson?

0:00:28 JB: Yes.

0:00:29 RF: This is Roxanne Foster. How are you?

0:00:32 JB: I'm doing okay. How are you?

0:00:33 RF: I'm doing pretty good. Were you having a procedure done this week or next week?

0:00:40 JB: Pardon?

0:00:41 RF: Were you having a procedure done this week or next week?

0:00:44 JB: Uh, next week.

0:00:45 RF: Oh, okay. Good. Good. Awesome. Well, it's good to finally be talking to you.

0:00:50 JB: Right. No, it's been sort of playing, uh, you know, musical calendars.

0:01:00 RF: Exactly, exactly. I was just like, I'm sitting in a hotel room in Memphis, Tennessee and I'm like, this has to happen today. Otherwise -

0:01:07 JB: Yeah.

0:01:08 RF: time is just gonna continue to pass and all that good stuff. Um, cool. Well, let me see. I had a couple questions for you before we jumped in. The information on your, on the WVU's website about you, is that information correct?

0:01:25 JB: Pardon?

0:01:26 RF: The information on the website, on the school's website about you, is that information correct?

0:01:33 JB: Um, probably not up to date.

0:01:37 RF: Okay, um -

0:01:39 JB: Can you, uh, read that to me because I don't know if they've updated it or not.

0:01:45 RF: Sure, it says that you're an associate professor at the P.R. Reed School of Journalism, right?

0:01:53 JB: Yes, that's correct.

0:01:35 RF: And that your specialty areas are visual journalism, race and ethnic studies, history, multimedia, new media and documentary studies.

0:02:02 JB: Yes

0:02:03 RF: And that you have nearly 15 years of professional experience as a photojournalist, photo editor and designer to the classroom.

0:02:09 JB: Yes.

0:02:10 RF: It talks about where you -

0:02:11 JB: That, that, I think that was my professional experience before I came here.

0:02:16 RF: Right.

0:02:18 JB: Hmm.

0:02:20 RF: Now, it does say that you have your M.A. and B.A. from the University of Missouri -

0:02:26 JB: Yeah.

0:02:27 RF: And that you pursued doctoral studies in Communications -

0:02:30 JB: No, I finished my dissertation and got my degree, so I have a, a PhD in American Studies.

0:02:44 RF: PhD in American Studies. Let me change that. And where is that from?

0:02:49 JB: Uh, Union Institute.

0:02:51 RF: Okay. Yeah, that was added in there. Okay.

0:02:56 JB: Right.

0:02:57 RF: On the website it says that you're pursuing it. Um, and does your research still center on how new media can be used by communities to document, preserve and promote their own stories and cultural history?

0:03:11 JB: Yes.

0:03:11 RF: Okay. Um, the "Fighting on Two Fronts"?

0:03:18 JB: Yes

0:03:19 RF: Did you that there's another trailer on YouTube that's very, well, it's not very different but it's different from yours - the one that's there. Did you know about that one?

0:03:30 JB: Nnn uhhhh.

0:03:32 RF: It's really interesting 'cause the comment section on that one is very short but it says that that film was debunked as a lie but it shows that -

0:03:41 JB: But what? What is this on?

0:03:43 RF: The film. It's got the, almost the exact same name as yours, so "Fighting on Two Fronts" but there's, like, something else in front of that. Actually, I can pull it up. Because when I Googled it, I was like, "What is this?" Ummm.

0:03:58 JB: Well, I don't know. I've never seen that.

0:04:00 RF: It's called Liberators: Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II"

0:04:07 JB: Liberators?

0:04:08 RF: Mmm hmm. And it was posted a year ago. It has - it comes up first because it has more hits but it's almost the same type of content or subject matter.

0:04:21 JB: Bizarre.

0:04:22 RF: Yeah. You might want to look at that [laughs] because I was like, uhhhh, hmhhh ... interesting.

0:04:27 JB: And what was, what was debunked about it?

0:03:30 RF: Um, it said that the interviewees were all telling lies and that it was proven - hold on, I'll pull it up. But I don't want to play it. I mean, it, it's got a similar look and feel to it but it says, um, the comments section, now, so take that for what it's worth. Um, it says that it was taken down as a fraud of a movie, umm, that everyone relating stories for the documentary about the 761st members is lying, it never happened, um, and then it says last days of the big lie watch, it's all a hoax. So, it's just real interesting that - yeah, you might want to just check it out on YouTube.

0:05:21 JB: I will. You know, I, um, I had some guy call me who was in the Air Force who wrote me or, I forget, that, um, the Tuskegee Airmen, it was a lie that they never ... [silence]

0:05:54 RF: Hello?

0:06:00 JB: Um, sorry. Um, I have to go pick up a rental car pretty soon. But, anyway, there's a lot of people who, I don't know, you know, I was labeled a racist by some, you know, there's a lot of issues around this. I -

0:06:18 RF: Wow.

0:06:20 JB: And, uh, but that, I'm not saying, I don't know what this other thing is about but I know myself, that I've experienced people, um, telling me that, you know, like, about things that aren't even in my documentary.

0:06:38 RF: Ohhhhhh.

0:06:40 JB: There's a, uh, one of the, uh, veterans I interviewed and his part of the story was a flight, uh, crew chief with the Tuskegee Airmen and trained them in Tuskegee before they went over and he didn't go over there. This guy, you know, contacted me. He was a World War II veteran, he was telling me he was still alive and the Tuskegee Airmen never lost any bombers when they were escorting bombers in Italy and that was all a lie, you know, it's been proven, blah blah blah blah and I was like, I don't even make that claim in the documentary. We don't even cover them.

0:07:32 RF: Yeah, so it might be this other thing that that person was referring to.

0:07:38 JB: It could be. I have no idea. I mean, and that's something that people say and all of this and, you know, there are people who, that has become their, you know, crusade to debunk that. You know, I have no idea. There are a lot of people out there who, you know, who don't like these stories and I've experienced that myself and there was no sort of attack me on things that I, that the documentary doesn't even, you know, it's not even a topic or it isn't even discussed.

0:08:25 RF: Huh.

0:08:26 JB: So, they just want to find people to have a, have a dispute with. Yeah, I just say, "Okay." I don't know.

0:08:40 RF: Yeah.

0:08:41 JB: And I don't make that claim. I don't know for sure. So, the, yeah, there's a lot of - not a lot, actually, I think most, most veterans tend to, you know, kind of acknowledge what happened and usually say, "Well, that's the way it was back then. They're white. Um, the, the, you know the people who are really defensive about it who are veterans will, you know, attack certain parts of it. I have a black veteran who said when he was

delivering ammunition to Marines - he was a CB, I think – he was delivering ammunition to Marines on Iwo Jima. Their commanding officer wouldn't, their officers wouldn't give them live ammunition.

0:09:54 RF: What?

0:09:55 JB: Mostly because they were afraid of'em and there was this incident when they were in camp before they went overseas where there was, you know, a riot and insurrection because of a racial incident.

0:10:07 RF: Ohhh.

0:10:10 JB: After that, they, you know, kind of came down on'em and but that's when they said they weren't gonna issue them live ammunition.

0:10:20 RF: Huh.

0:10:21 JB: And so, he says that he, you know, was on the beach and, you know, everyone in his unit. And, you know, that's - I believe him. I don't know the details of it. But, in general, the point is whether that was true for everyone in his unit or true for them. Um, you know, I believe him and I also view it as, I view oral history not as looking for objective truth about, um, what happened but a, you know, it's a performance of memory. How they made sense of what was happening to them. At that time, presented now. [Laughs] To me. And, you have to look at it as, that's their experience and just as you have other people relating their experience about the past, that's their experience.

0:11:49 RF: Right.

0:11:50 JB: You know, one of the examples of that is these collective stories that people tell. And, not just African American veterans but, you know, I've talked to veterans on my father's ship, talked about Pearl Harbor and what happened. They'll say, "You know, these planes flew by and they started bombing" and blah, blah, blah and they'll tell you all this stuff. It's like, okay, what was your job? Oh, I was down in the engine room.

0:12:22 RF: [Laughs] Oh.

0:12:25 JB: So, you know, it's like, if you were in Hurricane Katrina and, you know, you're remembering it. You're also remembering things you've been told and you're trying to kind of fill in, fill in everything. Trying to say what happened to us on the ship. You know, that's often part of the

narrative. So, one of the kind of, um, common stories or kind of collective memories that people have, I refer to those and a lot of people in oral history refer that to as collective memory, are things that happen, um, or were talked about so much that it became kind of that it happened to everybody. Right?

And one of those is, uh, there's several of'em with African American World War II veterans. One of them is there's a story about tails, you know, like, monkey tails. And it's a story that revolves around women. Like, they go, they go to Europe or they go to Hawaii or whatever, and they go to a club or a U.S.O. for black troops and there's a, you know, there are white women there or whatever, and that women will ask them, you know, or be looking at them, wondering if they have tails because white soldiers have told them that blacks have tails like monkeys.

0:14:19 RF: Oh my gosh! Wow.

0:14:23 JB: And that's a, that's a, you know, is always related as a personal, um, experience, but I, you know, I kind of doubt that everyone experienced that. But it was so, you know, it was like, talked about so much and occurred probably enough that it became "this was our experience". This is what, this is how we were treated, this is what it was like back then.

0:14:55 RF: Wow.

0:14:55 JB: And, and there are other ones. There's one about, um, there's the story about black police, military police guarding German prisoners. And, the German prisoners can sit at the white lunch counter but the Black MP's guarding them couldn't.

0:15:22 RF: Right.

0:15:24 JB: And, I've heard that, "I saw that in the training station in D.C." and "I was discharged and I saw it when I was down South" at a whatever. And it's related kind of over and over, um, as something that happened to everyone.

0:15:44 RF: Yeah.

0:15:45 JB: So, you know, it's really interesting that, and you can't say, you might be able to say that didn't happen to that person, um, but it happened. And it was part of, sort of a collective experience.

- 0:16:03 RF: Mmm hmm.
- 0:16:03 JB: Um, and the individual experience is unique but there are also things that people collectively sort of experience that becomes part of their memory and, and then becomes part of how they relay that experience to whoever's asking.
- 0:16:28 RF: How did you get in, how did you become interested in oral history in the first place?
- 0:16:32 JB: Uhhhhhh. Uh, I think, wait, when was that? I don't know. I mean, I think in, I've always been really interested in history. I've always been interested in storytelling and I, I'm really fascinated by the whole - and so, I think, you know, journalism and my training in journalism was always somehow unsatisfying because it was this, to me, I was trained to go and sort of get a certain kind of information quickly and sort of distill it and use conventional forms to do that and that was always sort of, always unsatisfying. And, so I always worked on kind of longer projects that involved more in-depth interviewing and that's just turned into sort of longer and longer interviews and more interest in oral history as a research practice, as a journalistic practice and, you know, I, it's interesting because, you know, the few kind of research articles about oral history and journalism kind of say, "Well, journalism is just a shorter form of oral history" and it really isn't. It has a different aim, I think, a different context and a different use for it. And, so, that makes it, it kind of trivializes it when you say journalism is just, you know, they have a lot in common and, you know, it's just kind of a longer form. So, because there's tensions between them.
- 0:18:36 RF: Right.
- 0:18:37 JB: So, you know, that's always been really interesting to me as a practitioner researcher is, you know, all of my research is, is kind of, practice-oriented research, like, more sociological, cultural studies, how we go about representing other people, other cultures and also as individual practitioners. You know, that's kind of where I drifted to and that came out of, for me, I, you know I dropped out of college in the 70s and went to a boat building school in Seattle and ended up working for eight years in shipyards and boatyards. And I just became very interested in the lives of these people who were, you know, their world was kind of disappearing with the industrialization, you know, as, as, you know, the industrial economy of the U.S. was moving overseas, you know, companies were moving over there to, you know, for cheap labor and

stuff. And, so, these guys I was working with - men and women, actually - in the boatyards and shipyards were, um, work was becoming less and less and the skills they had were becoming less and less in demand and, um, and I was interested in their lives and how that sort of larger, how do you tie this kind of larger, you know, these larger forces and larger economic and political kind of powers and movements and things effect people on a, you know, kind of cultural and social and personal level. You know, kind of, how they experience that and how that can change. And, um, and how they sort of negotiate that order. Resist it or get drunk or ...

0:21:08

RF: Yeah.

0:21:09

JB: And, I ended up doing some, when I was working in the shipyards, with a folklorist, um, and we did a study of graffiti in shipyard bathrooms.

0:21:27

RF: Oh!

0:21:28

JB: And, because a lot of what's expressed in there is like, so and so, you know, they'll have these, like, vulgar images of a boss screwing somebody.

0:21:46

RF: Ugh.

0:21:47

JB: You know, or somebody giving a, doing fellatio on the boss or stuff like that. And, and so, it's the area where all these sort of frustrations and anxieties and you know, anger and whatever come out and are expressed. It's really [laughs] I'd go sit in the bathrooms and record this stuff on a notebook.

0:22:20

RF: Oh no. [Laughs]

0:22:21

JB: On my sketchpad. Well, when I had to.

0:22:27

RF: Wow. How did you even -

0:22:30

JB: There are, so, you know, I, I, and I became interested in the use of the imagery, um, in a way that sociologists use it to investigate rather than represent.

0:22:48

RF: How did you get involved with the, how did you get involved with the folklorist to begin with, though?

0:22:55 JB: Um, I, I was taking a class and, um, the professor - I had told them stories about, you know, the shipyard. We talked about it. He was a labor historian and um, his name's David Roediger, he's written some books about whiteness and, uh, kind of one of the first people to do that - work about white privilege and this sort of ... (undecipherable) Anyway, so he, he said, you know, um, that this folklorist, you know, that he had talked, had a conversation with him and was interested in, um, in doing a work and if I would, you know, work with him. So, you know, it was really a fascinating project.

0:24:02 RF: Yeah. Okay.

0:24:05 JB: And, I don't really put that in my vitae. [Laughs]

0:24:11 RF: Because then you'd have to explain the rest of it. [Laughs]

0:24:12 JB: Shipyard toilet, stalked toilets ...

0:24:19 RF: It - wow. That's really, wow. [Laughs]

0:24:23 JB: Well, and it's also, when it's freezing in the winter and there's heating in there, you kind of take a long break to go to the bathroom and get warmed up.

0:24:30 RF: Yeah, yeah. A bit of respite from whatever's out there that you have to face. Yeah.

0:24:38 JB: Mmm hmm.

0:24:39 RF: Gotcha. So, then, let me see. I'm trying to figure out if I want to probe a little bit deeper there. You know what, how much time do you have? You mentioned having to go pick up a car.

0:24:54 JB: Yeah, I have to go pick up a car. What time is it?

0:24:57 RF: It's 9:26 here, so 10:26 there?

0:25:02 JB: Yeah, where are you?

0:25:03 RF: In Memphis, Tennessee.

0:25:07 JB: That must, is that central time?

0:25:09 RF: Uh huh.

0:25:10 JB: Yeah, so, it's 10 this time. I probably have like a half an hour at the most.

0:25:16 RF: Okay. Then I need to move on then. Okay. Um, how do you define oral history?

0:25:23 JB: Mmmmmmm. Well, there's a lot of ways. I mean, I forget who said this but, you know, it was, uh, a famous oral historian. Was it Paul Thompson? Um, that, you know, history is sort of defined by its, you know, social purpose. I look at oral histories as one of the, sort of, alternatives or one of the, you know, at times, it's the only source of, of historical data that is not, sort of, the official version of history.

0:26:23 RF: Mmm hmm.

0:26:24 JB: And what I mean by that is, you know, for example when you go to look at, uh, an archive, like you go to the National Archives and if you're doing, like, I've done a lot of work with, um, looking at African American military units and World War II. Um, for a lot of different reasons, but, for example, I told you about that, uh, veteran who was on Iwo Jima and he was in a CB unit which was, I think it's "construction battalion" in the Navy and they built like docks and airfields and all of that in the Pacific mostly but also in Europe like at Normandy they built these floating piers and things like that. However, when, in World War II black troops were put into special battalions, they were called, um, you know, like "22nd special", you know. And they had all white officers, like the headquarters company was white and then all the other companies were black except for the officers and non-commission officers were white. And, um, when you read the, the, uh, um, unit records, you see there's a political and social purpose for the report, right?

0:28:22 RF: Mm hmm.

0:28:22 JB: If you write a report to your superior about an incident, you're going to report it from your perspective with your agenda, relate things in the way that you relate them. So, most of official documents tend to be written from the perspective of that officer and generally those reports, they don't go down, they go up the chain, right?

0:28:56 RF: Mm hmm.

- 0:28:56 JB: So, I write, I'm a lieutenant, I write a report about a fight or I write a report about an incident of, you know, of a conflict, and that goes up to my commander and he writes a report about his company or his battalion and that goes up his, you know, and so it's done in a way that maybe is colored by personal stuff but it also has an agenda and a purpose. And, often those will omit all kinds of things. Like, I could never find any mention of a riot - and, actually, all the records from this one basic training aerial were available and no one knew where they were, um, I had difficulty getting records about, um, court martials for rape of, you know, with Black soldiers and White women and stuff like that. So, there, there, there's a tendency to, uh, more than a tendency, but you have to look at what the sources of information are. And, to get a source of information from a different perspective, you have to look to non-traditional places to find that and oral history is one of them. And, it has it's own, it has it's own set of research problems as well because people tell you things for different reasons, right?
- 0:30:43 RF: Mm hmm. Yeah.
- 0:30:44 JB: And, depending on who you are and who they are and what your social status is and what the situation is and how much time has elapsed since what happened, those are all going to be factors that color, influence, um, you know, my biases, their biases, and all of that. So, um, it's a really interesting thing but it's also one of the only kind of alternative sources of, of, data, let's say, qualitative data for reconstructing history. And, and from a different viewpoint. You know, and also oral history emerged from, like, um, the sort of post-war, you know a lot of reasons but one of them was this kind of political move to get voices from the bottom up. You know, like, after the Civil Rights era and Vietnam there was all this, kind of movement in social sciences against colonialism and against that kind of, you know, imperialist use of anthropology and sociology. So, you know, it, what do I term it? I mean, it's really kind of a complicated thing but I guess it's an attempt to get history from, you know, common people, to get some source of history from people who haven't had a voice in official history. Um, and to kind of mine that perspective. You know, it's not looking for, in general, you know, it's not very useful for, "well, when did that happen?" you know, 60 years ago. Right? Like, some of these are amazing, it's like, "Well, the next day on the 24th of April we, you know, got on a train and four hours later we -" you know, that kind of thing. It's actually more, it's to get a subjective view of how that was experienced in a way that if you collect enough of those, you start hearing, like I said, you know, thematic experiences -

0:33:21 RF: Mm hmm.

0:33:21 JB: and, which help to form kind of a, you know, um, a collective, a collective experience that's different for different people but there's some threads through it. It's kind of mining those and teasing those out and also, looking at that in terms of the official record. Kind of -how does this version differ or is similar to the official word and what does that say about, you know, the positioning of the authorities in contrast to the now, people who were below them. You know, that kind of thing. And so, that's what it's useful for and it's also useful for kind of empowering people to tell those stories. And it's not like I give them an out it's just having a channel for people to express things. And I know it – have you done oral history?

0:34:44 RF: Yeah, I'm in the middle of a project, actually.

0:34:47 JB: Okay. And, but, you know it can be quite emotional. Like, uh, a lot of these veterans, it's like the first time they've talked about it. I mean in 60 years and you're just like, "Holy crap," you know? This person believes they were, like, one fellow was going to go kill all the White officers one night. I mean, he, um, uh, volunteered for guard duty and they ended up not needing him and so, he didn't have an opportunity and then, you know, he changed his mind.

0:35:30 RF: Yeah.

0:35:31 JB: And, his whole life he was having nightmares and all this and his wife was like, know when I was doing interview was talking from the next room, "Yeah, he would wake up screaming." And, he had me turn off the recorder when he told me that.

0:35:49 RF: Mm hmm.

0:35:50 JB: And, you know, during the first time. And then, you know, I probably did, probably, like, I don't know, 100 hours of interviews and sitting down and talking with him. He ended up being in the documentary and I said, he said, "But I don't want to talk about that incident."

0:36:09 RF: Yeah.

0:36:10 JB: On the documentary. And I said, "You know, that's fine. That's your choice but, you know, can I ask you why?" He said, "Well, I don't want people to think I'm a murderer."

0:36:21 RF: Hmm. Wow.

0:36:23 JB: And, and, I said, “You know, you’re not. You didn’t do it. But, you know, you felt like doing it and that’s important to know – for people to know that you were treated so poorly that you were at that point.” Because he was like, “At that point we were going to Okinawa and we were probably going to invade Japan and I thought, ‘I’m never coming home so I’m gonna take these guys with me because they were the worst, most evil people in the world and the world would be better off without them.’”

0:37:06 RF: Yeah.

0:37:08 JB: And, I said, “You know, you didn’t do it and now,” you know, he said, “God was with me and somehow helped me so that I didn’t do that and I’m grateful for that.” And I said, “Look, you know, most people would probably feel like you did. ‘I’m gonna kill these assholes,’ you know? For the way they’ve treated me, I mean, putting my life and everybody else’s life in danger who are fighting for their freedom and, you know, and so I think it’s important to the story to let people know how bad it was for you. And, he said, “You know, you’re right.” And, you know, we were sitting there in tears, talking about it. You know, crying, and I said, “Look, you’re not a murderer.” And, I think for him – at least what I’ve heard from his family and his wife – she feels like, he feels somehow liberated because the, the government in the, I think it was during, uh, Clinton’s administration, had sent him a, they sort of, like, retroactively gave his unit some kind of Presidential Award for the stuff they did on Iwo Jima and when it came in the mail he tore it up and threw the medal away.

0:38:43 RF: Wow.

0:38:46 JB: And, he would never talk to anybody about his military service and now he goes around wearing a World War II veteran hat and, you know, people come up to him and I’ve had him, you know, speak at screenings of the film and, and when we go, we get invited to go to another university to give a presentation, I’ve invited him and, um, that has meant something to him. That wasn’t something for him to be ashamed of any more.

0:39:23 RF: Yeah.

0:39:25 JB: And, people come up and apologize – especially younger veterans, you know, who come – and they’ll just come up and hug him and say, you know, “I’m really, really sorry that happened to you.”

0:39:36 RF: Yeah.

0:39:38 JB: And, so that whole process is like, almost like therapy. Um, and it's one of the, kind of, for me was an unintended consequence –

0:39:52 RF: Mm hm.

0:39:54 JB: And, but also one that, you know, reveals to me the power of people expressing their story and the power of being able to, because he said, it took me and my students – my graduate students – like, two years to get him to speak to us.

0:40:18 RF: Wow.

0:40:20 JB: And, he kept saying, “Okay,” and then he would not be there, not show up, call and cancel and this happened, you know, numerous times for different, um, some just ended up refusing to do it or after the interviews said, “I don't want to, I don't want anyone to know about this.”

0:40:45 RF: Wow.

0:40:47 JB: So, the, the, you know, so, that's another part of oral history that's really, you know, it's very powerful. Um, not only on, sort of, getting the information and publishing it but also for the people involved – including myself. I mean, I feel so honored that people will entrust me with, you know, some really, pretty horrible experiences and humiliating kinds of experiences.

0:41:24 RF: Yeah.

0:41:25 JB: So.

0:41:26 RF: I've experienced a bit of the same. Yeah. So, can I ask, how are you using oral history in your teaching curriculum?

0:41:36 JB: Um, I actually, uh, make students do it. And, um, and then I make them transcribe every word. I do this with service learning. You know, I've been doing for about the last 10 years. I started out with just, you know, I was asked, just because I did, uh, I was probably the only one on the faculty at the time who was doing, um, kind of, more ethnographic, qualitative, uh, research, to be the director of the Veteran's History Project for the Library of Congress for West Virginia. And, uh, Senator Byrd, you

know, found out that there weren't very many oral histories at the Library of Congress from West Virginia for this project that was started in 2000. And, um, and so I was asked by the dean, you know, and I'm a new assistant professor and, to take this project and, um, so I'd been doing it with, you know, with classes. So, the way I sort of survived academia is to combine my teaching – because I do service learning – with community projects and community engagement projects. Um, that uses oral history. So, you know, some of the first classes were like Oral History and Journalism and we did oral histories of veterans – not just African American veterans but all veterans – and, uh, and then read, sort of critical readings about, um, oral history and about journalism and looked at examples of how oral history was used in journalistic kinds of pieces.

0:43:44

RF: Mm hm.

0:43:45

JB: There's oral histories that's used for historians and other, you know, folklorists and other, um, other purposes to generate social science theory or, you know, things like that. Um, or to answer other questions. And then there's oral history used for, for kind of popular, um, popular history and things like that. So, for example, we read Studs Terkel's "Good War" and then you can get his raw interviews, um, online and listen to them. And it's really fascinating to see how they were edited and the language cleaned up. You know, it's really, we have fun listening to that.

0:44:41

RF: Huh!

0:44:42

JB: A lot of the discussion was around representation and, you know, is it, you know – nobody wants to sit and listen to 20 hours of raw "ums" and "ahs" and well, let's go back to this, you know, diversions to my wife's cake or my husband's "whatever". You know, you just don't want to sit there and listen to it and the journalistic thing is to, sort of, distill it down to something that people would be interested in but as a social science approach is to discover themes that are informed by previous social science theory or cultural studies. So, a lot of that was, like, trying to get, you know, behind it, you know, behind the curtain of what that is and looking at how you can use it in journalism, what are the problems with that –

0:45:50

RF: Mm hm.

0:45:51

JB: Um, and, what are the, sort of, benefits of that. You know, and, how it can be used and what are the pitfalls and ethical, you know, conundrums it involves. So, that's how I've used it. Um, we're currently using it with the

project that's a, um, database narrative driven web and tablet and local, um, and also a touch-table for a World War I memorial building down in the coalfields, in the southern part of West Virginia that, um, uses oral history interviews that are, that are, that are linked to, um, places and, uh, documents and things like that.

0:46:57 RF: Cool.

0:46:57 JB: So that you can explore it, in this kind of interactive database there.

0:47:02 RF: Now, when did you begin using it? Like, when did you begin teaching oral history and teaching students do it?

0:47:09 JB: 2003 and 2004 was when we started doing them. And, you know, I've done a lot of that and we've actually – I've done workshops at other universities, things like that. Uh, mostly, it started pretty soon, you know, and it's a really good vehicle for teaching interview techniques in general, you know, listening, [laughs]. I remember this one student in particular who, uh, was, uh, we were, I had a Vietnam veteran in class and we were, you know, he said, "I'll come and be an interview subject." So, the student sat down with him and the first thing she said was, you know, and there's a list of questions from the Library of Congress and I'm always telling them, you know, bring along some questions or topics but don't follow those. You want to listen to threads and encourage storytelling and things like that. And, she says, "Well, were you drafted or did you enlist?" That was the first question, you know, the Library of Congress list of questions for oral history – veterans oral history. They make these materials available for citizens, non-professionals.

0:48:51 RF: Right.

0:48:52 JB: And, uh, he said, he went into this whole thing, "Oh God, I didn't – I wasn't a draftee. I enlisted in the Marines," you know. And, blah blah blah blah blah. I mean, you have this, right away, this sort of, you know, uh, attitude about that.

0:49:13 RF: Yeah.

0:49:15 JB: And she went to the next question. "What was it like when you went to boot camp?" And I went, "Okay. Wait!"

0:49:22 RF: [Laughs]

0:49:23 JB: "What did he just say."

0:49:24 RF: Yeah.

0:49:25 JB: And she goes, "Well, he said he was, he enlisted and wasn't drafted." I said, "No, what did he say? What did he just say to you? 'I wasn't one of those draftees'." And I said, "Ask him about that. What do you mean a 'draftee'?" You know, because I always tell them to ask, ask them to define it. And he goes, "Oh, they were these who didn't want to be there. I was there to fight for my country and they were just there because they had to be."

0:49:57 RF: Mm hm.

0:49:58 JB: And then he would relate these, you know, these experiences in boot camp between draftees and enlistees, between the draftees and the drill instructors and the sort of, social boundaries and divisions that developed. And, um, and so, you know, that really helps them think about, you know, interviewing and following these threads and things like that. So, you know, I tend to use it, um, you know, in these kind of practical project-oriented, um, courses that I tend to teach. I either tend to teach ethics of law and theoretical stuff or project stuff.

0:50:50 RF: Yeah.

0:50:51 JB: Then, they're actually involved in a project.

0:50:56 RF: So, what are some of the other classes that you've – you mentioned the Journalism and Oral History class or Oral History in Journalism class. Um, what are some of the other classes that you use it in.

0:51:07 JB: Uh, Multimedia Reporting. I've used it in, um, a class that I developed called Visual Storytelling. And, what I do is say, okay we're going to do an oral history and then how would you create a visual narrative around that using current and archival visual material. So, it might be something that, um, includes, you know, just purely archival pictures and, you know, somebody talking about it or, you know, a combination of contemporary pictures or stuff that the informant has done themselves visually. So, it really depends on the situation but I've used it in that context as well to talk about, you know, using, uh, kind of visual storytelling technique with oral history.

- 0:52:26 RF: How are you going about teaching your students, like, the nuance of how to use technology with oral history and journalism?
- 0:52:35 JB: Yeah, I think, um, that, that's the, um, I think that's the part that is always, uh, difficult, problematic because not everybody's going to be sort of a professional FinalCut person and all of that. So, what I've tried to do is, uh, with the technology is to make it as simple as possible. I mean, instead of trying to learn how to use a, you know, \$6,000 high-def video camera and FinalCut and all of that, you know, we, we, um, focus more on the, uh, how to create some kind of interactive narrative that will contextualize the oral history interview. You know, how do you contextualize someone's personal experience? What do you need to link it to? You know, you need to link it to a document, you need to link it to a graph or a, someone else's interview or visual material. You know what I mean?
- So, with that, the technology is less the "how to use that and make a product" um, to, it's shifted more to, um, how do you, how is the storytelling process created with, um, using kind of more database driven narratives. You know, and how to put that story together because the technical part's going to be changing a lot. So, for example, we've been using, um, mobile journalism kits – they're like 600 bucks – where they, it's a, I don't know if you know the LE or the, where you put an iPhone or iPod Touch into a mount that also can connect XLR audio and you can shoot video on the iPhone or the iPod and it sits in a mount, like a camera mount. You can put different lenses on it.
- 0:55:22 RF: Huh.
- 0:55:22 JB: You can mount a light. You can use a monopod and, it's just a little bag you can carry. You know, like, like a, smaller than a laptop bag.
- 0:55:37 RF: Yeah.
- 0:55:37 JB: And, and you can edit on that, on the iPod or if you have time you can download it onto your laptop and use it. And, I think because of the database narrative aspect of it, it's really shifted from, you know, putting together a narrative – like a, you know, an authored narrative – to more, a curation of content. So, you know, you edit, you edit the content to be, sort of it's own little piece, you know, but putting the whole thing together is the journey of the user, you know, the audience and it's a collaborative process. So, that's kind of how things have shifted, for us, anyway. It's shifted away to more collaborative storytelling in communities and, you

know, my students learn how to teach people to use a kit and to, how, how they can get those people to create stories that become part of a bigger database narrative.

0:57:05 RF: That's cool. Yeah.

0:57:05 JB: If that makes sense.

0:57:08 RF: So, it's much larger than just your students. That's great.

0:57:09 JB: Pardon? You were cutting out.

0:57:13 RF: Oh, I was just saying that it's much larger than just your students going out and doing it but they turn around and they teach other people to do it as well. It's a collaborative work between the students and even the people they're talking to in the field. That's really cool.

0:57:27 JB: Yeah, and I think what that does is, um, it really gets them – I don't know, have you done teaching much?

0:57:38 RF: Not much, no.

0:57:40 JB: Okay. Well, you'll find out that when you teach, you actually learn more teaching a class than you do taking a class.

0:57:50 RF: Yeah.

0:57:51 JB: But you have to really, sort of, get into what is it we're going to cover and then, and so, when someone says to me, you know, I need you to teach a class in, you know, ethics or I need you to teach a class in this or that, I end up learning a lot about it and I find that students learn a lot. Like, they've created manuals for, um, people in the community to train other people in the community.

0:58:23 RF: Wow.

0:58:24 JB: And so, by doing that manual, they really learned. It's like here's what I would've liked to have known, right? To learn how to do this. And, you know, so, I've had students for the semester, let's say, their project for the semester was doing a manual about how to use this kit to, you know, to do video oral history, you know, or how to shoot it, how to, how to edit. And, um, and that was their semester project because that was what they were interested in doing and it was a really valuable skill for them to learn. You

know, I don't, I don't look at everyone anymore as like, you know, you're going to go to work in a newsroom.

0:59:15

RF: Mm hm.

0:59:15

JB: I look at them, wow, that's a really valuable skill to be able to say, "Here's how you use this," because then they're aware of, sort of, designing the technology, how it would be used, um, all of these other things which, really it instills the, sort of, problem-solving, critical thinking skills are the ones they need to develop in today's world. So, you now, it's, it becomes, um, not really about oral history being used in journalism in a traditional way. It's like, how can that be used to fashion, you know, a new role for people who, who, uh, journalism is their calling.

1:00:17

RF: Mm hm.

1:00:18

JB: So, the core, sort of, values about democracy and, um, you know, all the core values we have about journalism, uh, about democracy about transparency about reporting on communities and, in a way, giving those communities voice, you know, reporting about what is going on there, have become a different kind of process.

1:00:52

RF: Yeah.

1:00:53

JB: And, you know, looking at it from a viewpoint of curating that process, as a profession, as a, you know, a life's work, is how I approach that.

1:01:10

RF: Yeah.

1:01:12

JB: What do you hope your students take away from it, though?

1:01:16

RF: Um, I hope they take away from it that those skills, um, you know, are transferrable. You know what I mean? They're not, I'm not teaching them how to edit a video really slickly. I mean, there are other people on the faculty who do different things, right. Like, the broadcast people still are doing their nightly news, right? But, I'm teaching about technology and community and how, um, for example you work, we've worked in communities with newspapers and some of them are really involved in mobile technology and working with people in the community to, you know, take advantage of that for economic development, for, you know, civic engagement and lots of different things. And then, there are other newspapers are like, nah, we don't want to get involved in that. And

what's happened is the community has sort of left them behind. You know, they've created their own stuff and, um, convention and visitors' bureau has become the place to go to for information.

1:02:48

RF: Wow.

1:02:48

JB: Because, because, you know, everybody's involved in the mobile initiative with them. So, you know, if people are going, if people mostly go to the newspaper for weather and community events and the newspaper's not engaged in mobile, or digital information, then they're gonna stop using the newspaper. I mean, my wife is a faculty member and, and me to a certain extent, she, you know, did this project in the community with the newspaper and the newspaper owners were young and very interested – and we're actually publishing a paper about this that's in review right now.

1:03:45

RF: Uh huh.

1:03:46

JB: But, but they were, they were really engaged in this mobile initiative where it was sort of anchored by the community newspaper as part, and they looked at it as like, you know, we're volunteer firemen in this community. These are rural communities, you know. We look at it that way. The newspaper is a business but it's also part of the community and we're engaged with that.

1:04:12

RF: Yeah.

1:04:13

JB: We, if it's not us, it's going to be someone else. They were very engaged in technology and halfway through the project, they were like, "We're sorry, we got a really great offer on the paper and, you know, we'd be happy to, sort of, continue working on the project but, you know, we're selling the newspaper. It was like "Aaahhhhhhhh". And – [speaking to person on his side of the conversation] yeah, I will. Just a minute. I have to go.

So, the lesson was, it's gonna happen. It's sort of, either join it or be left behind and, and there's a lot of theory – management theory about the disruption of technology and how that changes organizations. There's a lot of really interesting stuff you can pull from other areas. So, when you look at what students can take away from that experience, it has to be seen as, um, you know, they're in – we're in a situation where technology is, um, you know, exponentially changing and, so that, what you have to do is look at the nature of technological change and see what skills you need to

have to, uh, to be an adopter of that – an early adopter of technology and then facilitate that. Because that's really what, and, specifically in terms of storytelling and doing research. I mean, I looked at, my students, that they need to learn how to do research and how to vet documents and how to look at, you know, when I was talking earlier about how do you look at official documents versus personal testimony.

- 1:06:25 RF: Mm hm.
- 1:06:25 JB: You know, and, the performance of memory and all of those things and think about that in terms of story and then, how do you contextualize that? You know. So, um, anyway, I gotta go. I hope I, I hope I answered your questions or helped your research or –
- 1:06:49 RF: You did. Yeah, you added some new things to the conversation, so that's great. Thank you.
- 1:06:54 JB: Okay. Um, you know, if you want to call me again, uh, you know, we can talk again. I gotta go get this rental car because we're going to take out kids on vacation.
- 1:07:03 RF: Aw, yeah. Yeah. Okay, great. Well, I, yeah, I'll let you know.
- 1:07:11 JB: Yeah, just email me, or whatever. I know it's hard to, you know, hard to connect but I'm open to it if I can.
- 1:07:21 RF: Thank you for that. It's great.
- 1:07:24 JB: Yeah, and keep in touch and I'd really like to see what your, you know, your research kind of comes up with.
- 1:07:34 RF: I will do that. Thank you. All right, enjoy your vacation.
- 1:07:38 JB: All right. It was nice talking with you.
- 1:07:41 RF: Good talking to you too. Have a good day.
- 1:07:42 JB: Okay, you too. Bye bye.
- 1:07:44 RF: Bye.

Interview Transcript – Dr. David Dunaway

[Dr. David Dunaway](#) is a professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. His area of expertise is “the presentation of folklore, literature, and history via broadcasting.” He’s been involved in radio since 1972 and is currently a DJ for KUNM-FM, an NPR affiliate on the University of New Mexico campus. He is the author of nine volumes of history and biography, as well as the producer of several radio series on topics ranging from the life and music of Pete Seeger to historical accounts that trace the roots of Route 66.

Dr. Dunaway earned PhD in American Studies from the University of California Berkeley.

DD: David Dunaway

RF: Roxanne Foster

(Prior to starting the recording device, I asked Dr. Dunaway questions to determine if and how he used oral history in his journalism courses. The questions were generic in nature and used solely to ensure that I didn’t waste his valuable time if he could not speak to the topic at hand.)

0:00:00 DD: They rely upon broadcast quality interviews - some of them are historical in nature and some of which are more sociological. It depends on the topic. So I think the answer's probably 'yes' but, uh, there's some subtleties and nuances in what we mean by, um, uh, oral history.

0:00:28 RF: Great

0:00:28 DD: Now, I assume – let me just double-check a couple things with you, that you found, long ago, my article on radio and oral history from my oral history anthology, first edition. I think it was in the second edition too. Let's see, uh, I've done a number of essays - scholarly essays - on broadcasting in the humanities, which includes history. So, uh, let's see, I did broadcasting biography for "Biography" – the journal, "Biography". That might be of use to you because it takes up some more subtle issues. So, “Broadcasting Biography” is the name of it by me, a while ago. Another interesting article might be, um, I did an article called "Field Recording Oral History". And, this is not, this is from the Oral History Review and it's called "Field Recording Oral History". The reason I want to bring that to your attention is because it talks a lot about issues involved - and I use it

for teaching - in, um, uh, in the performance aspect of oral history interviews, which is totally relevant to journalists.

0:02:03 RF: Yeah.

0:02:05 DD: So, I talk about audience analysis, performance context, uh, what we do when we make a field recording, um, and issues involved in the sociolinguistic interactions - that's a mouthful - sociolinguistic interaction between an oral history interviewer and a subject. A lot of that is relevant to journalism and broadcasting.

0:02:38 RF: I'll definitely check that out.

0:02:40 DD: So, those are a couple pieces of bibliography. I give talks called "Broadcasting History", um, but I'm not sure I have it written down anywhere. And that's basically the overview.

0:02:55 RF: Okay. Well, I think that in the letter I sent you and the email I sent you, I talk about specifically what I'm looking for with the professors that I've contacted and it's for them to share insight and experience on how they've used oral history with their journalism students. And, so, is that something that you feel like you can speak to?

0:03:22 DD: Yeah, I think I can. Um, uh, you know, when you say journalism I think of a variety of topics within that such as broadcasting, such as documentary production. Is documentary production considered journalism by you?

0:03:41 RF: Yes.

0:03:42 DD: Well, then, definitely I do.

0:03:44 RF: [laughs] Great. Sounds good. As a matter of fact, um, at the University of Missouri last semester I took a class that was called the "Intersection of Journalism and Documentary Film", so, yeah.

0:04:00 DD: Okay. Good. I, myself, favor radio for the presentation of oral history. I seem to be a minority.

0:04:08 RF: You know, it's kind of what I'm working with right now with my project - the actual work portion. I'm doing, um, oral history interviews with people who were a part of the desegregation of public schools here in the 1950s and 60s. And, most of the people I've talked

to in town, um, who are journalists, about the project, it's mostly the people in radio that are really excited about whatever it is that I produce. So, it doesn't surprise me that radio is a great outlet for it.

- 0:04:40 DD: Well, in my piece, "Radio and Oral History" I talk about the fact that, um, in some sense radio is tailor-made for oral history because it doesn't require the process of translating images into words. It allows words to be presented in words and it allows the more intimate performance context of the narrator to be heard and appreciated in a way that does not require illustration.
- 0:05:25 RF: Yeah, I remember reading that it was, um, actually, I have the second edition but I think I read the first edition when I wrote my lit review, so, I went over it the last couple days -
- 0:05:35 DD: That article hasn't changed.
- 0:05:37 RF: Okay, good. Good. Um, let's see. Okay, well then, I'm going to just jump into the research questions that I have. Um, let's see. Can you tell me again the name of the courses that you taught that would've included oral history?
- 0:5:56 DD: Well, um, once again I teach, I used to teach just oral history. Now I only teach oral history applied. I teach oral history, okay, so, let's see. San Francisco State 790 - Documentary Laboratory. San Francisco State 750 - Producing and Distributing Electronic Media Projects. At the University of New Mexico, that would be English 520 - these are graduate courses - English 520 is a variable topic but I teach it as Writing to Documentary.
- 0:06:55 RF: And, on average, how - what would you say your average class size is for those classes?
- 0:07:02 DD: Graduate seminars, uh, 8 to 12.
- 0:07:10 RF: Does that include the ones at San Francisco State?
- 0:07:12 DD: Yes.
- 0:07:13 RF: Okay. They're all graduate. Okay, so, my first question then, is (Q1) how did you become interested in oral history?

- 0:07:35 DD: I was a radio producer before I ever heard of oral history. I walked into the graduate seminar in oral history at Berkeley in the history department offered by Willa Baum - B-A-U-M - a major figure in oral history in the United States. I felt like a character out of "Tartuffe" - Moliere, that is - who walks on to the stage and says, "You know, I've been speaking prose all my life." Uh, that's the way I felt when I discovered there was a subject, or field, variously defined of oral history because I had been already producing radio for quite a number of years and before that I'd been a journalist, uh, in college and so it's a mixture of journalism and radio and the existence of graduate seminar in oral history that did it to me.
- 0:08:39 RF: What prompted you to take that class?
- 0:08:42 DD: I heard there was this interesting thing called oral history where they record people and I said, "Boy, that sure sounds like what I do."
- 0:08:52 RF: That's amazing. So you'd never heard of it before that at all.
- 0:08:55 DD: No.
- 0:08:57 RF: Wow.
- 0:08:59 DD: Mind you, this is 40 years ago. Uh, so, uh, a lot of people hadn't heard of oral history.
- 0:09:08 RF: Well, I'm just thinking, would that've been around the time of, like, Studs Terkel and his shows and things like that?
- 0:09:14 DD: Studs Terkel began his radio shows in 1953, I believe. When I was crawling around on the floor. Um, Studs Terkel began publishing his highly edited and controversial in the world of oral history works in the mid-1960s and published them straight through 'til about 1990, so, the period where I was encountering oral history would have been 71, 72. And yes, there was a great deal of popularity but whether Studs Terkel is an oral historian is a topic that requires some serious research before you presume that he was.
- 0:10:06 RF: Oh, I've seen - that's actually written in my lit review.
- 0:10:11 DD: Michael Frisch has written an article in the last two years in which he weighs if our - F-R-I-S-C-H - the way in which Terkel was or wasn't

an oral historian. It's the current, sort of, standard article on that topic.

- 0:10:29 RF: What was his name again?
- 0:10:30 DD: Michael Frisch. F-R-I-S-C-H, who ran American Studies of Baltimore. And is the author of a number of key works in oral history.
- 0:10:44 RF: Great. I'll definitely check that out. I know that, yeah, as I did my lit review, I think in "Doing Oral History" by Ritchie, that was one of the spots where I say that there was tension about him and then a couple other articles that I read, um, that seemed to go both ways and a lot of it had to do with his editing process and transparency and a couple other things.
- 0:11:10 DD: That's all correct, Roxanne. The single largest turning point is this - oral history is not considered, by oral historians, to be oral history until it is accessible to the public in unedited, raw form - either tape or transcript or both. And he never deposited his stuff anywhere. So, nobody knew if he made it up, if he, you know, took some very inarticulate individual and made them very articulate. Nobody knows. You're right - editing and transparency and finally the deposit of the actual documents. But Frisch covers this in the new article.
- 0:11:56 RF: That's great. I'll definitely look at that. Well, actually, you've kind of answered my second question: (Q2) how do you define oral history.
- 0:12:03 DD: Oral history is the tape-recorded reminiscence - a video or tape-recorded reminiscence - of eyewitnesses to historically significant events or trends.
- 0:12:19 RF: Where would you say that definition comes from?
- 0:12:23 DD: Uh, Dunaway and Baum, "Oral History: An interdisciplinary anthology". In the introduction, we realized we would need to define oral history and that's how we defined it.
- 0:12:42 RF: Great. Okay, then, based on that definition of oral history, (Q3) how are you using it as part of your teaching curriculum?
- 0:12:52 DD: Well, um, I, my students in broadcasting routinely conduct interviews with eyewitnesses to historically significant events, whether it's gun violence in Oakland for East Republic Radio in the

Bay Area or, um, something more research-oriented where the interviews form more of an ethnography, uh, for a thesis or dissertation. Um, the issue with, once again, we come to the issue of the functional definition of oral history. You have the academic description, denotative description; the connotative definition - as in "connotation" - is a little different. It separates interviews done by a researcher and kept by that researcher from material which is available to researchers - other researchers - by depositing that material in a repository. So, I can tell my students 'til I'm blue in the face, "It ain't oral history until it's in the archives" but they sometimes do remember to present that and sometimes they don't.

That's the way it is with students. Uh, and the other issue is the context, uh, which has its origin in the critical piece of folkloristic scholarship called "texture, text and context" which term was formulated by Allen Dundes - D-U-N-D-E-S - who directed my graduate study. And "Texture, Text and Context", I believe is published in '63 or '64, and it set out the parameters for what we mean by a text studying oral literature which, into which category oral history would fall. Context and texture - context is obviously from the Latin "con" - (with) - in what comes with the text. Texture refers to the elements within the text, which are stylistic and performance-based. And this whole analysis applies to oral history as well, which is spoken, and the minute it's spoken it becomes oral literature, oral performance.

So, I don't know if I've answered your question very succinctly but I can tell you that doing an interview is not doing oral history. Doing an interview, depositing that interview and presenting a historical context as you use that interview - that makes it oral history. So, yes, I use oral history and oral history techniques in teaching the documentary but it, you know, you lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink.

0:16:24 RF: [laughs] Yes. When you say, um, "oral history techniques" what do you mean?

0:16:33 DD: Um, I'm referring both to the research techniques, which underlie every single oral history interview, and the recording technique, which allows the ability to collect a clear, uh, usable, piece of sound, which can be used in many, many different applications of audio. Uh, so, research technique, recording technique, interview technique. Again, I refer you to the "Field Reporting" essay that I wrote, which talks about that and some of these other issues. It's learning how to

interview. Uh, and these are fundamental techniques which are sometimes covered in oral history seminars, which are most often not part of a regular university curriculum but it's that standalone seminar like the ones Columbia University offers and Baylor offers.

I give weekend-long workshops - I guess I should mention this - to citizen historians; lay-people in the community who are interested in collecting their own history and not having someone come in from the outside. The expert who doesn't really know the lay of the land, the streets of the town, and thus is an outsider and suffers from an etic perspective - E-T-I-C - the outsider perspective, as opposed to the emic - E-M-I-C - which is the fundamental perspective of people who grow up in a community. And some of that is used for journalism but it's a very different audience. These are people, these are barbers, these are waitresses, these are people who worked at a gas station, these are people who don't bring a pencil when they come to hear me. Uh, and, that's fine. But these weeklong, intensive weekend-long workshops start with designing, go through recording, go through interviewing and end with use and some bibliography. As I say, they're not a college audience and they're not a college situation. They're citizen historians and they're trainings that come to communities upon request because it's a different way of teaching oral history and journalism than in my courses.

0:19:11 RF: So then, translating what you teach in the workshop - even the research technique, the recording technique and the interview technique - um, how are you doing that with your students?

0:19:25 DD: Well, first I have them create a 90-second story in sound with no words. So, they learn how to listen and operate a microphone. Then I ask them to do a three-minute excerpt of an interview, edited down. So, they can take an hour-long interview and slice it together - no questions, not Q&A, but only A. That's another technique I use. Uh, then I can see their editing skills and where they have to move. Of course, there are many readings that they have to do, including "Field Reporting in Oral History" and depending on what else I'm teaching, other things that I didn't write, of course. Um, you know, there's the usual fumble around with the microphone, uh, which is a fairly low-level exercise. "Oh! Is this recording? Okay, now I'm going to record you!" This stuff. Um, I call it fumble with the mic. That's useful to get people, you know, to break the ice, get'em working with each other, etc., etc. So it really depends on what level I'm teaching, from graduate seminar to citizen historian workshop.

- 0:20:54 RF: Could you - I'm going to just take it piece by piece, then - could you go into some detail about how you communicate the different, um, I guess the nuance of research technique?
- 0:21:09 DD: Again, it depends whether it's citizen, undergraduates or graduates. Three different audiences - very, very different approach. Citizen historians may possibly be sophisticated in research, um, but generally the level of research is: go to the library, find an open terminal and type in a word or two and see what happens. For that audience, I try and mention key databases, uh, I try to bring up other ways of doing research, like in print, in your local public library. For undergraduates, if it's in oral history I usually assign a collective oral history project that people do, uh, and a final project that they do on their own. For graduate students, I start right out with projects that they do on their own and I put them through these early phases - fumble with the mic, uh, uh, learning, you know, as a preliminary because the graduate students have much more research skills than either the undergraduate or citizen historians. So, that's the variety - I mean, I have my book and I show them the oral history book and a number of the other ten books that I've written and I pull an excerpt out of it and ask them to critique it. I might pull a transcript out and ask them to do a sample edit on it, but again, that's not research but it shows them how transcripts can be manipulated.
- 0:23:10 RF: And then, in regards to your undergrads and graduate students, can you talk about, um, recording technique and how you teach that.
- 0:23:21 DD: Well, it depends whether I'm teaching in this country or I'm teaching abroad. Sorry. I've been a Fulbright to Kenya, uh, I've been a Fulbright to, uh, Colombia, in South America, I've taught in - multiple years - in London, Copenhagen, uh, various other places. And, so, if I'm teaching abroad, I'm usually working at a foreign university, which has exchange students from high-prestige research universities. The problem is they never get to touch a microphone. So, I'm having to start with basic acoustics, to explain how sound works, the wave phenomenon, the inverted square law, all the essential stuff that you need to know in order, you know exclusive recording, uh, inclusive recording, sound isolation, I could just go on for hours but I won't. Um, so, when I teach my radio documentary course, I have to teach all those things. Uh, if they're foreign, and if they're in the U.S., it depends if they're broadcast majors or humanities majors. Humanities majors, as I taught at London, need much more training but they catch on pretty darn quick. Broadcast students have some background in how

equipment works - by the time they get to me, that is - uh, and so I can concentrate on more nuanced aspects.

- 0:25:03 RF: That's great. See now, I'm wishing that I'd taken classes from you, um, because I'm fascinated by that and I think that's something that I haven't been taught that yet. And, so, anyway, work on that later. By the way, I love that you said ...
- 0:25:19 DD: What you have to do is invite me to Missouri for a summer workshop because I teach in two places already. Summer, though, is free and I come in and I give one-week workshops. By the time that one-week workshop is over, you're producing documentaries left and right and you know something about sound.
- 0:25:36 RF: Would I be able to attend a workshop that you have going on somewhere else?
- 0:25:42 DD: Um, no, um, because right now the workshops are stopped. They're paid for by the national park service. Uh, they're periodic. I've been doing these for many years now and I think they feel like I've done enough.
- 0:25:58 RF: Huh.
- 0:25:59 DD: But anybody - I respond to invitations.
- 0:26:04 RF: Okay. Well, I'm leaving Missouri, that's why I'm saying that. I love, by the way, that you said "Colombia" and not "Columbia" because I catch a lot of heat for that because I've been to Colombia, um, spent some time down there working with kids and stuff and people here think that I say it funny. But, I'm like, there's two O's. It's not funny.
- 0:26:23 DD: Quiere aprender español?
- 0:26:26 RF: Yeah.
- 0:26:27 DD: Se pronuncie a "Colombia".
- 0:26:30 RF: Y no es "Columbia".
- 0:26:34 DD: Eso, no.

0:26:34 RF: Uh huh, es un país. Um, okay, and then regarding your undergraduate and graduate and international students, can you talk a bit about teaching interviewing techniques?

0:26:48 DD: Okay, well, I have my own little spiel. Uh, again, they have to read "Field Recording Oral History" before they get to hear my spiel. I conceive as, okay, I start from the theoretical premise that Sandy Ives talks about - that's I-V-E-S - uh, Edward, uh, he goes by "Sing". Well, he's dead now. But he wrote a very useful little book, uh, probably superseded today but has very good material on field recording, um, uh, what's the name of it? Why don't you - "Recording Oral History"? If you look up Ives you'll see it. And in there, he makes this statement that, um, "Oral history is a trialog." It looks like a dialog but it functions as a trialog. There is the interviewer, there is the interviewee and then there is the anticipated audience. And in many cases, the anticipated audience is abstract. It's Cleo, the Greek muse of history. Um, but more often it's an oral history archive and the readers who will come to this interview in an oral history archive. And so, if you accept that as a, that oral history is a three-way discussion, not a two-way discussion, it leads you to - it leads you to understand that there're going to be uses for your interview beyond the immediate circumstances of its recording and anticipated use.

For example, I did these interviews on Route 66 oral history for a radio documentary for NPR and PRI in 2001, 2003. Now, ten years later I'm working with the Autry Museum in Los Angeles to prepare oral history excerpts for their new touring Route 66 exhibit and I have these interviews transcribed and edited already. So, every interview has multiple interview potential. That's the heart of what I teach. Then, I give examples.

Then, I conceive of an interview as a triangle in which, at the very top, is the question that you're there to ask. The question that only one person can answer. But we start at the bottom of the pyramid creating rapport, asking unexceptionable questions and make our way up - slowly, carefully - I can't go into all the details, 'til we finally reach that question and that region of questions which you have gone to that person to answer.

0:30:15 RF: That's good. Can you give examples of how you train students in executing that process?

- 0:30:27 DD: Well, I'm not sure I can. This is more or less my theoretical overview of the sociolinguistic dimensions in interviewing. The students then take that information and conduct their own interviews and some of them become skillful interviews and some don't.
- 0:30:51 RF: How do you determine the ones that are skillful and the ones that aren't?
- 0:30: 53 DD: You listen to the transcript - I'm sorry, you listen to the tape, not read the transcript. Transcripts come in two varieties - edited and unedited. The unedited is of great use to the linguist, the, uh, perhaps to the sociolinguist, the people that study the exact format of the expression of content. It's of value to an instructor because you can hear how the individual uses the number of features for oral history interviews. The prompt, the, uh, uh, redirect, the, um, contextualize, uh, things like that. It's sort of like asking a professor of writing how he evaluates writing. There are actually quite a number of criteria which are subtle but have to do with interruptions, have to do with, um, oh, the way that the individual has built rapport before asking tough questions, the way the interview questions are structured, uh, the way unanswered questions are asked, I could go on, once again, for hours. Those are some of my criteria.
- 0:32:20 RF: Okay. That's great. Okay. Um, so the next question that I have is what do you hope that students glean from the process?
- 0:32:36 DD: Which process?
- 0:32:38 RF: The process of learning about and using oral histories as, in broadcasting and using them for research purposes – just, the process of engaging with oral history.
- 0:32:50 DD: Well, my goal is to enrich the historical mindedness of the American citizen. That is my goal. And I am for that goal in a lot of different ways. I produce, as you know, my own documentaries, which are aired on hundreds of radio stations around the country and around the world. My last series was on Pete Seeger, uh, and it aired on about 306 stations on PRI across Canada, on two separate channels across Australia, translated in Denmark. Uh, I think there was a short excerpt on German public radio. What I want to do is, is, let people understand that they have stories just as good as the stories they're hearing and reading in the paper, in the journals on radio and television. So, that is my goal to pass to my students. I want them to

think about returning a community's history to the community, not taking it away from them for academic gain. Hence, the cruciality of depositing your interviews once it's done because doing interviews with a community and then taking them away is cultural theft not cultural preservation.

- 0:34:26 RF: Mm hmm. That's good. So -
- 0:34:30 DD: I'm used to talking in small bits so I can be interviewed, so I can be edited together. [laughs]
- 0:34:36 RF: [laughs] Uh, that's good - to a point. [laughs] I'm facing a little bit of that with, um, with some of the people in the community I'm interviewing because they're so used to journalists coming and asking them for stories and so I'm constantly saying, "Would you elaborate on that?" "Could you give me examples?"
- 0:34:54 DD: I distinguish, when I teach interviewing, between the said-piece and the original recollection. A said-piece is a, um, an oral narrative which is performed almost ritualistically in response to the same question multiple, multiple times. And, again, I take this up in "Field Reporting". Uh, but, so, my experience is that you have to collect a said-piece before you can begin unpacking it and interrogating it.
- 0:35:35 RF: That's good. See, I just, yeah. I need to check that out. That's basically what's happening. So, next question, then, how is your goal and the process of engaging with oral histories, how is that received by your students?
- 0:35:55 DD: Very eager. They want to know how to do what I do and they're eager to sign up and learn how to do it. And, they're enthusiastic - without exception.
- 0:36:09 RF: That's great. And, what challenges have you faced with using oral histories as a teaching tool?
- 0:36:20 DD: Let me think about that a little bit.
- 0:36:22 RF: Okay.
- 0:36:26 DD: Well, I mentioned one challenge already, which is the inability, occasional, well, frequent inability of students to follow up and remember that they are not just doing interviews for themselves but

for a community and to return - find ways to return that history to the community. That's a big frustration for me. They all say they'll do it, then school's out and they're off in Pago Pago and, uh, they don't remember that they have a debt to a community that gave them information that got them college credit. That's one.

Number two is a general complaint I have, I'm a very serious guy and I expect students to be serious and engaged when they take a course with me. And some are just taking it for credit. Uh, they could care less. So that's a source of frustration to all people. Um, all teachers, that is.

Uh, next, um, I'd say in third place would be the unwillingness to - occasional unwillingness - to dig deep in research. People are conditioned to the idea that you can type three or four words onto a screen and get so-called "research". Some college students, believe it or not, are not even familiar with the difference between a search engine and a database. And so, as a result, they do slipshod research, which leads to slipshot interviews.

You know, that's with a high standard. You know, when I embark on an oral history - multi-year oral history project, which can lead to a book, to a documentary in radio or television, to articles, I'll spend a year doing research. I'll know as much, I'll have read just about every interview in print that that person has given before I'll go talk to them. And as a result, I can say, "Oh yeah, well, in a 1963 interview, you said 'this'" and suddenly, the texture of the interview changes entirely.

0:39:04 RF: So, then, how do you adjust that expectation to fit within the parameters of time, especially, that you have with students?

0:39:12 DD: Do the best you can.

0:39:16 RF: What does that mean?

0:39:19 DD: I need the question again.

0:39:21 RF: How do you, then, adjust the expectation?

0:39:23 DD: My expectation?

- 0:39:25 RF: Mmm hmmm. To the time, especially, like the time parameters that you have with the students. How do you then adjust that to what you're working with?
- 0:39:34 DD: Well, you're really asking a pedagogical question here. Uh, and it also has to do with the personality. A good interviewer is very patient. A good mother is very patient. A good professor is very patient. And, uh, you know there are different ways that you accommodate that. You do a kind of, uh, what is that? Uh, they call in elementary school, where you get the bright kids together who are hard working and serious and put them in one group. Sometimes I'll do it that way. Sometimes I'll spread those people out in various other groups. It depends on whether I want a single, stellar product that I can demonstrate to the value of utility, in which case you group according to ability, or whether you want it to be more pedagogical in orientation, in which case you want the smart, hard-working, dedicated people evenly distributed evenly among the various groups.
- As to my own expectations, I think, like any human being, they're going to vary according to my mood, my situation, everything else under the sun. I, my motto is "Never a dull student." And, so, it's a matter of being an exciting teacher.
- 0:41:03 RF: So then, what benefit would you say you've received - personally, as a professor - by using oral history as a teaching tool?
- 0:41:19 DD: Personal benefit. Now, that could be pecuniary - none. Uh, that could - personal benefit. Uh, that could be professional satisfaction - and yes, I've had plenty of that. Um, but I come back to the founding, my founding principle, which is that oral history, broadcast and used as journalism, can open up a broad, personal avenue into American history and culture. And with, and driving down that avenue can be a whole new generation of recordists and interviewers dedicated to the idea that a community's history belongs to them and they should be the ones who collect it, use it, and pass it on to another generation.
- 0:42:33 RF: So then, who would you say benefits most from the use of oral history?
- 0:42:37 DD: Students.
- 0:42:40 RF: Why so?

- 0:42:41 DD: Because they're learning to do the, they're learning the technique. They're learning first, to design, then, to research, then, to interview, then, to contextualize, then, to use.
- 0:43:22 RF: That's great. [laughs] Sorry, I'm just listening to you type. Um, okay, great. I think I've made it through all of my questions. Is there anything else you want to add about oral histories in the classroom and your experience with them?
- 0:43:41 DD: Well, first, I would bring your attention to a volume called "Oral History in Education" if you haven't found it already. Do you know that volume?
- 0:43:50 RF: No, I don't.
- 0:43:51 DD: Okay, it's critical, essential. Within the oral history association, which I assume you have heard of, uh, I go every year. I'm a life member. Uh, there is a section on oral history in education. Uh, and the organizers of this section, um, who are Gary and Laura, uh, god, married, uh, I tell you what, you can find, I forget their last name, so, I don't ever use their last name. So, that's really weird, that I can't remember their last names but if you type in the volume "Oral History in Education," which I believe is published by, oh, today it would be Rowman and Littlefield - R-O-W-M-A-N - and, just like it sounds, "Littlefield", uh, which took over the Alta Mira list, it was originally published by A-L-T-A-M-I-R-A Press. Alta. Mira. Press. And, then, Rowman bought their list out. R-O-W-M-A-N. I have an article in there about educating citizen historians but there are many, many articles in there about using oral history in college and graduate school classrooms.
- 0:45:25 RF: Great!
- 0:45:28 DD: That would be a big help to you because it'll - there's a previous work by George Mehaffy - M-E-H-A-F-F-Y - called "Oral History in Education" and it's a, um, I have an excerpt of it in the first edition of the anthology. So, if you have that first edition, you can find the excerpt from Mehaffy and Company. But you can also find his pamphlet, I mean, being a serious researcher, which is called "Oral History in Education" and it was reduced 1985 and published by the Oral History Association. They may still have a few copies. So, those are the two previous works on oral history in education. First one is sort of how to guide by George Mehaffy, and then, uh, the "Oral

History in Education" which came out, I think, in 2009 and is an anthology of what oral history educators have done with oral history. Essential stuff for you.

Um, other final thoughts. Journalism and broadcasting is not a right but a privilege. And we earn that privilege by serving the people who pay for our education (in the case of a public university). Or who subsidize, in case of a private university because it gets many tax breaks from all of us taxpayers out there. As a result, we, as oral historians, owe a debt to communities and one effective way to repay that debt - to return oral history to the community - is through using journalism and broadcasting. But that use, that privilege, comes with responsibilities - responsibility to treat the material recorded accurately, uh, at all times. The responsibility to produce a raw transcript and an edited one. The responsibility to return the edited transcript to the narrator and have him sign off on it and correct it. And, finally, and maybe most importantly, the responsibility to deposit that material and publicize its existence in association with an archive, which requires the responsibility of getting a release form, which releases the copyright to the interviewer so the interviewer can deposit that material. You'd be amazed how many people forget to get the releases, which would allow an archive to use their material.

Those are my last thoughts!

0:48:44 RF: Wow. Thank you!

0:48:47 DD: Sure.

0:48:47 RF: Yeah, the, um, I think those last ones are all really great, especially that part about the - publicizing its existence and then archiving it with, um, like, a historical society or something like that. And getting that release form - that was one of the very first things that my supervisor here - they provided the release form and they said, "You have to have this before you start the interview." And so -

0:49:18 DD: There are different schools of thought about that. I, the, uh, the current thinking is that you don't - okay, traditional oral history practice: your instructor is probably not an oral historian but rather somebody who has used that technique. There is a distinction between people who use oral history techniques -

0:49:36 RF: Well, he's the state oral historian.

0:49:41 DD: It doesn't matter. He may not be trained in oral history. What's his name?

0:49:43 RF: Jeff Corrigan.

0:49:46 DD: Say the last name again.

0:49: 48 RF: Corrigan.

0:49:50 DD: I don't recognize him at the Oral History Association. You should ask him if he goes to the OHA.

0:49:54 RF: He does.

0:49: 56 DD: Uh, funny. Okay. Anyway, sure, there's no license. You need a license to be a plumber. You need a license to be a doctor. You don't need a license to be an oral historian. People call themselves oral historians who have maybe taken one course, which touched on oral history, okay. You, caveat emptor, here, "Let the buyer beware." Uh, someone can be employed as a state oral historian and not know anything about oral history except this button I push here and it turns on the recorder and this button stops it.

There's a depth, there is a field, there is a literature in oral history, you know. The questions I have is does this person know these things? Do they know the Grele books versus the Dunaway books? The this-versus-that? Ideally, if one was studying oral history, one would really embrace and master the literature in oral history, which goes back to the first oral history reviews in 1966, if I'm not mistaken, and goes up to the present. It's a huge body of literature out there to know and to master. There is, for example, in, two issues ago in the Oral History Review, an article on oral history and radio, which you might not have come across but you want to check that one. Let's see, I'll find you the name of it or at least the name of the, uh, the name of the author because he's in Australia. He's been writing me recently. I'll spell it for you. This is the most recent piece on oral history and radio. First name: S-I-O-B-H-A-N. I don't know how to say that. McHugh. M-small C-H-large H-U-G-H.

0:51:49 RF: Yeah. I've seen that name before.

0:51:51 DD: And this guy is maybe someone you should talk to. Do you know that piece?

0:51:54 RF: I have, yeah.

0:51:57 DD: Cause he just published it two issues ago. I think I'm one of the first persons he quotes and he has a whole curriculum based on oral history and broadcasting.

0:52:10 RF: Hmm. I'd definitely look him up.

0:52:15 DD: Yeah, um, as a matter of fact, if you'll give me a quick email I'll go ahead and forward his most recent, uh, letter to me, which has the links to his oral history broadcasting curriculum. Go ahead.

0:52:31 RF: Okay. It's R, D as in David, F as in Frank, B as in boy, the number eight, D as in David, at mail - M-A-I-L- dot Missouri dot E-D-U.

0:52:51 DD: R-D-F-B-8-D-at mail dot missouri, E-D-U.

0:52:57 RF: Correct.

0:52:58 DD: On its way. Details of his curriculum in oral history.

0:53:06 RF: Great! I look forward to getting that. I know that I've read articles by him because that first name stands out. And so -

0:53:17 DD: It does. I don't know if he's written any other articles that have been published internationally but I do know that either in the last issue - not the current - either in the last, probably in the last issue, or possibly the issue before, he as a fairly good survey to picking up from some of my work.

0:53:39 RF: Okay.

0:53:40 DD: So, if you haven't seen his most recent, you will find it in the Oral History Review, which, I'm sure your library gets.

0:53:47 RF: Well -

0:53:48 DD: Missouri has such a great school of journalism, and, uh, they have a history of this stuff as well. You know, you might tell Jeff that I'm going to give, this year, my talk is on the hidden history of Route 66

and a lot of it takes place via my oral history interviews in Missouri on Route 66.

- 0:54:14 RF: Okay.
- 0:54:17 DD: Have him introduce himself.
- 0:54:18 RF: I will do that. Great. Uh, making a note there. Great, well, thank you so much. Um, I feel like I've learned a lot just in listening to you talk about how you use oral history in your own personal work but also with the students that you work with. Um, yeah, and if I have further questions, I know that you're leaving for Africa in mid-July, would it be okay to contact you via email and maybe try to set something else up if I need to clarify things?
- 0:54:56 DD: Uh, sure, you can just send me an email and we can probably do it that way. This would constitute an oral history interview. I am only hoping that you will [laughs] get a permission. Send me a release, so you can deposit this in your university library's special collection.
- 0:55:15 RF: I can do that.
- 0:55:16 DD: I appreciate that. My office is the University of New Mexico - Albuquerque, New Mexico. Uh, and, uh, yeah. I'm glad to, uh, help you out. Um, for some reason I just got interviewed by somebody from Greece on a somewhat similar topic. It just seems to be that time of year. [laughs]
- 0:55:39 RF: That's great.
- 0:55:41 DD: It is. Um, anyway, thank you for taking the time. I look forward to reading this material and, uh, I hope it turns into a really exciting project for you. Where are you going for your doctorate?
- 0:55:58 RF: Oh, I'm not. [laughs] We're finished after the master's degree. Yeah, we're done.
- 0:56:05 DD: What will you do with a master's degree?
- 0:56:08 RF: You know, I'm really not sure. Um, my undergrad is in business and I just decided I didn't want to do corporate marketing anymore. Um, I'd lived abroad, working with non-profits, and so, I may look at non-profit storytelling. I honestly don't know what comes after this.

0:56:25 DD: Well, I'll just tell ya that an M.A. in journalism is typically a terminal degree but more and more, there is degree inflation at work.

0:56:40 RF: Mmm hmm.

0:56:41 DD: And, uh, for somebody who's smart and ready to do serious research - as you obviously are - the path forward is going to be a doctorate, eventually, and perhaps running a large organization, like a non-profit. Like the, um, Missouri State Historical Society, or something like that. Uh, these are great options but they come to you with that next degree and so, sure, I understand, the last thing you want when you're leaving, finishing a graduate degree, maybe, is to think about another. But sooner or later you're going to be back at the, uh, back at the trough.

0:57:20 RF: [laughs] Oh my gosh, I hope not. [laughs] Yeah, I don't know.

0:57:27 DD: You need to because the kind of level that you're working at almost requires a - you're already deeper than a lot of the people who are doing M.A.s in journalism already. And, as a result, your work will be more like a real thesis rather than one of these rinky-dink, eh, journalism theses. And that, the quality of that thesis will be enough, one hopes, that you can publish a chapter in the Oral History Review. Right?

0:58:00 RF: Mm hmm.

0:58:01 DD: I mean, you're crazy if you don't break off a piece for the OHR. I can say that because I'm no longer on the editorial board [laughs] but I ran it for quite a number of years, though they'll probably send it to me anyway. I don't know.

0:58:16 RF: Yeah.

0:58:17 DD: But, but I'd certainly break off a piece while your research is current and make sure it gets into print so that, if you do want to go back, you have something to show for the M.A.

0:58:29 RF: Definitely.

0:58:29 DD: Just a thought.

0:58:30 RF: Yeah, I've heard this before. Berkley Hudson, one of my committee members, he's on it. So, yeah.

0:58:39 DD: Uh, what's his name?

0:58:40 RF: Berkley Hudson.

0:58:42 DD: No, I don't know that name either. Okay, anyway, nice to, uh, talk with you and, uh, you know, let's see. This year, the Oral History Association is easy driving distance from you - it's in Oklahoma City.

0:58:57 RF: Oh.

0:58:58 DD: And, as a result, you probably should come. It's too late to present a paper on your work but there's always a group of oral history educators that meet and you can meet the editors of this "Oral History in Education" volume because they come every year.

0:59:13 RF: Oh, great. When is that? I could look it up too.

0:59:17 DD: It's, uh, middle of October. Um, I don't have it on my calendar yet. I think it's, like, the ninth through the thirteenth or something like that, of October.

0:59:30 RF: I'm pretty sure I'll be in the Caribbean. Yep.

0:59:33 DD: Oh well, good deal there.

0:59:34 RF: Yeah. [laughs]

0:59:36 DD: Okay, nice to talk to you.

0:59:37 RF: Nice talking to you too. Thank you so much and enjoy all of the time that you have in Mozambique.

0:59:42 DD: I will. Bye.

0:59:43 RF: Bye. Thanks.

Interview Transcript – Dr. Earnest Perry

Interviewer: Roxanne Foster
Date of interview: August 5, 2013
Duration: 56:16

Dr. Earnest L. Perry is an associate professor and chair of the journalism studies emphasis area at the Missouri School of Journalism where he teaches courses that range from the History of American Journalism to graduate courses in Historical Methods and the Media and Civil Rights. His research areas include African American press history and media management. He was recently [recognized by the American Journalism Historians Association for his efforts](#) in engaging students with journalism and mass communication history.

Dr. Perry earned his bachelors degree from Texas Christian University. He earned his masters degree and PhD from the University of Missouri.

EP: Earnest Perry
RF: Roxanne Foster

0:00:00 Testing and setting up the conversation in the middle of our conversation. Initially, I started our meeting by talking about my project and the reason why I chose a project over a thesis. When the conversation turned towards the subject matter for the interview, I told him I was switching the recorder on.

0:00:10 RF: What are the differences between them?

0:00:11 EP: Well, I would say the, you know, as I said before, I think one of the differences between, um, in-depth interviews conducted by journalists and, and the work of oral historians is, historians before they go into those interviews need to have immersed themselves in the history of that particular subject. And not just the history of that subject but the time period in which that subject took place and all of the other aspects that had an impact on that particular situation. Most journalists when they go into in-depth interviews, they're concerned about, uh, that, that particular person, what that person had to do with that particular incident, and how it may shape the here and now. A little bit of history – understanding the history is important but not to the, to the depth that an oral historian would need to have when they're doing an oral history.

0:01:21 RF: So how would a person go about reaching that depth of understanding of the context before going into an interview?

- 0:01:27 EP: Are you talking about an oral historian? Uh, a lot of reading, a lot of, of, understanding or, or learning to understand the time period. It's almost like placing yourself in that time period; in other words, what was it like to be an African American in 1960 integrating a school for the first time? What was, what was the, what was the atmosphere there? Not just there but what was the atmosphere regionally and nationally about this? What did, what did it really mean to do that? In other words, you have to understand the political, the cultural, the social, the economic aspects of desegregation and how did you get from the point of say, Plessy vs. Ferguson to Brown vs. Board of Education? What were the steps to get there? Fffo.. based on all those things I just mentioned. You have to know that going in because you want to know how, what that person was going through and your question – when I say question, I'm talking about the first question, second question, third question, center more around that than it does how did you feel. Most oral historians never ask that question. “How do you feel?” “How did you feel?” That should come from them reliving their experience and that's the point that the oral historian is trying to get them to is, is to get them to relive that experience. Most, when, when most journalists are doing interviews, they're just trying to get information, you know, when they ask the question, “Well, how do you feel?” You know, what's that gonna get? They're gonna tell you how they think they feel right now, not actually how they actually felt then. That's why as an oral historian, you never ask that question or you hardly ever ask that question. The only time you ever ask that question if they're describing their feelings to you and you sort of interject. [3:45]
- 0:03:50 RF: So then, how do you teach that to your students, your journalism students here?
- 0:03:55 EP: [sigh] Ok, this is gonna sound harsh, and I say it all the time. Journalists have an innate inability to shut up and listen. And that's what I tell them all the time. “Sometimes you just need to shut up and let them talk.” The other difference is that journalism – journalists are working on deadline. Most oral historians aren't; they may have a deadline but it gives them, there's some flexibility in that deadline. Their deadline is predicated on how much time is this person going to give me, not on how much time I have to get my story in. And there's, that's a huge difference because once you get these people to talking and they realize that you're allowing them to talk and tell their story from their perspective and how they lived it and that you have some understanding of what those time periods were like, they may say, “You know, I only have an hour.” You look up, and you may – you're maybe two hours, three hours, four hours into it and

they're still talking and they're not even looking at the time. Most journalists are looking at their watch doing this. [Looks at watch on wrist] And a lot of that comes from "Just shut up, let them talk." [0:05:16]

0:05:19 RF: So then given the, can you talk a little about the assignment that your students in the "History of Mass Media" class have and how you work within that time period when someone is planning to do an oral history.

0:05:31 EP: Well, [sigh] and that's where it's a little tricky when you start talking about it from that perspective because you are under some time limits in terms of the semester and working on a paper. Uh, that's one of the reasons why I really push for them to listen to oral histories that have already been done by people who have some experience in doing 'em and use that material as opposed to trying to, you know, trying to do an oral history themselves because most of them are master's students and they really haven't had the time to immerse themselves in the literature before doin' it. Now when I'm working with my, when I'm working with my PhD students, that's different because they, before we even get to that point of them actually conducting oral histories themselves, they've immersed themselves in the history and, uh, and all those aspects that I talked about earlier, they have an understanding of that and that helps to inform them of the, uh, and when they start writing the questions that they're gonna be using to sort of guide the, the person back into that time period. And there's a, that's a difference too in what, in what journalists do and what, what historians would do in, in these situations is that historians use these questions as guides and journalists use these questions to obtain facts and that's a huge difference.

0:06:58 RF: What do you mean by that?

0:06:59 EP: Well, journalists, they, they have a certain idea of, of some facts that they are trying to get from a person, some information they're trying to, to gain. Historians have questions, they're using their questions to sort of to guide that person back to that time period, to, to, sort of, get them to sort of start talking about their experiences within that particular situation, or that particular time period, or that particular incident. And, the guide is just to get them back there and then once the person starts talking, you'll, you're using those questions to keep them there. Do you understand what I'm saying? So, you know, once they can, you know, you're trying to keep them in that time period, 'cause you don't really want 'em to start thinking in the here and now, because the here and now is totally different than the past.

- 0:7:56 RF: So, then, I know that with some of Jacqui's classes that I've taken she talks about a lot about immersion journalism and spending time with that person to get back to that place, asking them to walk you through their home or talk about something sitting around and tell the significance of that, using those things to bring. How is that different?
- 0:08:17 EP: That's similar, that's similar.
- 0:08:19 RF: Ok.
- 0:08:20 EP: I mean, there, there are – some really good journalists out there use oral history techniques in their, in, in trying to do that but those are few and far between. There're not a whole lot of journalists who do that and in today's, you know, 24/7 online, you know, post it when you can environment, you see very few journalists that actually use that kind of, of, user those kinds of, of, of ideas and those kinds of tactics and trying to, to, to do their stories.
- 0:09:03 RF: How do you get your students to shut up and listen? How do you teach that?
- 0:09:07 EP: [sigh] It's a difficult thing to teach. Part of it is, one of things that I do is when, when I, I'll I bring in an oral history, uh, interview and I'll play it or either I'll take them to the Historical Society and let them play and what I ask them to do is stop and just listen to the way in which this is conducted. How often do you actually hear the person who's conducting the interview? What's the difference you see in that and the way in which you've seen journalism interviews conducted? And understand the importance of silence; understand the importance of letting someone think through their thoughts before interjecting. Because journalists, journalists have a problem with silence, when somebody stops talking, if it's for longer than 10 to 15 seconds, then they jump in with a question. Does that help?
- 0:10:14 RF: It does. Umm, can you talk about – we talked about this before I started recording – can you talk about the assignment actually that the students in your class do?
- 0:10:25 EP: Well, for the “Historical Methods” assignment one, when I, when I do it in my historical methods class we usually go over to the Historical Society and we do a, it's, it's, it's generally somewhere between 2, 2 1/2 hour session where the, the, the oral historian over there will talk to them about how he does what he does and then he'll, then he will play some

pieces, uh, and to give them an idea of how an oral history is, is conducted. Uh, then, what we'll do is, and then he'll talk about "here's what we have available in our archives." Uh, then what we'll, we'll, what we'll do is, is come back over and I'll talk individually with students in the class who want to utilize oral history in their research project that they're working on for that particular semester, that's at the, that's at the doctoral level. With the, when I've done it, when I've had the assignment for master's students, uh, what I try to do is I will take a series of oral histories that are either online – because there are a lot of them available or available at Historical Society – and have them listen to them and then write and then add in the history that they themselves are, are, are gathering and take that and turn that into a, what I would call a, mini-, uh, uh, scholarly paper. It's not something that I would submit to a conference or submit to a publication but it's the beginning of what could possibly be a, a history, uh, thesis, or a history-based project. And that oral history encompasses that. So they get a sense of, of the differences between conducting an interview for journalism and doing an oral history and how that can be incorporated into, uh, uh, into a, something that could be seen as scholarly or even incorporated into something that could be a, a, magazine-length, uh, publication.

0:12:55 RF: Who were the, like, who were the students that take your class, like, what, what do you find is their general trajectory, their, like, where are they headed?

0:13:03 EP: [sigh] It depends, I mean, I, last fall I taught a class on um, I taught a class on the press's civil rights and there were 10-11 students in the class. Uh, a couple of them were law students, uh, uh, a couple of them, uh, were, were students in our magazine sequence and I think what they were looking for was a fuller understanding of the history of the press's involvement in, in civil rights. Uh, and how, how, what the press did back then can inform what the press is doing now because I talked a lot about that. And, and, what many of them were using it for is – I know one student, uh, finished up and I think he's looking to go into a PhD program in Temple. Uh, the two law students I had, one of them is thinking about practicing, uh, uh, practicing civil rights law. Uh, the other one is thinking about public policy. I have some other students who, they said they were gonna get in touch with me this semester to find out what they're gonna do in terms of their project. Uh, this fall I have 15 students in that class. So, and all of them, I think, with the exception of maybe one or two are master's students.

So, I'll get an idea of, at the beginning, of what they want out of the class, what they hope to get out the class, how they hope to use it. Uh, a lot of it is to help them understand that a lot of the ways in which the press participated in the movement back then is similar to some of what they are doing now. The issues themselves, of what we define as civil rights now, may be different. You talk about, uh, the marr- the issue of marriage, you talk about inequality, you talk about, um, you talk about healthcare – all those issues are civil rights issues. They're just in this time period. If you go back and you look at what was happening in the 1960s, what was happening in the 1940s you see some similarities to what's happening in the mid-2000s, I mean, in the 2000s. And you see some similarities in how the media has covered those issues or not has covered those issues.

And, even though I'm still formulating it, there could be, it could be an oral history component in that in terms of going and looking at, going and listening to oral histories that have been done in those previous time periods for people who lived in those previous time periods and, and try to determine whether some of the things that they're saying back then, or about the times back then, are similar to what you're seeing and reading and viewing in today's media coverage of those issues.

So, in other words, take, you know, your own project – I can have my students go and listen to the oral histories that you've done and talking about the desegregation of Columbia Public Schools. Are you hearing some of the same things about that when you talk about the opening of this new high school, in which now you have these three high schools, are people talking about the same thing and the transfer rules and that sort of thing? I bet you do. But in order to be able to do that, you've got to, you have to know the history of desegregation and that's where the history part comes in. [0:17:12]

0:17:15 RF: And how do you do that with them...

0:17:17 EP: Read.

0:17:17 RF:...in such a short time period?

0:17:18 EP: Reading. A lot of reading, a lot of read – and a lot of them know, they know the general history. What they don't know is the depth of history, so it's a lot of reading. I mean it's a history class. It's a graduate history class, so you're gonna do some reading. Uh, and hopefully, what you're reading informs, you know, what you already know.

0:17:42 RF: What types of readings or what types of things do you assign?

017:45 EP: [sigh] Umm, stories that I find about, like, stories that I find about inequality today. But then, I also have them read, I mean, they're, they're reading history. I mean, they're reading history books; it's not journalism history. They're reading actual history about, uh, the struggle in the North prior to, prior to and during World War II; what led to the, the, the movement in the South, uh, and after World War II leading into, uh, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, leading up to Brown vs. Board, uh, and all that that happened. Then, then you start getting into the actual, uh, what we would call the modern civil rights movement, uh, that most people know. They know the, the, the general parts of it, but they don't know just how violent it was, just how political it was, just how economic it was, and we talked a lot about that.

So you're sort of informing that general history that they know, by saying, ok, here's what you, you know, you've seen the fire hoses, you've seen the dogs, you've seen the marches, but here's what you didn't see. You didn't see the economic toll of the boycott, how, uh, Kennedy was apprehensive about civil rights, how if it had not been for L.B.J., a lot of, a lot of what we know now in terms of, uh, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act, which the Supreme Court just, you know, decided on again – what did all that mean? When you talk about, when you have states, when you have states during Brown vs. Board of Education say, uh, bring up the term nullification. What does nullification mean? Nullification means “we're not going to adhere to laws that were passed by the feder-federal government and upheld by the Supreme Court. Mmm-kay. We're just not gonna do that. Guess what? 2013! They're still doing it, with healthcare! Nullification! And the students sit there and go like, "You gotta be kidding me?" "No! I'm not!" You know, so here we are fifty-some years later, still talking about nullification on a civil rights case. Healthcare – basic right. Education – basic right.

You know, so that sort of gets them to, from the here and now, to there and back. And then, when they hear those stories in the oral history, they'll go, "Wait a minute, they were talking about when they integrated Douglass, or, when they integrated Hickman, in Douglass and the students got together, they were talking about boundary lines and all this stuff.” Yeah, they're still talking about it and some of the same rhetoric you hear today, you heard then. Does that help? [0:21:01]

0:21:01 RF: It does. I'm like, I'm thinking that I skipped some steps because we jumped right into stuff and then I was just like, "Wait. I don't even know

how that happened.” Um, so I'm gonna backtrack and then we'll jump forward again. How did you become interested in oral histories in the first place?

- 0:21:19 EP: I don't know if I necessarily became interested in oral hist- I just became, you know in becoming interested in history, you get fascinated, I mean, I'm not an oral historian by trade, I'm more of an archival historian. I like, I like digging in archives, uh, but in those archives are oral histories, and if they're there, I'm gonna use them. So, that's, that's how I become interested in oral histories because listening to people tell their stories about how they, you know, how they survived, how they lived their, how they lived their lives during, during these tumultuous times and knowing the history of those times really informs my storytelling or the way in which I want to tell those stories that people can see the press is involved in it, be it good, be it bad, um, uh, be it, be it for the benefit of the public or the benefit of the person who owns the press. So, and that's, to me, that's, that's, that's the journalist in me. I'm telling, I'm telling the story the way it happened and I'm not really concerned about how the actors themselves, the actors in, in the story come off. You know and that's being true to the story, and there's, that's a difference – I won't say it's a difference, but I think that that's something that journalists can bring to history, to oral history, uh, is, I wouldn't say, I wouldn't say objectivity because I don't believe in objectivity, uh, but I would say I'm not, I want to tell the story in its entirety, not to make one side look good and the other side look bad. [0:23:17]
- 0:23:19 RF: And then how did you become interested in history to begin with? Like even archival, any of that, how did you?
- 0:23:27 EP: That's a hard – sss – I've always, I guess I've always been interested, interested in history. I mean, I was, political science was my minor when I was in, in, uh, college. I took a lot of history courses, uh, so, I mean, it was just, you know, I was always interested in history and, and then listening to the stories of, my parents' stories, my grandparents' stories, you know, that sort of thing. So, I mean, that's how I got interested in history.
- 0:23:57 RF: And you, am I right in thinking that you were a reporter with the [Houston] Chronicle?
- 0:24:01 EP: Yep.
- 0:24:02 RF: Okay, how did you use history in your own reporting?

0:24:08 EP: [Sigh] Well, it helped me in the Chronicle because I grew up in Houston so I knew a lot of the players, I knew of the players, uh, and in knowing that, I was able to, I sort of had a background in the history of certain places that other reporters that didn't grow up there didn't know. So that's mainly how I used history, uh, as a journalist. Uh, because I knew the area, I mean, I grew up in Texas, I worked at three newspapers in Texas, so, um, I was always sort of a Texas history buff, so I knew a little bit about it and I just used it, uh, you know, to help me, help me find sources, develop questions, think about stories ideas – that sort of thing. But as a journalist, I didn't really think about, when I was practicing it, I didn't think about, "Oh, wow, it's great that I know this history." It was just – I knew it. And it didn't, it wasn't until I came to grad school that I realized, "Ok, this is why I was doing it." And you then think about, ok, this is how I probably could have done it better if I'd, actually had stopped to think that it was important. And that's, I think, one of things that helps in this, helps in the way in which I teach classes both in the undergraduate and graduate level, is getting students to understand that history can be a informative and can help you, uh, if you know it. Both to tell – in, in, in a lot of ways, in many ways, to tell people's stories from their perspective and not in the way in which you think the story should be told.

0:25:59-26:29 [Silence]

0:26: 30 RF: So, before we started recording, you talked a bit about the differences that you perceive between oral history and journalism. Can you tell me first what, how do you define oral history?

0:26:48 EP: [sighs] I define oral history as the ability to capture and record stories of the way in which people remember, captured memory of historical events that include individuals from – their stories their perspectives – from the way in which they lived their lives, the way in which they remember the time period; how they felt, how they lived, how they, how they, what they believed. To me, it's the, to me, it's the – if done correctly – it's one of the truest forms of historical knowledge available. It provides, it can provide the narrative that you may not get from documents and archival materials – not saying those things aren't important, they're very important because you can use them to verify some of those stories, uh, but the combination of those oral stories and the documents, including newspaper articles, that can back that up – powerful. And quite often we have the documents because people save. What we don't have is the actual stories because it was difficult to cap- capture them that the time and there's not enough of it going on right now. I mean, people tell their stories now, they get on, they get on whatever digital recording device that's

available and they tell their stories, but most of the time they're telling their stories from the way in which they, they tell their stories from the way in which they remember it but it's clouded by the present. What it takes is someone is trained in oral history to take that person back to when it actually happened and tell the story when it actually happened and tell the story from that perspective and in that context. That's when you get the authenticity of, of those stories. [29:33]

- 0:29:51 RF: So then, can you talk a bit about what you perceive as the differences between oral history and journalism?
- 0:29:59 EP: Well, one of the things, I just said. That's the, that's the difference. That's a huge difference - is getting people back there in that time period and have them tell their stories from there as opposed to I'm sitting here talking to you about what I remember about what happened that day. It sounds, you know, as we said it sounds like, oh, that sounds like the same thing but it's not; it's not the same thing.
- 0:30:41 RF: So, then, I'm totaling being – I'm just gonna ask it. What's the difference?
- 0:30:49 EP: The difference is the person conducting the oral history has to understand that particular period in time and formulate questions to take that person back there, if the person is not there already; it depends on the interview. You can be interviewing someone and they're talking to you about "Well, I remember this, this, this, and this," and you're going, "Well, wait a minute. I've done a lot of reading on that. I don't remember that. So, let's talk a little bit more about that. And how does that relate to this, this, this, and this? And then you're slowly moving that person back there. Some journalists will hear a person, he'll interview someone, and say, "Well, I remember this, this, this, and this." They're busy taking notes and they're not listening; they're busy thinking about the next question; they're not listening. Um, good journalists will listen and realize that, you know, "Wait a minute that doesn't jive with the history I know, the history I've consumed myself and the history I understand." Because they've done the readings, they've immersed themselves in all those aspects – the social, the cultural, the political, the economic, you know. They understand how all those things merge together. Most journalists have not taken the time to do that but an oral historian has. And they've already framed their opening questions to get the person back there: "Let's talk about what Columbia was like in the 1960s, let's talk about what the, the state of the country in the 1960s." Start there instead of, "Well, what do you remember?" That's tot- that's two totally different questions.

0:33:07 RF: So do you feel then that the journalists would not start with that question: Let's talk about what Columbia was like in the 1950s, 60s?

0:33:15 EP: Do you know journalists that would start like that? Most I know wouldn't.

0:33:21 RF: That's actually the first question that I asked.

0:33:23: EP: Right, but, but you're doing it as an oral history.

0:33:24 RF: But I'm doing it as an oral history. Right. Okay. I mean, it sounds like one of the things, though, that's key is having that grounding in the context ...

0:33:41 EP: Yes.

0:33:42 RF: and so that's something that, you said this before, that's something that not all journalists do going into an interview.

0:33:47 EP: No.

0:33:47 RF: So, can you talk a little bit about that too?

0:33:50 EP: That's not the way we train them. We don't train 'em like that. We train journalists to go in and get the information, get the facts. We now, I mean, we talk a lot, I mean, you know, at least I do, talk a lot about, "I want you to get their story from their perspective – from the way in which they live their lives, not the one in which you think they live their lives." That's gonna take a little bit more time. The problem is, because of our 24/7 cycle, and being able to put a story up whenever we want, we don't take the time. So our journalism becomes shallow and we tell the story in ways that fit the paradigms that we've structured and not necessarily the way in which people actually live their lives. So when we, so when a good story does get out there, people tend to gravitate toward because there's a lot of other stuff out there that's just not good.

0:34:56 RF: What do you mean when you say that we tend to put stories out there that fit our...

0:34:59 EP: It fits the common narrative.

0:35:02 RF: Which would be?

- 0:35:04 EP: Stereotypical and biased in a lot of ways. It doesn't tell, it doesn't tell the, it doesn't tell, it doesn't tell the story, the stories in authentic ways. Like when we talk, say, when we talk about immigration, we always talk about immigration from the perspective of, uh, Mexican-Americans, when immigration touches, you know, a whole lot of, of people of, of other nationalities and Americans themselves. But, since we've already followed this narrative, since we already created this narrative, it's just easy to plug in the new information to the narrative that's already there.
- 0:35:45 RF: So, then, when you talk about the paradigm of how people live their lives and engage with stories, what do you mean by that?
- 0:35:52 EP: [sigh] What I mean by that is taking the time to say, okay, tell me what it's like to grow up in a neighborhood that's segregated in almost every way. And then, be forced into, pushed into, or agree to go into another sphere in which your, that comfort of being segregated is sort of taken away. In other words, you're the lone difference in this other world. What was that like? You know, that's, you know, that doesn't fit the normal paradigm. Does that help?
- 0:37:03 RF: It does. I'm laughing because I have, one of my interviews actually, pretty much fits that and I'm like, "John Kelly," and I'm "Cool." Uh, uh, let's see. How are you going about teaching your students the difference between going in, getting the information, getting the facts and going in and really understanding that person's story from their perspective and telling it?
- 0:37:47 EP: I want, I want, I want to see if they listened. How you did listen? How much was told? A lot of our students, when we, when we have them do in-depth interviews, uh, for our sophomore level "Cross-cultural Journalism" class, and one of the things that we see in a lot of those interviews is that they do more talking than listening. And we talk to them about that. They go in with a set number of questions; they don't deviate from the questions. And a lot of that comes from either you're not interested in who it is you're talking to and why you're talking to them, uh, or you weren't listening to what they're saying to ask follow-up questions and a lot of times it's a combination of both. So we talk to them about, "Listen. Stop and listen to what they're saying. How does that fit in with the information that you've gathered, your knowledge of the issue?" And then, "What are they saying about themselves that either matches that or does not match that?" And then, get into a conversation. Talk to people. When you're sitting down talking to your friends about something that's

going on in their lives that has some, that may have some meaning to you, you're gonna listen. You need to take that same tact here.

- 0:39:32 RF: So, does telling them that work?
- 0:39:36 EP: Mmm, for some them, yes; for others, it doesn't because the first key is that you got to care, you got to care about the story, you've got to care about the issue. If you don't care from the beginning, then what's the point? And therein lies the difference between, the, one of the differences between, um, journalists and historians is that, historians are doing this because they really care about this. There are some stories that the journalists care about and some that they don't. Some that they've assigned themselves, some that's been assigned to them, and most of the time you can tell the difference between a story that a journalist really cares about and a story that they just happened to be assigned to.
- 0:40:51 RF: So then, well, hmm, with your students in the "History of Mass Media" class or even the Methods class who are considering oral history, the level of care, I'm guessing, is not going, that's not going to be an issue?
- 0:41:06 EP: That's not even going to be an issue.
- 0:41:07 RF: Right, because they're going to care about the thing that they...
- 0:41:10 EP: Because they get to decide what they're gonna write about.
- 0:41:12 RF: Right.
- 0:41:15 EP: My, the only thing I'm looking at is, ok, can they do what they want to do in the time period we have available.
- 0:41:22 RF: So then, how do you go about teaching those students to listen? 'Cause they already care. So, how do you teach them to listen, and really, really listen?
- 0:41:38 EP: One of the ways I do that is I, I try to get them to limit the number of questions they have written down. Because if you limit the number of questions you have written down, you're gonna be listening to develop further questions which means you're gonna be engaged in conversation.
- 0:42:07 RF: How do you help them develop even the questions that they do have?

- 0:42:12 EP: Read history. Getting, you know, immersing yourself in, in getting, in that context, you're trying to get into that historical context. It's imperative. If you don't have it, you might as well not even conduct that interview. You're wasting your time and their time.
- 0:42:30 RF: So then, how does that then translate back to journalism?
- 0:42:34 EP: Um, because that's one more tool you have. Understanding. Understanding how history can help you better formulate your questions and to also better understand where those people were and where they are now.
- 0:42:54 RF: I'm just thinking that, you know, there's so many different facets to journalism and there's, you know, the spot news people, there're the immersion journalism people, people that write non-fiction, you know, books and things like that. And time constraints are, are a part of all of this....
- 0:43:10 EP: Right.
- 0:43:11 RF: So, for the person who does have that deadline - who thinks that I would like to incorporate more of the historical context into what it is that I'm reporting on - how do we find that balance? How do you?
- 0:43:26 EP: Well, one of the ways you find that balance is, and I tell my students this all the time, you got to read, you got to stay, you have to stay current in what's going on now but also understand that there's a history behind it and try to gain as much knowledge about that history as possible. So, you know, yeah, you want to have a life, everyone wants to have a life, but sometimes in having that life, I mean, you do some reading, you know. Pick up a, pick up a book about something. It could be, there are some, there are some fiction books out that have a lot of historical facts in them that can, that can really inform you about certain things that are going on, about certain issues that are going on, you know. And then there are some really good non-fiction books out there that can do the same thing. But a lot of it is reading and going back and picking up that knowledge that you thought at one point was not important because, I mean, that's not one of the things that happens to us – not just here but at every journalism program that I know of, is that you have journalism students who think, well, I don't need to know any history. Really? History is not really important course. Really? It becomes important when you're out there reporting something that someone mentions something and they expect you to know it and you don't. You look kind of foolish. [0:44:56]

- 0:45:05 RF: Where, like where do you think that disconnect is that students all of a sudden feel that history is unimportant to their specific field?
- 0:45:13 EP [sigh]: A lot of it comes because we spend so much time talking about, we talk so much about the importance of the practical aspects of being a journalist and not enough about the knowledge that you need to have in order to be an informed journalist. We talk so much about the bells and whistles, the nuts and bolts that we don't talk about how the bells and whistles and the nuts and bolts were built.
- 0:45:58 RF: And when you say "we," who do you mean?
- 0:46:01 EP: Journalism educators. I mean, you know, a lot of students who come into journalism, they only know, they know a lot about the finished project, not about how the product was built. In other words, they, they know what's on the newscast, they know what's in the newspaper, they know what's on the blogs but they don't know how that came to be. They don't know the work that it took to get that and what you have to know in order that you might do it well. So, when they get into it, the first thing, the first things that they gravitate toward is how do I do this, how do I do that and not, when it comes to actual reporting and that sort of thing, how do I know the, the sort of knowledge that what this person's telling is accurate because they're talking to me about, say you're covering the city council – they're talking to me, to me about an issue that was decided 10, 15 years ago. How do I that that person is telling me, what that person is telling me is accurate? Well, you gotta go and do some research. That's history. That thing that you were saying that wasn't really important? Now it's important. [0:47:17]
- 0:47:20 RF: So then, how can journalism educators do a better job of getting students to understand the importance of more than just the nuts and bolts but rather how the nuts and bolts work together?
- 0:47:32 EP: Incorporate it into everything you teach; it becomes a part of you. You, you know, just as much as you talk to them about how to craft a well-written story, you need to talk to them about what kinds of information needs to be in that story, what is importance of understanding the history of a particular area of a particular subject of a particular whatever. Without that you don't get to the well-crafted story because you don't have anything to write.
- 0:48:14 RF: Is that something that you feel that journalism educators aren't doing?

- 0:48:17 EP: I think our journalism educators are doing it but they're finding it, they're finding it much more difficult to do that when, um, you're being pre...when you're being pressed to teach more nuts and bolts, to teach more how you put something online, uh, how do you become digital first, this, these sorts of things, how do you know how to download a st...write a story, download a story, uh, do a standup and have a piece of audio all within the same story. So you're doing all of that, when is it actually time to focus on the story? So, I mean, it's a, it's, it's a difficult thing to do, but it's necessary because if you don't then our journalism becomes shallow, we lose our credibility, and what's the point, you know. [0:49:27]
- 0:49:32 RF: So then, how do you see oral history fitting into that?
- 0:49:39 EP: People like stories, that's what we're supposed to do as journalists is tell stories. Uh, and oral history in the way in which that it is done well, not all aspects of it but some of the aspects of it--the ability to listen, the ability to understand historical context--those types of things can help us to practice better journalism, to tell their stories from the perspectives of the people living them, not from the narratives that we've created, that fit, that fit into a nice little, neat box where all we need to do is plug in the facts, that, you know, don't necessarily fit this story of this particular person; but, hey, it's fitting the narrative that we've already created and people sort of accept, even though it's a stereotypical narrative, and we move on to the next story. [0:50:41]
- 0:50:56 RF: With, um, with your students that you work with, what do you, what are some of things that you hope they, especially the ones who actually do oral history, what are some of things that you hope they glean from the process?
- 0:51:12 EP: That there's a deeper, that there's a deeper story out there, there's a richer story out there than the one that's commonly known, and that there are individuals who actually lived through some very tumultuous times and their stories haven't been told. And so we do a lot of telling these stories of the ones who have been, um, popularized isn't the right word, but who are known because they had the access to the press, to the media; but, so they're stories are told, there are others who were a part of that as well whose stories weren't told that may have either lived that same shared experience or their experiences may be totally different, you know. There's this image that there were a lot of African Americans who wanted to, to go to integrated schools and there were some who were forced to go

to integrated schools who didn't want to go. You don't hear a lot about their stories, because it doesn't fit the common narrative. [0:52:34]

0:52:59 RF: What challenges have you seen? With using, with, especially with the students using oral history, what challenges have there been?

0:53:08 A lack of historical knowledge is probably been the biggest challenge and there's no one person, group of people, institution to blame for that; uh, there's a whole host that started with, you can start with the family and just work your way down, you know. Knowing one's history is not seen as being as important today as, say it was, a generation ago. I mean, we live in the here and now world. Here, today, what's going on right now, what's going to happen tomorrow; yesterday is yesterday. And it's not until you sort of stop and look at what's happening today and how it's a reflection of what happened in the past or not even necessarily a reflection, but it is a continuum of what happened in the past, that you sort of go, "Whoa, wait a minute; it's probably important that I know that." [0:54:29]

0:54:49 RF: Whom do you think benefits the most from actually being aware of the importance of history, especially in regards to the way journalists tell stories and the students that you work with? Who do you think benefits most?

0:55:06 EP: The public, I think, the public we, we profess to want to serve will benefit the most. Uh, the pu- audience. Some would public, some would say audience, it just depends on which, which one of those you want to use.

0:55:24 RF: Why? How so?

0:55:27 EP: Because they have, they can have a, you're enhancing knowledge, you're, you're providing them with news and information that they didn't know and you're putting it in a context that, uh, is, I think, more credible and can, can be more of a service to them as opposed to just saying, "Here's the facts."

0:55:05 RF: Is there anything you want to add?

0:55:08 EP: Mmm, no, unless you have some more questions.

0:55:10 RF: I don't think so. Cool.

0:55:13 EP: Did that help?

0:55:14 RF: That did. Thank you very much.

Interview Transcript – Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez

Interviewer: Roxanne Foster
Date of interview: June 26, 2013
Duration: 44:43

Maggie Rivas Rodriguez is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Texas in Austin. Her research areas include the intersection of journalism and oral history and U.S. Latinos as both producers and consumers of news media. Among others, Dr. Rivas-Rodriguez teaches the J349 “Oral history as journalism” class and directs the U.S. Latino and Latina Oral History Project “[Voces](#),” which she created in 1999 to “document and create a better awareness of the contributions of Latinos and Latinas of the WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War generations.” To date, it has collected interviews with over 650 men and women throughout the country.

Dr. Rivas Rodriguez earned her bachelors degree in journalism from the university of Texas at Austin, her master’s in journalism from Columbia University and her PhD from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

MRR: Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
RF: Roxanne Foster

0:00:05 MRR: Hello, this is Maggie.

0:00:06 RF: Hi, this is Roxanne Foster. How are you?

0:00:09 MRR: I'm good. How are you, Roxanne?

0:00:10 RF: I'm doing well. Good to hear from you.

0:00:13 MRR: Hang on one second. Um ... (undecipherable conversation with someone in the room with her.)

0:00:22 MRR: Um, okay. So, we're good.

0:00:25 RF: Okay, um, let me - okay. I have you on speaker, just so I'm able to write and take notes while I'm talking. Can you hear me okay?

0:00:34 MRR: Sure.

0:00:35 RF: Okay, and then I'm also recording you, so, just - full disclosure.

0:00:37 MRR: Okay. Let me just, uh, close the door because they look in.

0:00:42 RF: Okay. [long pause]

0:00:52 MRR: Oh, we're suddenly having a party in my office.

0:00:55 RF: Oh! Nice! [Laughs]

0:00:58 MRR: Not really, but ... okay, so, I'm all yours.

0:01:01 RF: Okay, great. Um, so just to - let's see - just to get started. Is all of the information on your bio on the UT website - is that stuff correct? Like, about here you worked and your degrees and things like that?

0:01:15 MRR: Yeah, I'm pretty sure.

0:01:18 RF: Okay, just so I'm not asking redundant questions. I can just look at that and get any type of biographical information that I need from there.

0:01:25 MRR: Yeah. It may not be real up to date but it's accurate, what it does have.

0:01:30 RF: Great. And then, um, let me start by asking what are the journalism courses that you've taught that have included oral history as part of the, uh, your curriculum and teaching tools?

0:01:44 MRR: Really, it's just one class. It's Oral History as Journalism. And I've taught that several times.

0:01:56 RF: Is that the J349, I think?

0:01:58 MRR: Yes. If that's what it was - we've changed our curriculum and so, I forget what the numbers are gonna be but we changed our curriculum last year, last fall. And so, after that we have all new numbers but it has been J349T before that.

0:02:13 RF: Okay, cool. But it's still called Oral History of Journalism?

0:02:16 MRR: Yes.

0:02:17 RF: How did you become interested in oral histories?

0:02:21 MRR: I was a reporter at the Boston Globe a million years ago. We were doing, um, a magazine piece about race in Boston. And, the person who

was heading up the project brought together - I don't know - five or six reporters from the newsroom and, uh, said what he was really looking for was a "Studs Terkel approach" to it. I had never heard of Studs Terkel. And, I went and read his book on, um, I don't remember if it - it might have been on working. I forget what it was. This would've been way back in the early 1980s. So, I read some Studs Terkel and I got hooked. I thought, this is, this is really great. And I, through that time, I really didn't, um, I just saw it as a great way to capture the voices of people of that period. I didn't quite appreciate it until much later, how you could actually use some of these recordings to, um, you know, to inform and to write, uh, kind of historical treatments until later.

0:03:31 RF: That's great. Um, let's see. How do you define oral history?

0:03:38 MRR: I guess, I mean, it has lots of different parts but basically, it is, to me, um, it's the recorded history. It's, uh, it's either audio or videotaped recordings of, um, of an interrogation of someone. And I don't mean interrogation as in the police interrogation but rather just an interview. I think that you get a lot from that, that exchange from someone asking questions and asking for detailed answers, um, that you wouldn't get just from having someone sit in front of, um, a recorder, although some people have done that and I guess you could still call that oral history but, you know, what we've mainly done is we've done, all we've done is interviews of people. And the recording part is essential because sometimes people want to say, "well, you know, someone has written this" and I think a written treatment is fine but sometimes the, the entire act of someone speaking lends itself, lends a real, um, genuineness that you may not necessarily get from somebody writing something.

The other part that I think is really key is having the interviews placed in a central, um, repository that people have access to the original recording, the raw recording. Not an edited version but a raw recording if possible having a transcript but, you know, oftentimes we don't have the funds to do the transcribing but at least some sort of finding aid. Some sort of finding aid.

0:05:23 RF: Awesome. So then, what do you think are the key differences then between oral history and journalism?

0:05:31 MRR: Uh. That's a great question and it's something that I've been grappling with for as long as I've been teaching this class. Probably the fundamental issue for me is - well, there's a couple things. One is, in oral history, in order to have this deposited at a library you generally need a

written consent form and in journalism, if you ask, you know, you just don't do that. So, that's kind of a key difference which speaks to the other larger difference, and that's the whole issue of the authority of the interview. In oral history there is, um, generally the principle of a shared authority.

The person who's being interviewed is often called the narrator. In some cases they're called the subject, um, the interviewee and there's, the way that most folks that I know who do oral history look at it is that it's their story and so the interviewer, um, more or less gives them free reign to answer as they wish and doesn't really, um, push very hard. In journalism, as a journalist, I feel a little bit differently because I think that I'm, I believe in a more "activist" approach to the interview. And, so, I believe in pushing, sometimes, the person that we're interviewing a bit, um, in a way that probably a lot of my colleagues in oral history wouldn't be real comfortable doing. So, you know, in some cases, even disagreeing with them or bringing up a point that kind of, uh, contradicts what they're telling you. Um, or bringing up, you know, um, bringing up a fact - and oral histories, oral historians do this too - but, you know, if someone's telling you that "x" happened on this date and you happen to have read about it and you know that it actually, you know, the written record says that it happened on that date - making sure that there's some discussion about why there would be two different dates and making sure that you kind of address those - any kind of inconsistencies or discrepancies in the interview.

0:08:03 RF: Okay. That's really great. I think that that - I actually did my literature review for the project that I'm working on on the intersection between journalism and oral history and that was one of the things that was just like - it was one of the things that, as I sat with my committee going around the table, we almost argued about because for some of them they didn't really see a difference in, like the interviewing style and things like that and so, that's really great. Um, so, can you tell me a bit about how you're using oral histories as part of your teaching curriculum?

0:08:36 MRR: You know, we've mainly, because I do this, um, I direct this oral history project that interviews Latinos of the World War II, Korean and Vietnam war generations, um, most of the - usually, the class is centered on one of those time periods but, for instance I taught in Spain for three years and, um, as a study abroad faculty, led study abroad class and when we did that we, we did interviews and we focused on the Spanish Civil War and the Franco, the years of the Franco dictatorship. And, so, you know, we did that for three years. We did, um, the development of the

Center for Mexican-American Studies on campus. We did, uh, Austin City Limits television program that's at the PBS station next door. Um, so, you know, it really lends itself to so many different things and the, the, uh, sometimes I think that some people don't, don't, you know, they think oral history and they think, oh, it's kind of, um, you're just going to go out and interview people and, and really, that's kind of the fun part but the hard part, and the part that really requires a lot more thought and preparation is getting ready for the interview and really immersing yourself in whatever, um, history and controversies that topic entails and so, really become thoroughly familiar so that when you do sit down to do the interview and they do tell you something that you know that the written record says something different, um, you're able to offer that and you're able to get some, you know, clarification of what those points mean.

So, I see it as having, oral history just has amazing applicability just in general and you can do lots of things after you have your interviews, um, but for journalists it's a really great way to teach our students the difference between primary source material and interpretations of those primary source materials. You know, why would, why would you privilege a written document automatically over an oral document? What are some of the problems with, you know, with, with the interview? What are some of the possible shortfalls that you might find? So -

0:11:07 RF: Yeah, that's great. So, how are you going about teaching these things to your students? Like, can you walk me through how exactly you're doing that?

0:11:17 MRR: We have, uh, we start off learning about, usually we start off learning about oral history and I have the book that I use is one by Valerie Yow. Um, which I think is called "Recording Oral History" or something like that. Um, and [unintelligible] Recording Oral History. I think this is an earlier version that I have sitting on my shelf but she did, she did, two different, um, she did one version and then she rewrote it a little bit and did a second one.

So, we start off learning about oral history and some of the, some of the challenges of oral history, and then we go through and we learn about the history of whatever topic we're looking at. So, if we're doing, um, the Spanish Civil War, most of my students had no inkling that there was a civil war in Spain and they had no inkling of the role that that played in what led to World War II. So, we learn about that and we try to, as much as possible, apply what the history says to current events. And, so, that's basically what we do.

Then we spend some time learning about just, about, just the, kind of the technical aspects - how to, how to mic somebody, um, how you operate your equipment, how you edit this, how you develop a finding aid, whether that's an index, usually that's an index, um, you know, getting the consent form.

So, it's kind of, I kind of see it as sort of a, it's really a four-part class. One, you learn about oral history. Two, you learn about history of whatever topic you're looking at. Three, you learn about the technical aspects, your equipment and developing the technical parts of the interview. And, fourth, you write, you know, we write the story. We do a side-by-side edit for all of the stories. We write about this. I sit next to my students and we go line-by-line and word-by-word – uh, word choice, um, you know, issues of fairness, of accuracy, going back and doing a historical fact-check just while we're sitting there so that we understand - so we can kind of stand behind whatever we're saying. And, um, and then hopefully we get a copy edit after that.

0:13:43 RF: That's awesome. So, then, what are some of the assignments that you give along with the different stages?

0:12:50 MRR: Generally, it's, um, it's readings. Basically, they have to do readings, they have to do, um, they do reflections of the readings. Um, and, most - and then they do, they do, as we're getting into, um, well, one thing that I usually have them do is I have them write a story from someone else's interview and comment on that interview. And, usually, it's because we have so many interviews for the oral history project that I direct, we have, we have DVDs and, um, a bunch of forms and stuff that goes with each one of the interviews.

So, they write a story about that from somebody else's interview and then they look at how did somebody else, you know, what did you think was the strength of this interview, what would you've liked to see more of? Was there anything that you felt the interviewer, um, should've asked? Could've asked? You didn't understand? All of those things.

And I also have them look at, just, we do it in groups, we have group work for their exploring the internet looking for different kinds of oral history projects and we evaluate them and then we do class presentations on things like, you know, how easy is, do you actually get to hear or watch one of these interviews? What kind of finding aids do they have? How did they go about finding people to interview? Um, I'm seeing what else.

Oh, um, they kind of, a lot of times they get into kind of the more technical things, like, a lot of my students like to look at the actual website, they like to evaluate ease of navigation and the overall design and that sort of thing because that's where they're coming from. So, they get a chance to evaluate different oral history projects and also I think that gives them - and then they do the class presentations - that gives them an idea of the breadth of oral history - how you can apply it to so many different groups and how, there's so many different ways of doing good oral histories. And also, there's a lot of ways of doing oral histories that you think, you know, this would be a really tough thing to include in the book because it doesn't have, it doesn't have enough information or a number of different things that they might've seen as a possible weakness.

- 0:16:23 RF: That's great. I love that, yeah, it makes me wish I'd done some of these things you're talking about before I started my project. I'm like, "You know, that would've been really helpful." Aaaahh.
- 0:16:35 MRR: You know what, I kind of like, I've developed this over many, many years and many, many semesters of teaching this class. Uh, so, it's not something that I just pulled out of my hat. It's really something that I've been working on for a long time and every semester, we change a little bit. You know, I may read a chapter for the eighth time and I realize, you know, that's not the best treatment of that particular issue and then I have to go and start trying to put together, um, kind of a course pack so that we can have something better. So, you know, it's one of those things that's never finished. It's always evolving and hopefully getting better.
- 0:17:17 RF: That's great. So, how do you, um, can you tell me, like, how you go about teaching the technological side of things? Like, you talked about mic'ing a person and editing and things like that. How do you go about teaching that to your students?
- 0:17:32 MRR: If we're, if we're - if it's a study abroad class, all we do is just audio record because it's, you know, it's so hard, um, when you add video to the mix, the possible problems just explode. So, just doing audio is a lot easier. So, what we do is, you know, we have, um, in some semesters I had everybody have, you know, I have several audio recorders. We've been using, it's, um, the Zoom H - I think the last one was an HN4. So, we use these Zoom recorders, we use external mics and we use, um, headphones. So, we, you know, I show them kind of the basics of this is how you turn it on, this is what you should be seeing, and, I let them take turns interviewing each other in class.

And, I make them, and I also - when I'm doing this with video - um, we do the same thing. I'm not, because of the video cameras we use, they change pretty often, so I usually have somebody who's more expert than I am on the video cameras but we can, you know, I have somebody come in, I have them show the basics and I have a written, um, handout of, "This is what you have to do". I think it's really important for people to know how to, um, tear down their equipment and how to assemble their equipment and tear down their equipment and assemble equipment. So, I have them do this at least five times before they go on the field.

The reason for that is I don't want anybody getting to an interview and fumbling with their equipment, um, and starting to get flustered when the main thing that they need to really worry about is the interview. So, it gets kind of - my students get aggravated, or they get frustrated about that. They kind of - "I already know how to put this thing on the tripod. I already know how to mic somebody." And I say, "Well, tell you what. You gotta do it for this class, just 'cause. And it always turns out that way, you know, every single semester, somebody goes out in the field by themselves or with another student and they get stuck and they can't remember how to do something or something malfunctions and they don't know how to fix it.

So, it's really important to have as much controlled practice as you can before the go on the field. So, they just kinda do it over and over and over and over again. And record each other and then learn how to take the, um, the audio recording, how to take that SD card, how to put it on their computer and then we just do real basic, um, we use Audacity software editing program and we just do real basic snippets of interviews. So, it's just excerpts of an interview. They don't have to do more than that.

- 0:20:34 RF: Okay. And then, is it the same when you're abroad? Like, when you're in Spain.
- 0:20:28 MRR: That's what we do when we're abroad. We only use the audio when we're abroad. When we're here, stateside, we do, um, we use video cameras.
- 0:20:46 RF: Oh, okay.
- 0:20:47 MRR: And because we have the support then. If we're doing it, if I'm doing it, you know, associated with my oral history project that I direct, the interviews are a little bit more complicated because what we usually

do is we'll go to a place and we'll do six interviews - individual interviews - simultaneously.

0:21:10 RF: Mmm. Wow.

0:21:11 MRR: And, so, we'll do six in the morning and we'll do six in the afternoon. So, when we do those, the, we have somebody who is our camera troubleshooter. We have somebody who all that person is in charge of is going back to each room to make sure that the student has hooked up everything the right way, has been making sure that all those, all the video is put onto an external hard drive the right way.

Um, and we also, I didn't mention this but the other part that we do is - and I think it's important - we did that in Spain. I don't know if you've seen our Spanish Civil War work but it's on the journalism website under student work - we also scan pictures. So, we carry portable scanners - and by portable, I mean they're, you know, they're large scanners - it's not like one of these things where you scan business cards - they're large scanners but they're real lightweight and they attach to a laptop and they do a really good job of scanning at a high resolution - photographs and things like discharge papers and, uh, ration cards and stuff like that.

So, when we do one of these mass interviews which we call a M.I.I.S, which stands for "Multiple Individual Interview Session" - we have, we've got a bunch of M.I.I.S. all over the country - when we do one of those, um, you know, the logistics of it are such that requires a lot of planning, uh, requires a lot of equipment - we have backdrops, we have lights, we have, um, we double mic, you know, we have a mic for the interview subject and one for the interviewer, um, and then we have three different scanners and three different laptops and we have students who are scanning like crazy, um, while the other, their classmates are doing the interviews. So, it's like, it's huge. We'll only do two of those in a semester when we have those.

0:23:17 RF: That sounds amazing. Wow.

0:23:19 MRR: It is amazing. It's really intense. You know, the students are all excited because they think, "Oh, this is so exciting! We're going to go out of town and we'll go to San Antonio. We'll spend the night in the hotel in San Antonio and they're all excited because we go out to dinner on, like, say, a Friday night. Have a nice big dinner. And then on Saturday we start, we start doing the, uh, we'll do the, we'll set up, you know, we get there at seven o'clock to set up in all these different places and then, you know, by

five o'clock they're exhausted. We're all exhausted. It's kind of, you know, it's really, really intense.

So, they think that, you know, I feel kind of bad because they think they're just gonna have fun but I tell'em, I say, "This is not just gonna be - it's gonna be fun but it's gonna be really intense, so I wouldn't make plans to go out on Saturday night after you've been doing this for a full day. [Laughs] But, sure enough - I'm right.

- 0:24:13 RF: Yeah. I mean, I know how I feel just after four hours of audio interviewing with somebody and I'm drained. I can't work out. I can barely eat.
- 0:24:22 MRR: Exactly. And I'm amazed that you can do four hours. I can do about – three hours is my upmost limit. I can do two – after two hours I'm pretty exhausted but, you know, if I have to I'll do more than two hours. Four hours? You'd have to wipe me up with a dishrag.
- 0:24:39 RF: It's pretty intense and, you know, I'm doing my project on desegregation here in Columbia ...
- 0:24:46 MRR: Oh, that's right.
- 0:24:26 RF: ... specifically looking at high school students, so there's - it's interesting, um, helping people get back into that time and relive, you know, their childhood and growing up in Columbia - what that looked like. And then you kind of delve into the deep and painful stuff of, you know, desegregation and the treatment they received and all of that. And, by the end, I feel like I've been beat up because they're rehashing all this stuff. But most of my interviews are around two, two and a half but I had one that was four hours not too long ago and I was drained, completely drained.
- 0:25:17 MRR: Yeah, I feel your pain. You know, we have volunteers in different parts of the country and my brother in El Paso is one of our volunteers. And, he goes on record for our longest interview but he did his over several days. So, he would go and he would do two hours one week, then he'd go back a few days later and do another one and so, it took him, it took him a few weeks to get - I think the longest one is ten hours.
- 0:25:44 RF: Wow! Oh my gosh.

0:25:46 MRR: Yeah, he's a, he's really, he's very, he's very detail-oriented. So, he gets lots of great detail.

0:25:54 RF: That's great. That's, I think that's the type of person you want actually going out there and getting -

0:25:58 MRR: Absolutely.

0:25:59 RF: Yeah. So, what do you hope your students glean from this process?

0:26:05 MRR: Um, I've had some unexpected, uh, effects on the students. I've had students who, you know, most - when we first started, most of my students were Anglo, were White, and another, you know small percent were Hispanic and a few were African American and a few were Asian. And, what I hadn't quite understood was how rarely my students have an opportunity to talk to somebody of another race and another generation.

So, I have all these, you know, White girls who had never talked to a Hispanic woman, of, you know, who is in her sixties or seventies. Never talked to them except as, you know, if somebody was a domestic for somebody. But they had never had a relationship. So, all of a sudden, these people are just relating to each other as human beings and my students who are, they took this class, by and large, totally ignorant of segregation concerning Mexican Americans, all of a sudden their eyes are wide open and they're realizing, Whoa! You know, these people once did something that we never have seen before and they're not even bitter about it. You know? That's kind of the most common thing that I would hear from them. "I can't believe they went through all this and they're not bitter about it." You know, "They're still, they're still willing to talk to somebody who's not of their race." That's sort of the unexpected, kind of the benefit that I've seen.

What I hope that they get out of it is an appreciation for history that they wouldn't, that they are not getting any other place. They're not getting this. You know, our history books aren't - I have no idea what they're like in Missouri - but I venture to guess that they're probably not that different from what they are here in Texas. When people think about Civil Rights, they might have a few pages on Martin Luther King. Very rarely do they know that Mexican-Americans had a Civil Rights Movement that was, in some ways, um, it was at the same time. There was some back-and-forth between African Americans and Hispanics in this generation; not a lot of cooperation but people were aware of what the other was doing.

And, this was, you know, there was, there was, there were important advancements that were made and I would say that had it not been for the efforts of that generation of men and women, people like me would never have had the opportunities we've enjoyed. You know, it didn't come easy and it didn't come - it wasn't just given to them. They had to really fight for this. So, I'm hoping that all my students will get this and they do. You know, I hear back from them years later, they'll say, "You know, I was telling somebody that I had been taking this class and I learned about this and they said, 'Oh, I didn't know Hispanics were in World War II.'" And, my students will say, "Well, that's why projects like that have to exist because people don't realize that Hispanics actually fought in World War II."

0:29:20 RF: That's awesome. So what challenges have you faced?

0:29:27 MRR: Um, probably, you know, like everybody else, the biggest challenge is funding. Um, you know, we're at this big university that has a reputation for our great football program, so, oftentimes people just assume that we get a check given to us by the administration and that just doesn't happen - and nobody, nobody has that happen.

Whenever people are involved in, from, a lot of the research that faculty do, across the board, across the country, if you're lucky and you're involved in something like engineering, there's a lot of grants, there's a lot of federal contracts that you can apply for. When you do something, doing something like oral history, there's not that many and there's a lot of competition for the little money that is, that is available to oral history projects.

So, man, you have to get really creative on how you, um, how you find the funding. That's the biggest thing because that, from that, come things like, you can travel if you have funds, um, you can hire somebody to do some of the stuff that's necessary to do if you have funds. Um, you know, you can, you can have, right now, all of our, we bought all of our, um, computers, like years ago when somebody gave us a check for \$25,000. Here's a check for \$25,000. They said, "if you had, like, \$25-, \$35,000, how would you use it?" and I said, "Well, we really need new computers. We're just taking kind of cast-offs." So, they made out a check for \$25,000 and with that we bought our computers. So, all those computers are now in the same place where they keep on crashing. You know, stuff like that that people don't - they assume that that's all getting taken care of. What they don't realize is that none of this gets taken care of.

We have a very small office. We have, um, we get, we do get a small stipend from the state government, from the legislature but it's renewable every two years and if somebody's not sympathetic to what we're trying to do, yeah, we had our funding cut by 25%, um, in the biennium. So, you know, it's kind of like that, that having to be, trying to do all this work and people not understanding that you don't have the money to do it. They want you to go and interview their father in California and you're going, "How am I gonna do that?" [Laughs]. You know? And, and, even volunteers. People say, "You can have volunteers." Well, somebody has to supervise a volunteer.

0:32:08 RF: Mm hmm.

0:32:09 MRR: And, so, like, right now we have two very, very nice volunteers in Austin who have agreed to help us out. Well, it turns out they don't have a car. So, it means that, the one person - my half-time person - has to drive them to wherever they're going to go and then drive them back. You know, it's kind of like, volunteers, they can be a wonderful thing if they're self-sufficient but when they need you to, to, provide something like transportation, it's, um, you know, it's a tough one.

0:32:29 RF: Yeah. Huh. Wow. So, are there any others besides funding? I mean, that's a huge enough obstacle as it is but -

0:32:54 MRR: Well, that's really the big one because then you have, with enough funding, if you have funding you can hire staff.

0:33:00 RF: Yeah.

0:33:00 MRR: You know, right now, because of funding I have to do more of the work than if I had more funds - and in the past before they cut out budget by 25% - I had a project manager who was here full-time. She was here every day, she did all the stuff. Well, I don't have anybody like that now. So, I'm having to do a lot of that work and then I'll put together a little bit of money and I'll hire somebody for a set period of time but, you know, unless somebody knows that stuff.

So, that's, that really is the biggest thing because, you know, I'm expected to do - that's not my job, really. I'm a volunteer myself. So, my real job is teaching and doing research. So, that's just a challenge. But, you know what? It is worth it and I find I get a lot - it's very rewarding. So, you know, the oral history has, has informed my teaching. It's my research. I

mean, everything that I work on - just about everything I work on as far as my writing - is based on my, this oral history project that I've been working on. So, you know, I get a lot out of it. There's no question about that.

It's just, um, it's just kind of a, you know, you stay up at night thinking, "How can we get some money to do 'x' and 'x'?" So, for instance, right now, we have this project that these volunteers - this is what they're doing. KLRU is partnering with us - it's a PBS television station across the street - they're partnering with us because there's a documentary coming out in September on Latinos and there's one - I think about about an hour of it - has to do with World War II. So, this documentary has used a bunch of our photographs and, you know, documentaries at a national level. But at the local level, the local PBS stations all do some sort of outreach to try to get community involvement. So, they called us and said, "Hey, do you have any ideas?" and I said, "Well, as a matter of fact ..."

We're doing this thing where we're creating - do you know what Soundslides are?

0:35:11 RF: Yes.

0:35:13 MRR: Okay. We're doing a thing where we're getting World War II vets and we're audio recording them as they're sitting in front of an iPad, swiping through some of their photographs from World War II.

0:35:27 RF: Nice!

0:35:27 MRR: And when they do that, they're able to, you know, they're looking at this photograph, they're describing the photographs and then we're going to edit all of that down to, um, five minutes. So, the interviews will be around an hour long and then we'll edit that down to five minutes and create some, you know, hopefully some really engaging, uh, soundslides, which we are calling, um, our project's name is "Voces" - the oral history project - so, we're calling this photoVoz, as in "photo" and "voz".

0:35:59 RF: Ahh, yeah.

0:36:00 MRR: And, and, so, we're gonna have this on the PBS website and also on our website and we're just kind of doing a pilot because they were, they did provide us a little bit of funding - just enough to hire somebody to edit this stuff and then the, and then, hopefully we can get some, you know, we

can apply for some grants. So, that's what we're working on. that's one of the things we're working on.

0:36:22 RF: That's so great. Well, you kind of answered my next question. I kinda chuckled when you started to do it but, it was what benefit have you received from using oral histories as a teaching tool. Um, can you expand on that a little bit? You said that it was, it's basically -

0:36: 38 MRR: Yeah, I mean, personally it's rewarding but the other part of it is that, um, we're not the only ones using this material. The material is going into a, you know, it's going into a library here on campus and it's getting used by, um, by academics all over the country. And, a lot of graduate students, in fact, come to Austin or they'll contact us and we'll send them a copy of a DVD if they're interested and we'll say, "Give us 10 bucks and we'll make a copy for you" - stuff like that.

So, you know, the fact that it's getting, that actually we're accomplishing what our mission is, which is to create a greater awareness of the participation of Latinos, um, that's kind of, that's what you ask for, that's kind of, for a lot of us that are involved in this sort of work, that's the payback. That you feel like you're actually making a difference and you can see, you can see where it's making a difference. You can see it in, um, some of the other books that are coming out of it, you can see it in a friend who says, "Oh, by the way, the book that I had on the Korean War, I had to revise it and I made sure, because of your project, I made to include Latinos this time."

0:37:56 RF: Wow.

0:37:58 MRR: So, you know, we know, we know that that's happening. It would be great if it could happen in a much larger kind of measure, um, but, you know, we're making some, we're making some inroads.

0:38:14 RF: Yeah. So, who do you believe benefits most from it?

0:38:18 MRR: Really, truly, I think the whole country does. Because, you know, our country has, for too long, had a real Eurocentric view of our history and the kind of history that I grew up on, that I read when I was in high school, um, and middle school was all about how White Texans had done this and White Americans had done that and I never read about the contributions of anybody that was, that were people of color.

When I got to college in the mid-70s, um, well, actually, 1973, I started here. In 1973 when I started here and I felt like I was a kid in a candy store because there was beginning of some, uh, classes on Mexican-American history. And, I felt like this, the history of Texas, is a lot more complex and interesting than the history that I read when I was in high school. And I think that when kids understand that, when they understand that, yeah, there were a lot of different people that contributed to what we have today as a state, I think all of the whole, the whole country needs to be aware of that. And, when you have the whole country aware of all the different groups that have contributed, then you're gonna stop having these people that feel like, you know, we're losing our country because, because minorities are going to be, are the majority of our country now.

0:39:53 RF: Mm hmm.

0:39:54 MRR: You know, right now, there's such a fear that our way of life is going to be taken away from us - and I'm not talking about me saying this, I'm talking about the Ann Coulters, Rush Limbaughs, Bill O'Reillys of the world who say, "Oh my gosh, you know, we used to be able to look at the Senate and Congress and the Presidency and everybody looked like us" and that's not happening anymore. We're seeing some brown faces and some brown faces of lots of different shades.

0:40:24 RF: Mm hmm.

0:40:25 MRR: Between that and "we're losing our country" and the reason they feel that way is because the country that they think that they come from is that white-washed history that we've been reading about.

0:40:35 RF: Mm hmm.

0:40:36 MRR: When they start realizing that, hey, those faces there, they've always been here and they've been making some contributions, I think that they're going to have a much different sense of, of our own country. And when that happens, I think they'll stop being so scared of where we're going. I think, I think our country is going in a really good trajectory and the one thing that worries is the backlash we see from, uh, from some of these folks.

0:41:06 RF: Mm hmm. Yeah. Well, great, is there anything else you wanted to add about oral histories and journalism?

0:41:19 MRR: Uh, not really. I think we have, you know, it has lots of - well, the one thing I should add is, actually, um, the AEJMC - you know what that is?

0:41:30 RF: Mm hmm.

0:41:35 MRR: Okay. We are beginning an oral history of how people within AEJMC have been involved in issues of diversity.

0:41:44 RF: Ahhh.

0:41:45 MRR: And we're just kicking it off. We're starting it up in August at the convention and so, it's something that's going to take us a while but people are really enthusiastic about it because at this point in, in our country's history, you know, for a long time, diversity used to be a big part of journalism and with what's going on in journalism right now, I kind of see it taking a back seat and people aren't as concerned about it and I think it's still, I think it's still crucial that we think about those issues and there's apparently a lot of people that feel the same way and we also want to get these stories before people aren't able to tell them anymore.

0:42:34 RF: That's great. Wow. And you said that's going to be at the, it's starting in the fall?

0:42:41 MRR: It'll start in August when we have our convention in Washington. Um, we're going to start by having a meeting and, um, and are you, are you part of AEJ?

0:42:50 RF: No, I'm not.

0:42:52 MRR: Oh, you should join. There's a graduate student - I don't know if it's a status group or a division, what those things - you should join. And, and if you go to Washington, every, what we're doing is we're getting all the different divisions and, um, I forget what they call it. There's different interest groups. All these different interest groups and divisions are being asked to get a person to be liaison to this overall effort and, um, I've only back from one division but they are revving to go. They have, you know, I'm just asking for one person and they want us to have two people because they have a lot of other people that want to do the interviews and, um, I think there's going to be a lot of interest.

0:43:37 RF: That's awesome.

- 0:43:37 MRR: You know, it's kind of relevant history for a lot of folks. I mean, for me, diversity is kind of like, one of the, the, the bedrocks of good journalism in our country. And, a lot of us got into journalism and made that, you know, the main part of what we did. I mean, most of my reporting had some element of race and ethnicity and, you know, I think if forms such a big part of our society. I think there's a lot of folks that feel the same way and want to make sure that doesn't get lost.
- 0:44:12 RF: That's awesome. Well, I'm looking at the website now so I definitely won't forget. Awesome. Well, thank you so much.
- 0:44:19 MRR: You're quite welcome.
- 0:44:20 RF: I greatly appreciate it. I feel like I've learned a little bit in hearing how you're using it in your classroom and even, for me as a student, how I can implement some things, so thank you for taking the time to talk with me.
- 0:44:32 MRR: No problem. Best of luck to you.
- 0:44:34 RF: Thank you. Same to you. All right. Bye.

Interview Transcript – Jim Sheeler

Interviewer: Roxanne Foster

Date of interview: July 30, 2013

Duration: 1:10:51

Jim Sheeler is an associate professor of journalism and media writing at Case Western Reserve University. As a reporter, he “specialized in narrative obituaries of people whose names had never before appeared in the newspaper, but whose stories were often more fascinating than any celebrity or politician.” His work with life story obits led to his winning a Pulitzer in 2006 for “The Final Salute,” a 20,000 word immersion narrative nonfiction series about fallen military personnel and the people who notify their families of their death for the Rocky Mountain News.

Sheeler earned his bachelors degree in technical journalism from Colorado State University and his masters in journalism from the University of Colorado.

JS: Jim Sheeler

RF: Roxanne Foster

0:00:00 - We were experiencing technical difficulties.
0:02:38

0:02:39 - This time was spent catching up with Jim’s travels and his plans for
0:08:16 the fall semester. It contains information unrelated to my research.

0:08:17 RF: Yeah. Um, let's see. Well, we can jump right in ...

0:08:20 JS: Okay.

0:08:22 RF: Now that we've kinda caught up. Um, so, you know, the, the, the
interviews that I'm doing, they're around how journalism professors are
using or have used in the past, oral history as a part of their curriculum and
teaching tools and things. Does that fit with you?

0:08:40 JS: I, it does. It's just, I'm not sure exactly how much my stuff will fit with
you because I use oral history sort of as a jumping off point, um, for the
stories, uh, that I want them to do but I specifically tell them I don't want
oral histories. [Laughs] So, I'm not sure. You can just kind of take what
you want from, from what we're doing over there. And, I guess I can just
kind of give you some background and you can shoot questions at me if
you need to.

Um, but I just, basically what I was looking for was - I started this in Boulder - was I, I had to teach this multimedia class and I wanted to do stories that were, you know, stories of people and in the classes I had taught before, um, trying to really immerse, get the students immersed in the lives, um, was a problem. Both for the students, as far as time, and because of, I think, just because they are students. Um, you don't have people that are as willing to spend as much time as they would, I think, with a journalist who's actually gonna publish something. And, it's difficult, I think, to get them to, at least it was for the students that I was teaching in Colorado, um, I had trouble getting them as immersed as I wanted them to be. And, kind of, that was one of the big questions I had, as, coming from the newsroom to the classroom was, is it possible for me to get the students in those same, sort of, intimate, raw, special moments that, you know, that I love witnessing and documenting as a, as a reporter. And, um, that was kind of my goal and sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't but I was looking for a place that would really foster the ability to do that. And, because I'd written so many obituaries and I'd spent so much time in nursing homes, I thought, well, this is really, actually a really good spot for them to just spend the whole semester. Instead of just saying, you know, spend a day in the life with a city councilman or garbage man or whatever, try and actually spend every class there and, kind of, have one place that's sort of their home base.

And, so, I picked a nursing home in Boulder and, um, it worked out really well. Um, we found, a, um, you know, I'd spent - it took me almost the entire summer to get all of the legal stuff and all of that worked out, you know, there's all the privacy and HIPPA stuff and all that but we worked up some, um, uh, some stuff that they were happy with legally and, um, I just wanted, because I wanted them to come in as reporters. I didn't want the nursing home to be able to approve anything, you know, we were just going in and if they found something they would report it. You know, if somebody told them something, they would have full access. That was my main thing, was, okay, go in and somebody, you go into an organization like that and a lot of times they want to have control.

And, so, negotiating that control was a big, um, it wasn't that much of a hassle but it took a lot of, just, kind of, paperwork and stuff like that. So, that took a lot of work. Once we got all that, the nurses that we found were just fantastic. You know, they really were, really wanted to help us out and find the people that they loved, you know, who were great to talk to and had great stories. So, um, you know, from then on, uh, I had the students basically go and I told them that, you know, you can start off with an oral history but what I really want is the story. You know?

Like, um, this one, like, one student, she had talked about this guy who was a photographer all his life and, um, he, um, he was showing her all of his pictures and, um, she had kind of written the story as, um, as a story about his photography. But then, she ended up realizing that - and a lot of these stories end up being this way - sort of about his journey since his wife died and how the photography helped him kind of cope with that and how he was trying to move on but that he was having a really hard time with it. And, um, they had a Valentine's Day dance and, um, he actually got up. After she, she got to know him, really, through the oral history part, but then, so, he was comfortable when she was there, um, when he took his, when he decided to get up and ask this woman to dance for the first time he had danced since his wife had died. And he was like - and that was sort of the, um, the theme of the story, was sort of, finding his, finding the right steps after all of that.

Um, uh, there were several other stories about - like, one was, uh, she had done sort of an oral history of this guy who was really into Native American artifacts and collecting them and that's, sort of, how he'd spent much of his life. Um, but then, the more time she spent with him, and she wrote this story that was about that but she had mentioned in this story about this poetry group that he hosts. And, um, he, uh, you know, I asked her about the poetry group. And she said, yeah, she'd gone to one of the poetry readings and she told me about this poem he had, which is just amazing, it's this poem called, "Do I Dare to Say I Care for You?" And, uh, it's about moving into a nursing home and, um, trying to figure out if I want to make new friends because those new friends may die soon. You may have to go to their funeral. And, so, it's, the whole poem is do I dare to say I care because, um, once you start to care that's, um, it's taking that big step of, of that commitment, of, you know, you may have to, you may end up - it's going to end up in sadness, probably. Um, and it's interesting because that's sort of ended up as a theme throughout all of these nursing home stories was, just this theme of caregiving. And, what, uh, what it takes out of everybody. Um, the people who are being cared for and the caregivers themselves, um, at that stage in life. Um, anyways, she did end up doing this great story framed around the poems of "Do I Dare to Say I Care for You" and she had, basically, his wife was also dying at the same time. And, um, she was totally fine with it and he was the one who was all, he was, he was, in the first story she wrote he came off as, sort of, this tough, you know, confident, cool confident guy, and then the, you know, the poetry story, it ended up, you really saw who he was and that's what I was looking for.

That's kind of what I say the difference between, sort of, the oral history, you know, I was born here, I did this, I learned this, which are great history stories, but I want them to, I tell them that I want them not to write about the story of who they are but, kind of, why they are who they are - what made them who they are. Um, you know, how those events in their lives influenced them to become this person that they are at the end of their lives. And that, for me, is the real lesson. And that's what I want, are more lessons rather than just, sort of, a, um, and I don't know if when you talk about oral histories if you're talking about the traditional, just, you know, I was born here, I went to school here, got married, that sort of thing, where it's just sort of chronological beginning to end. You know, I really want them to jumble that up. I really want them to create these stories that are, like I said, lessons. Real profiles.

And, the, when I got to Ohio, um, I wanted to do the same thing and I had noticed on the list of places for the students to volunteer, one of them was the Eliza Bryant Village Nursing Home. And, I looked at the history of it and I thought, "Oh, this is absolutely perfect." You know? It's the longest, continually operating African American nursing home in the country, um, you know, formed by this daughter of a freed slave, this amazing woman and, um, kind of kept going for all these years. And, um, so we went over there and they, actually, they were thrilled to have us over there. I think, mainly because they're in, they're in kind of an area of Cleveland that people just, you know, a lot of times forget about and, there're a lot of people there that people a lot of times forget about. And, they, they were so thrilled that, you know, the students would want to come and tell their stories it didn't take any of that legal wrangling or anything like that. They're like, "Just come in! Just, you know, people want to talk to you." So, um, it was fantastic, you know, kind of from the beginning.

And, I like to tell, one of the amazing, most amazing stories in the past three years happened that first, um, time we went over to the nursing home. Um, one of the first guys to volunteer, um, was this man named Andrew Bailey. And, he said, um, at first he said - have I told you this story?

0:18:04 RF: I think I read about it. But you haven't told me. Go ahead.

0:18:07 JS: Okay. Um, it's still, he's such an amazing guy. Um, he said that he wouldn't tell us his story but he would tell us his wife's story and, um, I said, "That's fine. Any way that you can get into their lives." Because he said, "You know, I'm not, I don't want to be the star of this story. My wife

is the one who's the star." And, but you can't talk to her because she's over in the nursing home and he was living in, um, the assisted living - actually, not even assisted living. He was living in independent living, which is, kind of, just an apartment, um, off to the side and they have these different wings.

And, um, and he sat down with the students and he told them, kind of, her story - oral history style - of her life. You know, who she was, where she was born, how she got there. Um, and, uh, then he started talking about himself and, um, how they got together and, you know, their, sort of, their lives together. And, um, he said, but I live over in the independent living and she lives, um, over in the nursing home and he asked them, "Do you want to come see my apartment?" And, they were like, "Yes! Of course!" So, we went up to his apartment and on the way he said, "You know, I know how far it is from my apartment to her bedside. You know, it's 320 steps," I think he had said. And, uh, 220 steps, I think. I can't remember. But, it was this amazing, you know, he just, he knew exactly how long it would take. And, he had, sort of, tallied it up since he went to see her 10 or 12 times a day, back and forth, he'd added it up to that he would basically walk a mile every day to go see his wife, back and forth. And, you know, it's just, you know, this really touching thing.

We went into his apartment and, uh, the students actually noticed - I didn't even see this. The students noticed that he had, just this immaculately clean apartment, you know, the students had noticed that he still had his table set for two, even though she couldn't come visit him, he still had his table set up for two and, um, you know, he really opened up in there, in his apartment. He started talking about why he wanted to talk about how she was the one that we should be writing about and not him. It's because she had made him the person he was. You know, he admitted that when, when they were first married, he was kind of a bum, he was, you know, drinking too much and just smoking and running out all the time and, then he said, "She changed me. I saw how she cared for other people and it changed me." Um, "And I realized that I needed to change." Then, he actually went into his closet and he pulled out this pack of cigarettes that still had written in Sharpie marker the date that he quit smoking. And, he pulled out his wallet and in his wallet he had an old fishing license that he had written the date that he stopped drinking. You know, these are the things that he was the most proud of and, um, he said, "It's all because of her, because of her strength that allowed me to do this."

And, um, one of the students asked him, he started giving us a tour of his apartment, and one of the students asked him what the most important

thing was and, he said, he went right into his bedroom and he pulled out this bottle of perfume and he, you know, opened it up and he said, "This," you know, "This is her scent. This is her." He said, "When," um, "when she dies, the kids can have anything in here. This is all I need." You know, it's just, because it's her. And, you know, he started crying and we started crying and, and that was for me the moment when I realized, "YES!" You know? It is possible to take these students and, some of them who'd never interviewed anybody in their lives, and put them in this situation that's just as real life as it gets. You know, that's something that - classroom - it's, you know, that - the essence of, of what we're supposed to be doing here, I think. It's telling stories like that.

So. Um, but then, he actually said, "Do you want to go see Mrs. Bailey?" And I'm like, "Yes! Yeah. Absolutely!" So, we walked the, the 220 steps to, to her bedside and, um, she, she's kind of, she had pretty, pretty, her dementia was pretty well advanced, so she recognized him but she was still sort of out of it. He came up to her and he started, you know, as soon as she saw him she lit up and, he would do, kind of physical therapy with her, like these squeezey things with her hands and, um, they would joke back and forth. He'd say, "Who's the boss? Who's the boss?" And she'd say, [in a gravelly voice], "I am the boss." [Laughs] Um, and, you know he talked about, you know, how he would stay sometimes just by her bedside if she was having a bad night and just sleep there in the lounge chair, you know, next to her hospital bed. One of the students asked him, you know, how he kept so positive and he just said, "It's because of her." You know, it's, uh, he said, you know, "I used to want to win the lottery. I used to go and, you know, gamble all the time" and he said, "You know, I'm really glad that I didn't win the lottery. I'm glad that this is all I have." He said, "I'm not a rich man, I'm not a poor man but I'm a happy man." And, um, you know, it's just so perfect.

So, the students were writing their stories and, um, and then, like a week later we got a note - this email from the nursing home - and, just kind of saying "sad news". We had expected her to die because she was in really bad shape but it turned out that he had died. And, um, you know, it just, you know, really, sort of cemented that lesson that I was trying to get to them as well that, you know, these stories are here, they're hidden but you gotta grab'em while they're there because sometimes they don't last that long. Sometimes they're these gifts that people just have waiting for you and that's exactly what that was. And they realized what the whole, so, that whole story came together, what could've been an oral history of his life or her life, it turned into this story about how her teaching him compassion ended up, um, allowing him to care for her as she was dying

and go out with that same compassion. Um, so, that's, that's a real story and that's what, um, I'm really trying to get students to look for and find. Um, that's real life and, um, that's real lessons.

0:24:33 RF: Now, you hinted at it a couple times but how do you define oral history?

0:24:37 JS: I, I would define oral history as just, sort of the things I go and listen to in the library when I'm researching people - when I was researching people for obituaries, where the volunteers will sit there and ask, um, you know, uh, just those basic, very basic questions. Um, it's not something that, um, like, I think it's different than sort of Studs Terkel or something like that where it's more, sort of, geared toward a theme.

Um, when I think of, sort of a traditional Smithsonian-style - I don't even know, I haven't listened to the Smithsonian ones - but it, just, sort of a traditional oral history, um, it's those ones that are, you know, it's got the information there but there's not the context, really. A lot of times you don't hear the story behind the story. Um, what about you? I'm interested to know, 'cause I don't know the traditions of oral history that well.

I just, you know, I, like I said, I'm not an academic. I just know, sort of, what I've - the oral histories I've heard in doing research and they're not something that I would spend my free time listening to.

0:25:49 RF: [Laughs] Understood. [Laughs]

0:25:51 JS: [Laughs]

0:25:51 RF: Ummm. Uhhh, okay, I'll tell you my version later because I want to get through your stuff and then we can talk about my project. And then, maybe that'll change your mind a little bit about what an oral history is. [Laughs]

0:26:05 JS: Okay. [Laughs]

0:26:07 RF: [Laughs] Ummm. I mean, I think that you definitely fit just because your students start with oral history as, kind of an entryway into finding the story behind the story or the story - behind the history, even. Um, which is what I think makes it a bit more on the journalistic side than the historian side. Um, when did you begin teaching the classes at Colorado?

0:26:35 JS: Uh, the first one was probably, let's see, I think it was 2009? I think.

- 0:26:46 RF: Okay. And, what was it called?
- 0:26:51 JS: [exhales] I think, I think they've all been called multimedia storytelling but I'll check and see. I'll check and see. I think I might've called it - no, it was called something, it had some big, long name because it was, uh, it had something to do with a grant from the, uh, from, uh, some community engagement. It was called Community Engagement - I can't remember the name of it. It was, um, yeah, but it was, because it had funds - the syllabus had won a grant from the community engagement group on campus and so, it had to have that in the title. So, I can't remember the exact title. But the one, the one that i'm teaching now is, um, immersion journalism/multimedia storytelling.
- 0:27:42 RF: Um, and in these classes - at Case Western U, you what, like, what fields of study are your students coming from?
- 0:27:49 JS: It's all over. Um, I have, you know, English students, um, we have students who are taking some of my journalism classes, um, nursing students, I've had engineering students, chemists, uh, you know, biochemistry students - just people who, um, yeah, it's definitely varied and the, um, the, uh, different experience levels and knowledge levels have really played into, um, the classes, you know, the really, diversity of thought in the classes and how people are coming at all these different stories from their own backgrounds and, um, and, and skill levels.
- You know, some of these people, um, like I said, have never taken a journalism class before. So, it's a matter of trying to pair people up and still sort of teach all of this stuff as - you know, you have to learn all of the button-pushing stuff as well as the interviewing skills and, and it's a lot to kind of throw on somebody. So, um, there's a lot of, sort of, baby steps and, you know.
- But I think that's what's so great about going to a nursing home because, really, there aren't - you know, these are people who, you know, have a lot of great stories and they have the time to tell them and they're patient to listen to the students and help them out. And so, it makes it a lot easier, I think, for the students, also because they, um, there's really no pressure of, um, I can't come and see you next week - unless the person dies, which actually has happened, unfortunately. Um, or, you know, I mean, it's just, but that's life. You know, they learn to deal with that too and learn that, it's, these stories are fleeting also but, um, but the, um, yeah, I think that, that's why that setting really has been great.

0:29:44 RF: That's cool. Um, you talked a bit about the button-pushing and things like that. How do you incorporate learning about the technology into what it is that you're teaching students?

0:29:57 JS: Um, it's, it's still evolving as the technology continues to evolve. Um, the students come in with, you know, quite a bit of, um, kind of technological experience just knowing how to, um, the very basics of shooting - and I just give them the basics on shooting video and editing. I given them a class on editing. Sometimes I do it at the nursing home and then we go and do a practice there. Um, uh, I've used Lynda.com and some other online training, MediaStorm training modules that help.

I think that, you know, and this is something that comes up at all of the, um, journalism educator conferences, is this, this, you know, sort of, balance between, you know, trying to teach the button pushing stuff, um, and teach the storytelling. Because, I mean, what I'm best at is to teach you the storytelling part and what's been great is now we have, you know, Lynda.com or different online tutorials and that's fine. They can learn how to do all that stuff. It's like a textbook for them, you know? They learn how to do that kind of stuff on their own, in many ways, and we'll do some labs on it but I'm not teaching a production class, you know. So, it's basically taking what they have and trying to say, okay, now, we have this transcript, we have this video. And yes, you still have to teach how important sound is, how to, you know, always having their headphones on and things like that but, once they get through that the hard part is, "what's the story?"

0:31:43 RF: What do you guys use?

0:31:46 JS: A little bit of everything. We started with flip-cams. Now we're using, sort of low-end, um, but high-quality, like, Canon, little mini-camera, mini video cameras. We have the Zoom, uh, H1 microphones for their slideshows. And just, some of them use point-and-shoot, some of them use their iPhones, some of them use different DSLRs, you know, very low-end DSLRs that we have. It's pretty low-end equipment. It's not professional grade but it's close enough. You, know, so.

0:32:20 RF: And then, how do you go about teaching the storytelling?

0:32:24 JS: I think it comes through just working through the students together. You know, it helps to go through the past stories we've done, um, so obituaries and other profiles that I've done. You know, how, um, what the

difference is between a list of facts and a real story. Um, and, you know, what's, what's the compelling thing here? What is it that's, that's special about this person that they have to teach me? Um, that's a lot of it and it, it, a lot of it is just through examples, and through them breaking down, you know, their stories in class and –

Okay, so, um, like there was a story this last semester about, um, a woman who, uh, let's see, we met her at one of the, um, Alzheimer's, um, dementia care groups. They have these, sort of, group meetings and, um, she was saying how, um, how difficult it was to care for her dad, um, because, um, he didn't think he had dementia, um, he just, you know, she had, she had just gotten the, um, power of attorney over him, um, and her brother also didn't think that his dad had dementia even though she was kind of the one who was like, "Look, he's done this. You know, he locked his keys in his car and he didn't know where he was and he, he was having all this trouble." And so, she moved in with him and, um, you know, which is already, kind of this interesting kind of caregiving story of how do you, you know, how do you deal with all of this. And, um, it turned out that, um, she, um, she finally opened up while we were there and said that, um, he hadn't been around at all when she was growing up. And, she's had a really, kind of, rough relationship with him throughout their whole life - that he just kind of ran around the whole time she was growing up. Any yet, um, because of her mother's strength, you know, she said that her mother would've wanted her to care for her dad.

0:34:38 RF: Wow.

0:34:39 JS: So, you know, here's this kind of, grumpy old guy who doesn't want her care and she's giving it all to, to care for him and in her spare time she would sketch these pictures - she actually is a fantastic artist - um, and, uh, so, she'd sketch pictures of all her children, she was showing us. And, um, she had this picture of her dad that she'd sketched and she'd given it to him for Christmas and, um, uh, she said, you know, "He doesn't think it looks like him." And it was so perfect, you know? Just, you know, she, she pours all this effort into taking care of him or giving him this present and, he was just like, "It doesn't look like me." You know, so, and, you know, the way that he sees her and she sees him and, you know, there's so many gray, you know, images that come with that.

Um, and, you know, we kind of - our theme this last semester was, um, these women caregivers who were in, sort of the same, um, uh, tradition as Eliza Bryant, you know, who started the nursing home. And, because we had her, we had another woman who was a nurse there at Eliza Bryant -

the oldest, she'd been a nurse for I think 20-plus years and, you know, they'd tried, other hospitals had tried to lure her away, you know, with better money and better things but she just, this was just a place that she felt like she needed to be because these were people who weren't gonna be cared for. Really special lady. Um, there's another woman who was living in independent care, who, after church every Sunday goes and visits with the people in the nursing home who have no family. You know, and, she's this hilarious woman, who had come over from Jamaica and just, you know, this bundle of energy, um, just fantastic and um, so she was really funny.

So, it was a good balance. And then we had a historian who met us at the cemetery where Eliza Bryant's grave is and it turned out that the gravesite was just recently, um, in the past ten years, um, until then she didn't even have a headstone.

0:36:47 RF: Wow.

0:36:47 JS: So, they just gave her a headstone. So, it's sort of this, these, these sort of hidden, strong, um, women, African-American caregivers that people have - just don't see.

0:36:57 RF: Wow.

0:36:57 JS: So, that was sort of our theme of, of the whole semester and it just, it just kind of clicked and worked out really well. So.

0:36:04 RF: How do you teach students about interviewing? Like, how do you do that?

0:37:09 JS: Uh, it's, um, it's a lot of, sort of, watching me do it. Um, I, I show, I mean, I give them lists of questions. I have them develop lists of questions and then tell them that they don't have to stick to those lists. That's one of the, that's one of the hardest things to teach them is that, after they've spent all this time listing, you know, to the, figuring out these questions that they're going to ask that you don't have to go down the whole list. [Laughs] So, um, and, you know, if somebody brings up something like, "Oh, well, my father was never there for me" - Okay! Then, this whole interview has just changed. You know, the whole idea of it. So, I give them some situations like that.

I think it's, it's, it's gotten better as the classes have gone on because I can show them the evolutions of stories, the questions that students asked to

elicit these answers, um, the questions that I've asked in different stories. So, I try and really break these stories down to the point of here's how everything fell into place. You know, sometimes it's not, you know, they don't realize that some of the best things, you know, come from not asking any questions. You know, you're just hanging out with somebody and they say something and you just follow up with that. It's just being around people. That's one of the benefits that this class has is that they're able to spend so much time with the people there that they can just watch things happen and then allow that - them to realize that that's a big part of the story. It's just the events that are happening in front of them, not the sit down at a table interview.

0:38:48 RF: Yeah. Now, I think you mentioned this with Mr. Bailey. Do you go out with the students?

0:38:54 JS: I do, yeah. Um, and I've been trying to find the right balance with that as well. Um, because Eliza Bryant is kind of in a difficult to access area of Cleveland and not all of the students here have cars - in fact, very few of the students here have cars. Maybe, just maybe a quarter of the students, um, because they pretty much just live on campus and, which is also a reason that I want to get them off campus because [laughs] they call it the "Case bubble". And it is a bubble there, you know, and students are afraid to go into different parts of Cleveland. And, there are some dangerous areas where you don't want'em to, you know, I wouldn't want to just have, um, you know, a young female student carrying a bunch of very expensive equipment, you know, in a bad part of town but, um, so we carpool over there for parts of it and then they carpool over there on their own as well.

Um, but I spend at least half the classes over there, um, kind of going, I'll just see, kind of, how students are evolving with their different interviews. I'll kind of pop in, see what's going on, ask a few questions. So, I'm trying to do it - the first class we had, we only had, um, four students because nobody had heard of the class before. So, I was able to, it was basically like an internship where I was able to go and look over their shoulder the whole time. So, this last class, there were twelve, which is, um, kind of about, you know, we had groups of, you know, four groups of three, um, and, uh, so I was able to pop in on them.

And then, they also do individual stories as well. So, um, it's just sort of - and I would also teach, we had a, they gave us access to one of their meeting rooms, so I would sometimes spend the first hour, um, in the meeting room talking about, sort of the lesson and then the next hour and a half would be them going out and doing it. So that worked out pretty well

and, you know, I am able to bring my portable projector or whatever and show some, you know, movies and we had a Facebook group where we would also be talking about, all the time, um, you know, posting, uh, video and people and comment on that. So, it's really sort of a class that never ended, you know, they had required time that they had to look at other people's and critique other people's videos or stories and, you know, having that on the Facebook group seemed to really work better than Blackboard because all the students hate Blackboard. So, but they're always on Facebook at least, you know, once a day, so they would see that somebody had posted something and they could look at it. It worked out pretty well.

So, we used Facebook, we used Vimeo, um, to upload the videos, um, and um, it was all private and, um, and then at the end, I'm still trying to compile them all into a website. I had planned to do that at the end of the semester but obviously, things kinda got crazy, um, I didn't have time this summer. But, uh, that's something else I'm doing this summer - trying to compile all these into, uh, a functional website. We didn't actually, 'cause I, that's not part of the class. I thought about that.

We, the first class I taught in Colorado, we actually teamed up with the multimedia class and they built the website for us. Actually, one student pretty much built the website for us. [Laughs] Um, but it, there's just not enough time, I think, to do with students who have no journalism experience at all, to basically come in from the very beginning and come out with a functional website, I think, you know, it's hard enough to get at least two really good stories that they're proud of each. Um, that's my main goal, is to have a, sort of a profile story that's, um, written with an audio slideshow and then a 2-3 minute video story. So.

0:42:42 RF: And what happens to the raw material that you collect?

0:42:45 JS: Um, I keep it. Um, I have it all. Um, some of the, some of the people, some of the residents want it so I just burn them a DVD of it for their families. We give'em all copies of all the stories and the nursing home as well. Um, but the raw video just stays on my hard drive. I don't know. I'm just keeping it, I guess there's no real reason to - the stories are pretty much done, but, um, space is really cheap these days. In case I need to use it for practice or, um, if something happens that it's worth finding again. I do keep it. Yeah.

0:43:31 RF: I'm looking through the questions. Uh, let's see. You kinda touched on some of these in your, like as you were just giving me the overview and

kinda catching me up on what it is you do in the class, so I'm skipping some.

0:43:47 JS: Okay.

0:43:48 RF: Um. How do you communicate to your students the difference between oral history and storytelling? Like, how do you really just help them draw that distinction and how do you communicate what you're really looking for?

0:44:09 JS: Uh, part of it is. I guess it's, it's, it's, there's, like, so many different, um, things that I'm trying to overcome with these students. You know, there's the, the, um, the way that people talk, you know, just like, that they think this is what you want. Just an oral history and that's fine to just start - in fact, that's one, you know, place that I just, why don't you just start at the beginning or just start where you're comfortable talking. And then, you know, just kind of ask questions from there. And, sometimes, they'll just write that chronologically.

Um, but, um, there's also the, um, traditional research paper model that they're, they've been taught how to write, which is not storytelling by any stretch. Um, it's like, it's like when I was in journalism school, trying to break my feature writers out of the inverted pyramid. You know, here, I'm trying to break them out of the research, academia model and into feature writing. Um, so, you know, it's, it's a different challenge and also, when they have no, um, you know, journalism experience - where I was actually teaching at a journalism school for, um, there's another hurdle.

Um, a lot of it is just, you know, just reading them stories that work that I, and kind of breaking them down and showing them why I think this, this story worked or - and it's actually a really good question. I think I as, as, also, as they turn in stories and they get molded from sort of a fact-based this happened, then this happened, then this happened, um, to, um, a real story, I think they realize what the differences are. You know, like, what, what do these different elements mean? Why do you have these details in there?

Um, and then, you know, just some simple - you know, would you read this? Would your roommate read this? Is this boring? You know? I, I think that part of the, um, just that, that element of, you know, the challenge of time, you know. If this were sitting up on a website, how much time would you spend on it? - that they realize, no, I wouldn't read this story, which, for a lot of their papers, they don't care if people would read that

story. You know, whether it's an academic paper or something they're turning in for many other classes. No, that's going to end up ... [silence] ... the rest of their life.

When they realize that - and I emphasize that - you're dealing with people's [undecipherable due to internet issues] here. It is the, you want this story to live up to this person's life. Then, that's more of a challenge of, okay, this isn't just something that's going to get filed into a drawer somewhere. This may be the last thing that's ever written about this person. So, it's really worth it to put in the effort to make it into a real story, something that you would read, your mom would read, you know, something that you would, you know, send around to your friends. Um, and, I think, you know, just sort of that mindset change seems to help also.

- 0:47:24 RF: That's great. That's really what I was looking for, so that's great.
- 0:47:29 JS: Great.
- 0:47:30 RF: Um, so then, you probably touched on this or you may have another idea - what do you hope your students take away or what do you hope that they glean from the entire process?
- 0:47:43 JS: Um, I just, I think that, uh, I want them to know about all the stories that are out there that aren't being told and, um, how those stories can influence their lives and how any of us can be the ones to tell them.
- 0:48:20 RF: And, how's that received by your students?
- 0:48:22 JS: I don't think they get it in the beginning, um, that they're - some of them have never been in a nursing home before. Um, some of them haven't really had that much communication with old people before so they're pretty awkward and scared. Um, but I think, once I show them, sort of, both, once I show them what the other students have done already, and, which is great because that's a pretty, it's a bar that they don't think they can meet and then they realize that they ca- when they start getting to those moments of, you know, I just, you know, "This person told me this amazing thing today!" You can just see their eyes light up that they've made these breakthroughs and they know that, that I told them were possible and eventually they all get to that point of, you know, not all of the stories are as good as other ones, not all the connections are as strong bit I think there's a bond with, with all the students and all of the residents to some degree and, um, and they do realize just how, um, how, how well that time has been spent.

0:49:29 RF: And, what are the challenges?

0:49:32 JS: Sometimes it's, uh, sometimes it's, uh, it's, it's life, it's dementia, it's, you know, all kinds of different, it's, it's people who don't want to talk about something in their life - it's the same challenges that we all have as journalists. Um, you know, trying to get into that, that real, uh, essence of what life is. I mean, not everybody is going to open up like some of these, um, some of the residents did.

Um, so, um, sometimes there's, you know, physical challenges; there's a guy who'd had a stroke, um, who was very difficult to understand. Um, and, we, um, we went back and forth on - she'd done an audio slideshow, um, and he was this great guy and he, you know, he had these amazing stories of being a Marine and, um, his wife was hilarious and, um, but, uh, because of the stroke he, his, you could hardly understand what he had said and, um, the student was very against putting, um, uh, subtitles underneath his voice because she had, she had come to understand him, you know, after, you know, just like anybody with an accent or something, you can eventually, you start to figure it out. Um, so she could understand him but afterwards people, all the students just said, "I have no idea what he said at all." Um, so, we kind of came up with a, a happy medium of, kind of, summarizing what he would say in a slide and then having him say it so you could actually kind of set you up for what he said and then you could, under - "Oh, that's what he's saying!" instead of having the subtitles and I think that worked out well as, you know, as a respect for him while also allowing the reader to tell the story.

Um, so there's, kind of, ethical kind of challenges like that, um, uh, because you do - you want to respect these people, um, you know, they're opening up at this point in their lives and, um, you could show, I mean, like, we showed one guy, um, the older man who was, uh, um, we were there when he was putting in his teeth in the morning. Um, and, and, but he was fine with us, you know, he was, you know, and, um, and that was, uh, as long as he's fine with it, you know, I think it's, it's fine. Um, but I wouldn't want to be sneaking up on people. I'll let them know, you know, you want people to be comfortable. They're letting you into their lives and into their homes. You know, you don't want them to, um, you still want to, to, kind of, oversee and have control of the story but you also don't want to go someplace that's, um, that's gonna make these, that's gonna be intrusive, that's going to be, um, um, you know, invasive. So.

0:52:38 RF: How do you teach students, like, where that line exists, especially when dealing with "life". Really, how do you teach someone who, I'm assuming, is going to be in their early 20s probably about, just being aware, even? About the ethics and about the level of respect that's needed when dealing with, especially, older people?

0:53:01 JS: Yeah. Um, part of it is through my experience. You know, I go through, sort of, um, uh, case studies, if you will, because I've, you know, I've, I've written a lot of stories about older people. Um, there's this one story where we did where, um, the photographer took a picture of - and this is one of the first stories I read in the first day of class - um, this, uh, photographer had taken a picture - we spent a year, not a year, we spent several months with a, this, um, 76-year old who was taking care of his 103-year old dad in the same home where they both grew up. And, uh, it was a similar, almost a similar to the Scruggs family I was talking about before where he had, really, no relationship with his dad throughout his entire life and, now, he was sort of taking care of this guy who, you know, he was trying to get closer to before they both died. And, um, the photographer had taken this really touching picture of Stan, um, making Harold's bed - and Harold was the older guy - making his bed while Harold was in the shower, sitting, he's sitting on a, like, a little chair but he was naked but you couldn't really see anything but, it was a naked 103-year old man.

But it was this really touching picture of how close and how distant they were and it just, it showed so much. Just a beautiful picture. Um, but, um, as soon as the photographer showed it to me I was like, "That's ama-" you know, it says everything about that story. He just said, "Well, I'm not comfortable, um, I'm not sure I'm comfortable running it." And, um, he told me this great thing, which was, he said, you know, he, he, he sees all great pictures as a gift from the subject to the photographer and when someone gives you that gift you have to treat it with respect.

And so, he actually went up and did something that I don't think - because we had already had permission, basically, from them to use whatever we wanted - but Steve wanted to make sure that they were comfortable with that photo, so, um, he went up and told Stan, the younger, the son, he's got this picture and I just, I, I think it works with the story and here's why I think it works and that's something that I tell the students. If he, you should be able to explain this to yourself and be able to sleep on it. You should be able to explain it to the person and have an argument that you think works, um, for why you really think this needs to be in there. And, um, Stan was like, "Yeah, that's fine but you better show dad. He's the

nekkid one." [Laughs] So, he showed it to Harold and he was fine with it and just, just having that permission made it, you know, made it so much easier for us to sleep at night and also, you know, it's just the right thing to do.

0:55:47 RF: Yeah.

0:55:47 JS: Um, yes, they could've said "no" but, um, you know, sometimes you have to take that risk of, you know, um, you gotta be human about it. So, and I think that, um, these students, for me, and I think are much more, and I think just, younger people in general, are more, in my experience with the students, they actually are definitely more inclined to err on the side of, um, keeping something out or not publishing something that might be, um, uh, harmful or hurtful or, you know, um, but, uh, than, say, a old-school, traditional journalist who's been in the newsroom for 30 years.

Um, but I think that, so it's actually a lot of times, the opposite - trying to have them dig a little deeper and say, "So, what does this mean?" You know. That poem, you know, why, go find out what that poem means instead of, um, focusing on, you know, the pictures that are hanging, you know, the Native American stuff in his office. Um, so, you know, that's, um, a lot of times, just, that's, that's more of the problem than, um, worrying that they're going to be exploitative, um, so.

0:57:04 RF: Why do think it's, why do you think that is? Like, why do you think that it's, you're having to kind of shove them in the direction of probing instead of the other way?

0:57:14 JS: I think it's because we're not taught as people to go there. [Laughs] You know? And, as, um, you know, especially, and you don't, you don't go there on the first interview but, you know, once, once the people come to know you, you can, I think, start asking those questions and I think the students, it's because, um, whether it's, you know, there's all these other elements around.

You know, we're not taught to, we're not taught as people to talk to people about illness and death and mortality and, you know, all of these, you know, you're not even supposed to say the word "cancer" around somebody. You know, just, um, but these are people who, they've been through all that. You know? For the most part, they've dealt with it and they're totally fine with it. They're out front with it, you know to the point of, you know, you know, being right there in a way.

And I actually have the nurses come in and tell the students that because the nurses, you know, I think, help them understand that from a more authoritarian spot than me. Um, just like I'll have, you know, uh, hospice workers or victims' advocates come and talk to my "Introductory to Journalism" class, just to talk about how to deal with victims of tragedy. You know, so they know the right questions to ask, they know that, you know, here's places where you do want to go, where you don't want to go.

And then, also, just letting them hang out and look at how the nurses and other people around interact with them. Um, you realize that - the students, I think, realize more that, um, that really, a lot of the areas that you thought were taboo or off limits, um, are really just your own, sort of, constraints that you're putting on yourself.

0:58:57 RF: What type of preparation do your students do before they step into an interview?

0:59:03 JS: Um, they'll go, they'll write down the questions and I'll go through the questions with them. Um, and then, it's, and we do do that, just from, some lists of questions that I'll give'em. There's the, um, StoryCorps questions, I think, are good. Um, a good basic, a good, sort of, starting point. Um, they have some, just great - and I ask them to come up with other questions besides the StoryCorps questions based on, you know, those. Where should you, what should be the follow-up question to this question? Um, have you seen that? Are you familiar with that?

0:59:39 RF: No, I'm not. I'll have to check it out.

0:59:42 JS: Yeah, check it out, Um, they have a kind of, you know, how to do the StoryCorps interview. And, um, you know, that's, in some ways, that's what they're, what they're doing is boiling, you know, their interviews, which I think some of them, I think I talked to somebody who worked at StoryCorps and they said that sometimes those interviews are more than two hours and they have to condense it to 45 seconds or less, you know. So, um, you know, those, those, that's really trying to get right to the story. So, um, uh, but they have a list of questions if you want to do a StoryCorps-type interview or you want to interview your grandparents or you want to interview, uh, a veteran. Here's a great list of questions. And, they're really good. They're a good starting point. Um, but that's, that's the whole thing of you don't want to just go down the list of, of, um, of questions.

Um, so, yeah, that's how they'll prepare for - and then they'll come back from the interview. I listen to their interviews and I tell them, you know, what, you know, what they didn't ask, what I could've, what you could've asked, um, which is one of the most frustrating parts of - well, I hate listening to my own interviews. Everybody hates listening to their own voice, so. But then, so listening to their interviews is frustrating because, you know, a lot of times I just, "I wish I was there to ask this question right here," and, so. But then, then they learn that and they can go ask that question. So.

1:01:03 RF: I think I do that to myself. [Laughs] It's like, "Aww! I wish I could go back and ask that again." Yeah, I do that all the time. Um, I'm guessing that with the people that they interview, there's really no telling what's going to be the topic or, basically, they don't know what they're stepping into until they start to talk to that person. So, I was just asking about background research and whether or not they go in with any idea because you talked about, you know, words like "cancer" being off-limits and knowing what, what is "safe" to ask in that type of environment. So, that's why I ask that question. Yeah.

1:01:45 JS: And, they, they have the very basics, a lot of times. Um, they'll just, 'cause I do, do, actually ask the, um, the nursing home to give me a list of people that would be good to talk to, um, because, you know, there's some people who, you know, their dementia is so advanced that, um, and I have had people interview people with dementia and those stories have turned out nice but they have to, the students really have to know what they're getting into. And that can make for a really difficult interview.

Um, so I ask, I ask for patients who are, you know, more coherent and have, can tell their story but if they can't, you know, maybe if they're, if they have a family member who comes and takes care of them that can tell their story while they're there, that's fine too. But if it's somebody who can't talk and, you know, you can't just sort of randomly go in and talk to anybody. So, I do tell them, "Okay, here's somebody, all we know, we know that he's, um, he's kind of a practical joker. He was in the Marine Corps and he's 80 years old. You know, those, so, something like that. Just something that the nurses, kind of, told me.

1:02:48 RF: All right. Then, how do you decide which students interview which interviewees?

- 1:02:53 JS: It's pretty much random. I, um, I, at that point, a lot of times I don't know the students that well. So, you know, it does end up as pretty random. But, no, it has worked out fine.
- 1:03:06 RF: But do you choose or do they choose?
- 1:03:08 JS: Um, I choose.
- 1:03:09 RF: Okay.
- 1:03:09 JS: I just, you know, kind of pick their names out of a hat.
- 1:03:12 RF: Gotcha. Cool. Um -
- 1:03:14 JS: I mean, if there's somebody who's, who might be one of the more difficult, um, interviews because of physical or health limitations, I might give it to somebody who I know is, maybe been in one of my journalism classes or something like that. But -
- 1:03:28 RF: Okay. Cool. Um, what's the overall feedback you get from students about the class?
- 1:03:40 JS: It's very positive. Um, extremely positive. Um, you know, some, uh, some students keep up with the people, you know, afterwards and they, they form relationships. Um, we have, the very last class we present the stories to the residents at the nursing home, so they're able to hear their own stories and be the stars for the day. And, um, you know, it's a, a, it's a really fantastic. It's one of my favorite classes that I, that I teach, with even, this is one of my favorite classes that I've ever taught but that day of that class is always amazing, you know.
- And, um, yeah, sometimes the family members come and they hear stories that they haven't heard before and, you know, the family members will start crying and, you know, it's just, because, you know, we, they get to hear their stories and the students talk about what it's meant to them to, to learn, uh, these life lessons, so. Um, yeah, it works out really well. They, they, they, um, the definitely enjoy the class. I think so. I've gotten nothing but good feedback on it.
- 1:04:48 RF: That's awesome. Who do you think benefits most from the students going in and doing this type of storytelling?

1:04:54 JS: Uh, it's definitely, um, reciprocal. It's, um, the students obviously are meeting people that they're gonna remember for the rest of their lives and the residents, you know, um, the nurses have told me that, um, once the students come in, some of the residents, some of the residents are, are, amenable to having students interview them and some of them aren't. Some of them are just too modest, you know, which, it's a problem you come up with whether - especially with all the World War II veterans I've interviewed, and, they just don't, they don't, "I don't have a story. I don't have a story." Just, you know, but if you just have'em sit down with you ...

And, um, I've heard from the nurses that, once the students come in, sometimes the, the, uh, the chatter at the dinner tables changes from, you know, you know, griping about the food or their health elements to talking about that, that girl who came from Case who came up to interview me and here's, and she brought up this story that I'd forgotten about and then, even somebody who wasn't interviewed will come up and say, "Can I be next?" You know? [Laughs] And, so, because they start, they realize that, you know, they're the star. And, so, they want to tell their story. "Maybe I do have a story after all." You know? So, um, and they say, the nurses say that sometimes it actually changes that, that mood, um, in, even after the students have gone, which is fantastic to know.

1:06:16 RF: Then, what do you personally gain from it?

1:06:19 JS: I have, you know, I love these stories and I love being able to, um, you know, these are, these are the types of stories that, you know, not, you don't get to do all the time as a newspaper reporter. So, um, but they were always my favorites. So, now I get to, um, sort of, vicariously live through the students' stories and, and go out and report, you know, several of these stories all semester and, um, maybe have my fingerprints on a little bit of them but definitely learn, um, the same lessons that I would have if I had been there, which is, it's just fantastic. So, um, it's, um, definitely one of my, if not the best, favorite classes I've ever taught. So.

1:07:07 RF: That's awesome. Okay, um, is there anything you want to add about the classes, oral history as a starting/platform?

1:07:16 JS: I don't think so. I think that definitely covers it.

1:07:19 RF: Cool. I did have one more question that was kind of a, just my curiosity. When you talk about the audio slideshows that you guys put together -

- 1:07:27 JS: Mm hm.
- 1:07:28 RF: I understand, of course, that the interview forms the basis for the audio portion but what do you use as the visual?
- 1:07:36 JS: Oh, they take, um, photos. They'll use, just still photos, um, with their, uh, sometimes with their iPhones, sometimes with the DSLR cameras and, so they, I, I, I teach a very, extremely basic, uh, photography, kind of, lecture but then they also do the Lynda.com photography modules. Um, and, uh, um, and then, yeah, so they, so, and I want them to be taking pictures of them as they're doing whatever they're doing. If they're looking through scrapbooks, there's pictures of them, you know, close-ups of their hands or, you know, just so you get a, a chance to see and it's usually, you know, the audio slideshows are usually a minute, minute-and-a-half, so, you know, ten, fifteen pictures is all they need.
- 1:08:27 RF: Okay. Hmm. And then, how do you - I know that as I've done some, some visual slideshows and things like that - how do you teach them how to balance, like, the interviewing portion and the photo portion? Because I know for me, I have to switch sides of my brain, almost, to get to do both of those things and I don't always do them well if I do them simultaneously. So, how do you get them to manage the time of doing both of those?
- 1:08:55 JS: Yeah, they usually aren't doing it at the same time. I usually, and, sometimes, actually in the last class I had them pair up, so one was shooting, um, shooting photos while the other one was interviewing but, usually, I just tell them to do the interview first and then, um, depending on, sort of, what the interview talks about, oh, she talked about her grandson, you want to make sure you get a picture of her grandson, or something like that. Um, it's just, it's going back a second time to get the photos and spending time because the, the audio is the most important. If you've got bad audio, nobody's gonna listen to it and I think it really drives the photos. Um, but, then they spend a separate day taking pictures. So.
- 1:09:46 RF: And then -
- 1:09:46 JS: And, that's also, it doesn't get, also, you don't hear the clicking of the shutter while you have the audio going. So, that's important.

- 1:09:52 RF: Very important, yes. [Laughs] Um, how do you, oh what was my question? How, like, how much time, on average, does each group or student spend with an interviewee?
- 1:10:07 JS: It depends, really. Um, I know we've got, what fifteen weeks? And, at least half of those are probably – more than half of those are at the nursing home. I can look in my syllabus and give you a better, a better idea. Um, but I would say at least eight hours of time with each person. So.
- 1:10:34 RF: Okay. Cool, I was just trying to put it all together in my brain -
- 1:10:39 JS: Yeah.
- 1:10:39 RF: to see how it all fits together. Cool. All right, well, thank you for your time. I'm gonna turn off the recording device that's back here and then I'll tell you about oral history.
- 1:10:50 JS: Okay, okay.