

MARION GORDON (INTERVIEWEE) INTERVIEW

CONDUCTED 12/09/2021 BY

ARABETH BALASKO (INTERVIEWER)

**BEGIN – Transcription completed by Charles Balasko**

**ARABETH BALASKO (AB):** Hello, my name is Arabeth Balasko, and I am an archivist and historian serving at the Greenbrier Historical Society and North House Museum. Today is Thursday, December 9th, 2021, and I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this oral history interview which will primarily focus on your youth during the time you attended The Bolling School in Lewisburg, West Virginia. Before we begin, would you please tell me your full name and the years that you attended the Bolling School.

**MARION GORDON (MG):** My name is Marion Gordon and I attended The Bolling School up through the seventh grade.

AB: Great, thank you, Mr. Gordon, and again I'm...thank you for being here with us, and I will be asking a series of questions today regarding your time at Bolling. If there are some that you do not...or that do not relate to you, we can skip over them. And if there are some comments or feelings that you have that you would also like to share about your time at the school, please feel free to share those at any time during our chat. I will begin now with a series of questions. And, once again thank you for taking the time today to share your story and your voice with us.

My first question, Mr. Gordon, is can you tell me about Bolling School?

MG: Well, at the time Bolling School was the only school that I knew about, and ah, of course it was in our neighborhood. I lived on Maple Street...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and the school is on Oak Street which is just one street over, so we walked to school every day, and, of course, you know, that was a lot of fun...

AB: Yeah (with light laughter).

MG: ...you know, being a young kid. But, ah, once we got to school it was...it was all business...

AB: Okay.

MG: ...you know, 'cause the teachers were strict (AB says "Oh..")...and, very strict and ah, they expected us to do certain things, and if we didn't do 'em, then we got paddling...

AB: Oh, my goodness, Mr. Gordon. Can you tell me a little bit...like, do you remember any of the different types of rules, like, was it, you know, no chewing gum?, or no going in the

hall?...or do you remember the different types of the strictness, I guess...an example of their strictness?

MG: Well, each teacher had their own strictness...

AB: That's probably true, too...

MG: ...you know. Some didn't allow you to chew gum (AB says "Uh-huh), okay, and none of them expected you to talk while they were talking...

AB: I can imagine that.

MG: And, ah, and then when they left the room, to go to the principal's office or something...they would put...ah...another student, or maybe even another teacher, in charge of their class, and if you misbehaved you were in trouble (AB lightly laughs in background and says "Uh-oh")...you were in trouble. And, ah, just to show you the strictness...I got a paddling one time because... back then we played a lot of marbles...

AB: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

MG: ...out in front of the school (AB says "Yeah.") used to be a marble ri...ah, dirt field...(AB says "Uh-huh) and we would play marbles during recess. So, we had marbles on our person almost every day. And it just so happened this particular day I was bouncing marbles off the wall (AB lightly laughs in background), and the president of the student council...student body, okay, turned me in (AB says "Uh-oh!") to the principal, and I didn't know there was a rule that you couldn't do that, but anyway, I got a paddlin' (AB says "Uh-oh" and laughs lightly) 'cause you're not supposed to marble...ah, bounce marbles off the wall (AB & MG both laugh lightly), so that's an idea of how strict it was (AB says "Yeah".)

AB: In what years...I know you said you attended up to seventh grade, correct?

MG: Yeah.

AB: What years, ah, were...was that, Mr. Gordon?

MG: Ah, well, I graduated from Lewisburg in sixty-six (AB says "Uh-huh"). So, it was, ah, I come over...I come...I left here in sixty-two, so (AB says "Uh-huh, okay")...ah what is that, seven years? (AB says "Yeah. Uh-huh")...so, that would have been fifty...fifty-four (AB says "Uh-huh")  
and that's...

AB: Uh-huh and do you remember who the principal was at the time who gave you the paddlin'?(AB laughs lightly).

MG: Oh yeah, yeah. The principal was Earl Clay (AB says "Okay. Uh-huh). Earl Clay...and I remember him very well 'cause he had an outstanding signature...

AB: Oh...

MG: ...and to this day I still try to copy his signature.

AB: That's...see, that's a very influential thing (MG says "Yeah"). I love that. I love, you know, even throughout time those influences are still imprinted on you. So, ah...

MG: Yeah, yeah. Mr. Clay and, uh, Mrs. Coleman...Margaret Coleman, (AB says "Yeah. Uh-huh") she was our...back then you didn't have a separate classroom for each grade...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...you know, the first and second grade were in, ah, like a barracks building...

AB: Oh, okay.

MG: ...and then the third and fourth was in another barracks building, and then the fifth and sixth grade was in the main building...

AB: Uh-huh.

**04:56 TIME MARK**

MG: ...and then the other grades were in the main building. (AB says "Okay"). So, ah...you know, we were jus', you know, jus' had that one teacher who taught both classes (AB says "Uh-huh"), so, you sit and did homework...a lesson...while she taught the other class. (AB says "Uh-huh") So, that was...that was pretty unique 'cause...of course, I didn't know any better, and, uh, but we got everything done (AB laughs lightly). In fact, I got, uh, two grades in one year...

AB: Oh!

MG: ...because in third... third and fourth grade was in the same class, and the teacher would ask fourth grade class questions and no one would put their hand up, and I would, and I would answer them all the time (AB chuckles lightly). So, finally she just asked my parents would it okay to just move me to the fourth grade...

AB: There you go!

MG: ...so, of course, it was okay. They moved me to the fourth and then at the end of the year I passed to the fifth.

AB: There you go. That's great, Mr. Gordon.

MG: So that was...I graduated a lot younger than all my classmates.

AB: Yeah. That's a good feat. Congratulations!

MG: Yeah, it was good in a way, but as I got older, I found out it was not all that great...(AB says “Okay.”) I was so... I was so immature (AB says “That can...”)...compared to all my friends, in college, especially (AB says “Uh-huh”). And, I was sixteen just turning seventeen into college, and everybody else was eighteen and nineteen (AB says “Yeah”), and trying to play ball ...(AB says “Yeah”)...and it was...I was immature, I admit, but, uh, just made the best of it...

AB: Hey, that’s right. Life...it’s all ebbs and flows, and so, I think that’s a beautiful full-circle sentiment. So, Mr. Gordon, ah, can you tell me what did it...what did something mean to you at the time you were attending Bolling, meaning what was something...I know you talked about your marble games, and sports, and your friends and, you know, the teachers making influence on you...what are...what, at the time when you reflect from today, what’s something that kind of stood out to you then that you remember as... as youth, and then today as an adult? If anything...

MG: Well, I don’t know if this is answer to your question, but they had a music class every Wednesday (AB says “Oh”)...Mrs. Alma **Hogsett (sp?)**, she was the county music teacher...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and she would be on the radio...

AB: Oh, Wow!

MG: ...every Wednesday, and all the schools would, of course, turn their radio on and each...and every week there was a certain theme, and, of course, the teachers would put the song for that week on the board (AB says “Uh-huh”) and you had to copy it down and you had to draw a picture relat...relative to the song...

AB: Ah, that’s cool

MG: ...and at the end of the school year they would have a music festival (AB says “Oh..”) here at Bolling...

AB: Oh, wow, uh-huh.

MG: ...in the gym, and all the students from throughout the county would bring their folders with all their pictures and all their songs that they had written down and then you got awards for the best...first place, second place, third place ...

AB: Oh, uh-huh.

MG: ...so it was competitive...that was competitive (AB laughs lightly), and, uh, and then I’ll never forget Mrs. Coleman...I’ll never forget Mrs. Coleman (AB chuckles lightly) because she was very...ah, I don’t know the word, but she emphasized handwriting...your manuscript...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and, uh, you know, you had those pink sheets of paper that had the lines, and you had to make Os upright and upsidedown...

AB: Oh, I remember those, yeah....

MG: ...and she was religious about that stuff, and, uh, but now, you know, I appreciate it, and she was the lady who I think made me competitive because everything we did...we'd have jack rock tournaments and we'd have art tournaments, and, uh, we competed...seemed like we competed everything we did in that class...(AB chuckles)...and, uh, she was from White Sulphur, in fact, she's the sister of Katherine Johnson...

AB: Oh, yeah, uh-huh.

MG: ...the NASA lady...(AB says "Yeah")...and, uh, of course I didn't know that back then, but, uh, Mrs. Coleman was very, ah, influential in my...in my coming-up. And then we had, uh, Mr. Branch...he was the football coach...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and, you know, we were pretty much very respectful of him...pretty much scared of him, uh, you know, 'cause he didn't play. He had the reputation of paddlin' you very hard...

AB: I'll tell you...you guys...

MG: ...and, uh, he would have you to bend over...you'd get a chair...it was like wicker chairs back then, and you'd bend over and you'd put your head on the chair and grab the side of the chair while he paddled you...(AB says "Oh, no...")...and, uh...and so, (MG laughing gently)... Mr. Clay paddled you, but you didn't have to do that... (AB comments "There"...)...you'd just bend over and grab your knees, and uh, so, we were scared to death of...of...of Mr. Branch. We were scared not to do well in class...in his class.

AB: And what did...you said he did football?

MG: Yeah.

AB: And did he do other, ah, like academics as well?

MG: Yeah, he taught history...

AB: History...

MG: Yeah, he taught history and, uh, football. And, of course, Mr. Clay...he was the chemistry teacher (AB says "Uh-huh") plus he was the principal...

AB: Yeah.

10:03 TIME MARK

MG: ...there was no assistant principal back then. And, uh...but I remember all my teachers. Mrs. Cabell was my first and second grade teacher, and, Mrs., uh, Lefwich was my third and fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Coleman was my fifth and sixth grade teacher. And then, when we got to the seventh grade we had Reverend M..M...Meekins...(AB says "Oh, uh-huh")...he came...he was the pastor at the John Wesley Church...

AB: Oh, wow, uh-huh.

MG: ...at that particular time. And Mr. Branch had gotten sick, so they (AB says "Oh..." as a sorrowful retort to Mr. Gordon") ordered in Reverend Meekins to substitute for him...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...And then we had, uh, Mrs. Carter...Pearl Carter, who was the English teacher...Mrs. Anna Jackson, she was the math teacher...just a real small lady (AB says "Uh-huh"). She had a reputation of giving you zeros...

AB: Oh, I've gotten a zero once in my life, too, Mr. Gordon, so I can identify.

MG: And you know, zeros don't average very well.

AB: No, they do not (light laughter).

MG: So, and she was the math teacher, but she was good...you know, she made us appreciate, you know, doing your homework. And she had us get up...come to the board (AB says "Uh-huh"), show our work. And then there was Robert Merrill, Bob Merrill, he was the, ah...he was an English teacher, too. And he used to do a lot of sentence diagramming...

AB: Okay.

MG: ...which I thought was fun (AB says "Oh, yeah")...I thought was fun and...and, uh, he paddled me one time, too (AB laughing lightly in background)...(MG laughing along) Sounds like I was a bad guy...(AB says "No, no..")...but I wasn't a bad guy...I called this girl...she was giving me a hard time, and I guess I can say this...I called her a heifer (AB says "Okay"), okay...which at that time, I guess you couldn't do it 'cause I got a paddlin' because of it. (AB laughing lightly and saying "Oh...")...and I'll never forget her, ever, yeah, and never did like her after that either...

AB: Uh-oh (laughing lightly).

MG: ...and, so, Mr. Merrill, then there's Mr. Saunders, he was the scien...science teacher...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and he at one time was teachin' driver education here...

AB: Oh, wow, uh-huh.

MG: ...but when I got to the age where I could take it, uh, I was over there at the high school...Lewisburg...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG ...High School. And uh, who else was there...? Ah, then there was a Mrs. Williams...ah, Edna...not Edna Williams...ah, can't think of her first name...from Organ Cave...she came in and took the place of one of the elementary teachers. I don't recall whose place she took, and she was the librarian, too...

AB: Oh, wow, yeah.

MG ...and, uh...

AB: Was the library here in the main building as well?

MG: Uh-huh. The library was up on the third floor (AB says "Oh, uh-huh")...it was just a little area about the size of this (AB says "Uh-huh")...and she had cookies and... and cakes and stuff up there...it was like the store...

AB: Okay!

MG: ...you could buy stuff...

AB: That's the place to go, then...yeah.

MG: ...She had notepads and pencils and erasers...

AB: Yeah.

MG: ...so you could buy stuff like that and it was pretty neat (AB says "Yeah")...it was pretty neat looking back on it compared the way it is today...you know, it was real neat. So, that was all my teachers.

AB: Uh-huh (MG says "So, uh...") Well, those are great memories, though, I mean that's... it's amazing that you can, you know, truly step back into time...almost, like, you know, what it looks like today... (Mr. Gordon agreeing in background)...and you can still see all these pieces of it and I think that's really great.

MG: I can see every piece of it.

AB: Yeah. Well, will...would you tell me a little bit about it. If you closed your eyes and pretended...so the gym is right outside of our space, so what did the school look like to you as a...I guess as a, uh, when you were in the main building here?...what was kind of a footprint?

MG: Well, the basic footprint is still here...

AB: Uh-huh. That's great!

MG: ...and, uh, the gym is basically the way it is now...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and it had a big stage...okay. At one time, they took the stage out...I think when it became, uh, the intermediate school...Lewisburg Intermediate School...they boarded up the stage and made this area that we're in now...(AB says "Uh-huh")...the cafeteria...

AB: Oh, okay.

MG: ...Yeah. And, uh, but they still had the gym out there...(AB says "Uh-huh")...so, like I say, the footprint is still here...it's just been remodeled and the classrooms are basically the same as they are...as they were then, they are now.

AB: Huh!

MG: ...But, they added, you know, restrooms...(AB says "Uh-huh")...and, uh, conveniences, you know, like that.

AB: Did you all have indoor restrooms, or did you have to use outhouses during that time, 'cause I know some places, like some schools, especially, in rural communities, you know, still had to use, um, outdoor facilities?

MG: Naw, we had...down on the bottom floor, we had a boys and girls...

AB: Oh, great!

MG: ...bathroom...(AB says "Uh-huh")...and guys would get in trouble because some guys would push guys into the girl's bathroom...

AB: Oh, my.

MG: ... they'd get reported and they...

AB: They'd probably get a paddling, right?

MG: ...they'd get a paddlin' (AB and MG talking over each other here)...they'd get a paddling. So, you know, it was...it was great and something that...that I thought lookin' back was really great was...it was like first grade through twelfth grade...okay. And each grade was responsible for an assembly ever (sic) so often, and...uh, and some of 'em would be plays where you acted out...you had a script and all that. And then some was just choral type, you know...

AB: Oh, yeah, huh-huh.

**15:15 TIME MARK**

MG: ...songs, and...and it was different...and it was just different, and...and, uh, that was a lot of fun and it was always at night when the parents could come...(AB says "Uh-huh")...and, uh,

and you set up chairs on the floor out there, and it was...it was like, uh, you know, like a parent-teacher conference almost...

AB: Yeah, uh-huh.

MG: ...you know, so, uh, that was...that was a whole lot of fun being in those plays an' trying to get a role...'cause I always got the main script...

AB: Oh, okay, you're the main lead?

MG: ...yeah, I was the lead. One time I was...I was uh, Thorndike Barnhart, Junior...

AB: Okay, I...

MG: ...and I had to wear a box 'cause that's a dictionary (AB chuckles lightly), so I had to paint that box...if you...back then all Thorndike Barnhart Juniors were red (AB laughs lightly), you know, so I got that red box and we painted it, and you know...arms and legs, and I was Thorndike Barnhart, Junior (AB lightly laughing in background). I never forget that, either.

AB: Do you have pictures of those times? Does your...did any of the...one question I did have: Did you all have a yearbook? Or, did you have any types of club photos or anything from your time at the school?

MG: Ah...I don't have anything.

AB: Uh-huh, yeah, 'cause I was just curious 'cause we, uh, there's some yearbook collections at the Greenbrier Historical Society, but there weren't any from Bolling, and so that was...I wondered if there really had been a yearbook publication.

MG: Yeah...you know...like now they have picture day...

AB: Yeah, uh-huh.

MG: ...you know, but, not that I recall them ever having (AB says "Yeah") anything like that. (AB says "Uh-huh") And, of course, you didn't have cellphones (AB says "Yeah"), and no one had cameras like they do now (AB says "Yeah"). They take pictures of everything now...

AB: Yeah, that's true...

MG: And, uh, so it's basically word of mouth creates, I guess, the photo.

AB: Yeah. And the memories that you...like I mean again... (MG says "Yeah")...it's amazing that you can still... (MG says "Aw"...)...such an impact of being able to know what things were like...

MG: I can remember everything about this place...

AB: And that's great...I mean that obviously made a deep connection then with you throughout your life.

MG: We used to line up out in front of the school. I was tellin' Reese about this...They had two podiums out there on each side of the steps. The front of the school is the rear of the school now, and those two podiums on each side was your president and vice-president of the student council...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG ...you know. And every morning, okay, they had certain lines...lines for the elementary, a line for the junior high, and a line for the high school...And, you lined up, and you said, uh, the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and God Bless America, you sang that song, and the the student council officers for the class would be strategically located where you had to march around them and then go up the steps...and then, the elementary went around to the side, the junior high and high school came into the main building, and ah,, I...I always thought that was so ni...neat...

AB: Oh, yeah. Huh, just so intricate, and I can even see it in my mind, you know, so that's...

MG: ...Yeah. And everybody was quiet. Wasn't nobody unruly. It was quiet time 'cause you didn't want to get a paddlin'...

AB: I was gonna say... (AB laughs lightly)

MG: ...you didn't want to get a paddlin'.

AB: Oh...oh, Mr. Gordon. So, Mr. Gordon, I know that, uh, you talked a lot about your teachers and all those experiences, which are great, and I know that during the time, uh, that you were here at Bolling, it was a segregated school. Ah, would you be willing to share with me some of your experiences, ah, being here at the height, I suppose, or beginning to be at the height of the Civil Rights Movement?

MG: Well, to be honest with you, other than it being on TV, we didn't really notice it.

AB: Yeah, I mean that's great. Like I said, I wasn't sure what, you know, the area in Lewisburg it would've experienced. I wanted to chat with some folks who went there to learn about it.

MG: Yeah, uh, before I went over to the high school, the high school here would play high school sports. And some schools wouldn't play us because, of course, we had the worst equipment and everything, and, uh, we had this old fiel...which is Dorie Miller Park now (AB says "Uh-huh"), which was the football field, and it was just a rock bed back then, and, uh...but the boys...they had a schedule. They would play, you know, Frankford and Hillsborough, and Rainelle and places like that, S...and, uh, Sandstone (trailing few words mixed with talk over and unintelligible)...

AB: Oh, huh-huh.

MG: ...I remember playin' Union...they used to play some of those schools, and, uh, we had some good athletes...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...yeah, we had some real good athletes. Some of 'em went on to become (MG pauses) icons, basically, in businesses, you know, and, uh, none of 'em went on to play any sports, but they became presidents and CEOs of a couple of companies.

AB: That's awesome.

MG: And, uh...so, they got their education while they were here.

AB: Yeah. I mean...I mean that's just from talking from several folks, you know, this...you know, Bolling was truly...I mean...I can hear the love of it from you...you know like, everyone I've talked to, it was like a home almost for individuals who have just really felt safe and connected and truly cared for and educated and I think that's a great thing to feel, especially as a child. So...

### 20:30 TIME MARK

MG: Yeah, we...we didn't know much about...you know, I... well...we had two white students—Zimmerman's---(AB says "Uh-huh")...that went to school here (AB says "Oh, uh-huh")... and other than that, you know, we had no friends or any relationships... you know, they were nice and we were nice to them...they lived over on Court Street...and, uh, but other than that, uh, I didn't know any white people...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...I didn't know any white people until I went to the Lewisburg School...

AB: Uh-huh

MG: ...in eighth grade. Everything was in this community...African American community... (AB says "Uh-huh")...you know, we ride our bikes all over town, and, uh, you just had to be careful there because...and especially at nighttime...if a policeman saw you ridin' at nighttime and you didn't have a...if you didn't have a headlight on your...which is probably safety...and you didn't have a headlight on your bike...oh, gosh...you thought you committed murder or somethin'...they...(AB laughs lightly)...One time I had a scooter and I ran outta g...I was ridin' a scooter, but I didn't have any license, I wasn't old enough to have a license, and this state policeman caught me, and I'm not gonna call his name...

AB: That's okay.

MG: ...but, uh, he had a reputation of not being a nice man (AB says "Yeah") and he made me push that scooter...I was all the way on the other side of town (AB sighs), and he made me push that scooter, and I'd look around to see if he's...then, I'd hop on it, and then when I thought he was somewhere el..., you know, I'd get off of it, and, uh...yeah, I'll never forget him either.

AB: Yeah, people...you know, hey...the negative influences, but that could also...being able to lift your own self up in your own way...so in having your own feelings of community and in your town and like you said, your whole...this whole area...right, you said you grew up right down the road...right? This whole area was mostly Bolling students, then?

MG: Oh, yeah.

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: We had a couple kids come from White Sulphur... (AB says "Uh-huh") Of course, several of the teachers were from White Sulphur... (AB says "Yeah"). So, those kids rode over with them...

AB: That's great.

MG: ...there was no bus...

AB: Yeah, I was gonna ask. That was one of my questions, you know, how did you get to school, and you told me you walked...

MG: Yeah, we walked.

AB: ...and, but, I was wondering if there was like bussing or any types of...

MG: I used to hear some of the older ones say that they walked from White Sulphur over here to school...now, I don't know if it's true but my mom, you know, she just passed away...

AB: Oh...

MG: ...she was ninety-six...

AB: Sorry about that...

MG: So, she...she lived back then and she said they didn't have a bus, but they had an ole vehicle that they would use. Then they finally gave them an ol' bus...I think there's a photo around here somewhere of a...I guess it's supposed to be a bus parked out here in front of the school...looks like something they got out of the junkyard...

AB: Yeah, you know!

MG: Yeah. So, it was, you know, but that was back before my time.

AB: Yeah.

MG: But, uh, because this was the only black school in the county, so kids... (AB says "Uh-huh")...Back when my mom was in school, the black students come from Rainelle, from Ronceverte, from the whole area... (AB says "Yeah")...not just Lewisburg. But, when I was in school here, uh, all these other communities had their own little private... (AB says "Uh-huh")...not private, but own public black elementary schools (AB says "Uh-huh"), and then they

went to...when integration started, they went to the high school, and then town. And, uh, so that was interesting...you know, as far as the local community, like going downtown...

AB: Yeah, 'cause that's what I was going to ask you about, too. Yeah, uh-huh.

MG: Well, we didn't...when I was over here at Bolling, I didn't spend hardly any time in town other than maybe riding my bike...ah, used to be a Texaco...

AB: Oh, uh-huh.

MG: ...that...I was like a Pee Wee Herman...

AB: Yes, I love everything about that! Light laughter from AB & MG coughs)...that's, yes...

MG: ...I rode my bike and I washed my bike and cleaned my bike up every day...every day. (AB laughs lightly)...And, uh, there was some people---employees---down at the Texaco whose name was, uh, Kelly...I forget his first name...we called him Buckwheat...(AB says "Okay")...and he worked in the warsh (sic) bay, and he would let me come in whenever I wanted to to warsh (sic) my bike, and I loved that. And then there was up at the... where you have, uh, Food and Friends...

AB: Yeah, yeah....

MG: ...on the corner there...that little corner restaurant...(AB says "Uh-huh")...that used to be the Pure...Pure Oil gas station...

**25:07 TIME MARK**

AB: Ah, okay.

MG: ...and, uh, Mr. Pryor, Earl Pryor, used to work there, and he was real nice to me, and he'd let me come in there and oi..use the oil can and warsh my bike, and those ole guys were real nice, but other than...but they were African Americans, too...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...but as far as having any dealings with any of the, uh, white people downtown, we didn't. And then when I went to Lewisburg)...okay, that was my first mixing with white students...people, teachers...whatever. And, uh, and I saw...I saw a lot of discrimination there. We would have to...well, back then you could go downtown for lunch, and when we went downtown, the white kids could go in the front doors, and the Court Restaurant used to be there where, uh, the Green Space is now...

AB: Yep.

MG: ...right in the area... (AB says "Yeah")...in the bank parking lot... (AB says "Yep")...all that was the Court Restaurant, and we had to go around back where the garbage cans were and the bees and the trash...

AB: That's terrible.

MG: ...and sit on the steps, whereas our fellow students... they could go in the front door.

AB: Did any of your students ever stand up to that? Did they say, "My friends are coming in, or I'm not...", you know...did...No?

MG: ...Un-huh, no...no, un-huh. 'Course some...you know, some just brought their lunch and stayed on campus and ate. And, we always went downtown 'cause some of the parents of ours...not my parents, but some of the parents of the students who lived here in the neighborhood... (AB says "Uh-huh")...worked in the restaurant...

AB: Yeah...

MG: ...so, we could go in the back and we...we would actually end up getting more, you know, 'cause we'd order like five cents worth of French fries (AB says "Uh-huh")...you know, which is unheard of...

AB: Hey...

MG: ...you know, you're probably getting' what they getting' for ninety-nine cents...

AB: That's right.

MG: ...you know, and, uh, but yet we couldn't go in the front door. And, then, the Greyhound Bus would come through, and the blacks on the bus couldn't go in the bu...in the restaurant to eat. People could go in...the whites could go in and get their food and could bring it out to 'em...I remember that. And, I remember like Jim's Drive-in...we couldn't go out there. At one time, I remember early...we couldn't go out there. We couldn't go to the curb...they'd leave...they'd ask us to leave, and then it got to where we could go in and order, but we couldn't stay on the curb and eat it. We had to take it a...away.

AB: That's terrible.

MG: And then, finally, it got to where, you know, we could stay and eat and, uh...the Lewis Theater down here was basically segregated, because that's when they had the Military School...

AB: Yeah...

MG: ...and the Girls' College...

AB: ...and the (word unintelligible), oh, yeah.

MG: ...and the downstairs was for the whites and the upstairs was for the African Americans and, uh, I remember that very well...yeah. So, I saw that discrimination, segregation, and...very clearly then...(AB says "Yeah")...but it jus'...we didn't really think about it, you know, we jus'...was jus' in our own little world and...

AB: Mr. Gordon, were there, um, in this area like grocery stores, or restaurants in the Bolling communit...like in the area around us, or did you have to go shopping downtown, or were you...was it segregated in that respect, too, where you couldn't go into some stores to even get your groceries? I mean, what...

MG: No, well, as far as I know you could go in the store...we had a little, down here on the corner of Oak Street used to be a little restaurant had a pool table...

AB: Oh, fun!

MG: ...where you could go in and get bubble gum, candy bars (AB says "yeah, nice restaurant"), and stuff like that, and over the top of Court Street was another one...but you couldn't get any groceries...jus little...

AB: Yeah, like kind of like fun or novel...not novelty... (MG says "Yeah")...stores, but places...more experiences than food...

MG: Yeah, right. So, if you wanted to get any bread...milk, you had to go downtown to A & P (AB says "Yeah") or ah, Kroger, you know, the regular (AB says "Uh-huh") supermarkets and there was not that I know of any discrimination there. Of course mom and dad did all the shoppin' (AB says "Yeah, yeah"), so, uh, yes, uh, that was my experience doin' that...

AB: Well, thank you, Mr. Gordon. And, so, I know you talked a little bit about, you know, your fellow classmates, and, you know, not really kinda being aware here as much about, you know, the different things that were going on with the Civil Rights Movement...(MG says "Right...")... in terms of...ah...you know, did you feel that maybe your teachers kinda protected you all or shielded you all from that, or did they encourage those conversations...like, when you knew you were going to have to go to an integrated school, did they...was there something that they tried to prepare you or let you know, or did... was it kind of...

MG: I don't recall any preparation (AB says "Uh-huh") to go over there...you know, ah, we had a couple kids who were older to go over there back in sixty-one...sixty-two...they played football and they were sort of standout football players...

AB: Uh-huh.

### 30:20 TIME MARK

MG: ...but other than that there was just one or two that went over early, and then when it got to where we pretty much had to go, then that was just an experience that nobody...I don't think that anybody knew for sure when we were going to have to go...

AB: Yeah.

MG: ...because it was up and down as far as integration, segregation, and, uh, mixing students, and, uh...but I know when I got to Lewisburg...going out for basketball, I was like a sophomore,

and a tenth-grader, and there was a bunch of seniors and they didn't...and I was startin'...I was one of the first five, and, of course, these other guys were white and then they didn't want me, they wanted their friend to be the starter, so they wouldn't throw me the ball...

AB: That's terrible.

MG: ...or they would throw it to where, you know, I couldn't catch it...

AB: Couldn't even...

MG: ...just little things like that that people would do, and then the football practice...they would do things that, you know, to try to hurt you...they'd sneak up behind you...and somebody would come along and push you, and you didn't know somebody was on their knees behind, you know, for you to fall over. And they did a little...and they thought it was funny...it was jus' a little game...

AB: That's not funny, though.

MG: ...and I see those guys...some of 'em are dead, which is okay with me...

AB: Hey, you know, well, yeah, that's horrible...and it's horrible...like it's dangerous...jus'...

MG: And the coach, you know, didn't do anything...

AB: I was gonna ask if the coach ever...if anybody ever interjected...

MG: No...

AB: That's horrible.

MG: ...no, they never did anything. And, another thing that stands out is, you know, you have teachers and you have counselors and preparation for college and all that...we...I don't know of any black students were encouraged to go to college...none. And, uh, if we went to college it was just because our moms and dads got it all set up and money saved or loans or whatever. As far as scholarships, naw...and we had some smart kids, so they...we always...I think what it was is they just figured everybody was going to go to the Greenbrier and work, you know, and a lot of us took the, uh, uh...what you call it?...the Civil Service exam...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG ...and, you know, I was offered a job up in D. C. as a clerk---typist---

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...and a couple of other friends were, and some of them went up there (AB says "Uh-huh"), but I went on to college. And, uh, but as far as being encouraged to go to college or anything like that...none...none...not that I...

AB: I'm sorry, Mr. Gordon, that's a terrible feeling...you know, I mean to not...to go from a area where you felt so supported here at Bolling and to then to go in an area where you felt sort of like, you know, you...

MG: Yeah.

AB: ...you got to take care of yourself as a child, and that's just inexcusable...

MG: Yeah.

AB: ...and I'm sorry for that, but I do appreciate you sharing (MG says "Oh, yeah") your memories with me about that.

MG: It bothers...it bothers me while when I was teaching at Green...

AB: Yeah, well it bothers me, so...

MG: ... when I was at Greenbrier East...I was... taught down there for forty years (AB says "Yeah, yeah") and they would have scholarships, and so many of the African American kids wouldn't even apply for 'em. And we used to have the Bolling Scholarship...

AB: Oh, wow! Would you tell me about that? I didn't know about that.

MG: Yeah...we have a Bolling alumni association...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...which is pretty much dismantling...

AB: Yeah.

MG: ...and, uh, because most of the people who were attendin' had died off, and people didn't want to...I guess, then the pandemic come along...

AB: Yeah, yes that's a total other beast.

MG: ...But, uh, we had the Bolling scholarship...it was called the Augustus Taylor Scholarship Award...and it was... we tried to give it to a minority student...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...because most of the other organizations were white, and so then all their recipients were white (AB says "Yeah")...none of the black students got any of those, so we thought, well, maybe we could help some of the minority students by giving them...it was just like a five hundred dollar scholarship...

AB: Yeah, but that's help, you know (MG says "Yeah"), support and feeling supported.

MG: Right. And...and...and a lot...most of the time, I mean we couldn't get the students to even apply for that, you know, because, you know, they were...I don't know what the deal

was...everyone had the same opportunity (AB says “Yeah” in background), you know. We had more...it was probably (MG give puff of air through lips—like “phew”) ten to one of white students applying for the scholarship (MG laughs lightly and AB says “Yeah”) than the black kids. And, uh, so we, uh...we gave it out there for a few years and then we started givin’ it to students East and West (MG is referring to Greenbrier East and Greenbrier West High schools)...

AB: Oh, great! Yeah!

### 35:04 TIME MARK

MG: ...and, uh, we used to raise money at TOOT (refers to Taste of Our Town community tasting festival to raise money for various organizations in the community (AB says “Yeah, uh-huh)... We used to sell hamburgers at TOOT to raise money...

AB: Oh, that’s great!

MG: ...to put in our scholarship fund, but then it got to where you’re...you’re givin’ all your money to Carnegie Hall...(AB says “Yeah”)...you know, which is a good organization...(AB says “Yeah”)...but we don’t make the money like some other organizations...

AB: Yeah, yeah...what it was intended for, you know, was to support (MG says “Right”) a student...you know who’s...trying to take them to the next level of college and school...so, yeah.

MG: Yeah, so, we dropped out of TOOT. But, uh, but, yeah, but, we still have kids goin’ to school...and comin’ out of East...

AB: Yeah!

MG: ...but, of course, they getting’ counseling now. They’re getting’ a lot of counseling, and stuff now that...compared to what...what we got.

AB: And they should, you know. And all of this should have been a equal field (MG says “Right”)...and, again, I’m sad to hear those experiences, but again, I thank you for sharing them with me.

MG: We had to buy out textbooks...everything.

AB: Oh, my, gosh!

MG: We had to buy everything...we didn’t get...they got free textbooks...they get everything free now. We had to buy our textbooks.

AB: In high school, you mean?

MG: Yeah, (AB says “Oh, my, gosh!”) in high school...and over here at Bolling (AB says “Yeah”)...we had to buy our books. I’m not sure when they started giving free textbooks, but I

think I was teaching school when they finally started giving free textbooks in Greenbrier County. And you know some of them textbooks were like...

AB: Those are expensive!

MG: fifty...sixty bucks...

AB: They're like college textbooks...yeah.

MG: ...Exactly, and so some kids would go the whole year and don't have a textbook, so...

AB: Again, creating inequitable fields to even start with...

MG: Yeah...

AB: ...you know.

MG: ...and, uh, so, it was...it was...it was crazy (Here MG's voice trails off). It was crazy, yet we managed...we survived...

AB: Yeah, really, it's a testament of all the accomplishments that you've done and, I mean, and all of your fellow alumni...you know you talking about all of their accomplishments...

MG: Uh-huh.

AB: ... and, like, again, the amazing thing when someone feels supported and valued what greatness (MG says "Yeah, that's what everything...") and change they can make in the world, truly...and I think that's what's great that Bolling School provided you, from what it seems, as a haven to grow and foster into the person you've become today...

MG: Yeah, oh yeah...

AB: ...and I think that's a beautiful thing.

MG: Yeah, I give Bolling all the credit.

AB: Yeah, and I think that's great.

MG: Yeah.

AB: So, Mr. Gordon, so the last part of this...of the interview for this section is, do you feel that you have anything else you would like to share, or that you think is important to understand and reflect upon regarding the African American history in Greenbrier County? So, meaning, is there any, like, for today's, you know, generation or, you know, trying to encourage folks?

MG: Well, I don't know if this...you know...when they had Greenbrier Military School...of course, it was all white. Then, they had the Girls' School...

AB: The College...?

MG: ...Greenbrier...for women...

AB: Yeah, and it was all white.

MG: ...It was all white, and, uh, finally...you couldn't...well, you couldn't get in there...okay...and then finally, I think, the federal government come along and said, "You're gonna have to integrate". So, a couple of our friends from White Sulphur--athletes—not just regular students...they had to be athletes...okay, and they were able to go to, uh, GMS...that's what we called it...

AB Yeah...the Military...? Uh-huh.

MG: ...yeah, because they could play football...not on their academics... 'cause they could play football, but they never did, that I know of, integrate the Girls' School.

AB: Oh, I don't believe they did.

MG: And, (AB says "I can't...no") after a few years, you know, things shut down...

AB: Yeah, 'cause they closed in 1972, as did the Military School, I believe. But, I don't fully...I do not believe that they had integrated...from what I understand.

MG: Yeah, we used to go over to GMS...all the young guys, 'cause, you know, in the wintertime...there's no outdoor courts...well, the outdoor court was over behind the high school—Lewisburg High School...

AB: Oh, uh-huh.

MG: ...and uh, which is the tennis courts now...

AB: Yeah, uh-huh...down by the hospital?

MG: No...no, behind Lewisburg Elementary School...

AB: Oh, behind the school here? Oh, okay...

MG: ...where the state park is now...Matthews Park...Holloway Park...

AB: Yeah, yep, yep, yeah...

MG: ...That's where the basketball court was, and the tennis court...in the wintertime, they filled it with water and made it an ice rink...

AB: Oh, wow!

MG: ...and, uh, but we would go over there...and, it'd get cold, and we couldn't go outside, so, we'd go over to GMS 'cause they had an old gym, okay, and we'd go in there, and soon as one of the instructors over there...one of the white officers or supervisors or teachers found out we were in there, they'd come and make us leave...yeah (AB sighs), and, uh, so, but it was...I don't know, it was...just made you want to be that much better, I guess.

AB: Yeah, and you were much better than anybody who'd ever treat a human being like that, so, you know...

MG: Yeah.

AB: (AB sighs and continues) So, Mr. Gordon, I have just two more questions for ya...uh, what would say has changed the most from the time you were a young person to today...and I know that, especially, since you were a teacher, you know, also at East, what are some positive changes that you feel, you know, from again your youth till now that you feel that have happened either in Greenbrier County or just the world in general?

**40:16 TIME MARK**

MG: I jus'...I think now, uh, kids growin' up don't have an excuse, because if you want it, there's means to get it, you know, uh...you've got the military, you can join...they'll pay you to go to school, you know, they've got grants based on your parents' income...you know, they've got the scholarships I'm mentioning...(AB says "Yeah, yeah")...community scholarships...there's so much out there that if you jus' go get it...you...I don't see why you can't achieve whatever you want to achieve, but you've got to want it, you know, and, uh...some of the kids, they're...I don't know if they don't see enough role models, or they're not encouraged at home, but there could be a lot more students doin'—African American students—doing better than what they are. There's, uh...seems like around here, there's, uh, out-of-proportion number of ladies that go to college and finish compared to guys...

AB: Huh, uh-huh.

MG: ...I don't know why that is...you know, guys, I think guys think that if they don't play...if they don't get a scholarship or some kind of financial assistance to play sports, then they can't go to school. Whereas, it's really not about sports, it's about, you know (MG laughs lightly), making a livin' (AB says "Yeah") and graduatin' and gettin' you a good job. So, uh, that's one of the big things I see is kids don't seem to be motivated or still aren't encouraged enough as they need to be, and they don't see enough role models 'cause at Greenbrier East...you know, the most teachers they've ever had at Greenbrier East, which is at the time was like thirteen...fourteen hundred students, was like three teachers, you know, when the school opened, there was, uh, Pearl Carter, and, uh, Dolores Maddox, and, uh, Reverend Law...it was three...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...okay...and then Mrs. Carter resigned, and I come along...well, there was Bob Merrill, too...Bob Merrill used to be here...

AB: Here...yeah.

MG: ...In fact, I took his place at East...

AB: Oh, wow!

MG: ...'cause he was the driver's ed. teacher at east (AB says "Uh-huh"), and he retired and I was a history teacher at East and they asked me if I wanted to become the driver's ed. teacher...

AB: Oh, yeah.

MG: ...so, I became the driver's ed. teacher (AB laughs lightly), and, uh, but it was never more than three...four teachers...that's the county (AB says "Yeah ...uh") that's not just Greenbrier

East, that's the whole county. And there was never...I don't recall...maybe one bus driver—Wilmer boy—from over on the ridge...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...Dwayne Wilmer. He was the bus driver...in the whole county, now! Okay, I don't recall anybody workin' in the cafeteria...nowhere...nowhere. Downtown Lewisburg, you know, all the blacks, you went...you went to The Greenbrier. Basically, you went to The Greenbrier to work, and that's predominately where most of them went...or, they left... (AB says "Uh-huh")...they left, 'cause back then, too, Detroit...lot of my friends went to Detroit...

AB: Yeah...

MG: ...to work in the auto industry (AB says "Uh-huh"), and they stayed up there and they done well, you know...they didn't go to college, and, uh, they did do well by goin' up there with, uh, the Ford Motor Company...

AB: Oh, yeah.

MG: ...General Motors, that's the big company (AB says "Oh, yeah"), General Motors. But, uh, I'd like to see more kids get involved and guided one way...either through the school system, or through community organizations, through their parents...to more encouragement to take another step...step out of their comfort zone, and, uh, 'cause they're so talented...

AB: Oh, yeah.

MG: ...they're so talented, and really, like I say, there's no excuse...there's no excuse...and...and, uh, then the military...I always tell 'em, "I don't want to go to college"...:well, go to the military"...well, I might have to go fight a war"...well, you might have to, but you fight a war right here in the country"...

AB: You know, that's true, sadly.

MG ..."yeah, you fightin' a war right here". So, go ahead: "I can't afford to go to college"... "Well, go to the military...go to the National Guard..." You, know, two weeks...two week...two weekends a year...

AB: Yeah...a year... yeah.

MG: ..."They'll pay your way...give you re-enlistment bonuses...and, uh, just the discipline...so many kids need the discipline...and, uh, I'd like to see them require military service...at least one year, in order to, uh, you know, even if it's a part of graduation before you go to college...there should be something, because the kids need the discipline...they need discipline, I think, badly. And, uh, 'cause everybody seems to have a sense of entitlement. Nobody owes them anything, you know, uh, you get what you work to get...you don't just get it 'cause you're eighteen years old...doesn't come that easy...you got to work for it. Nobody gave you anything (MG says this in reference to AB)...

AB: That's true...that's true, they don't. You gotta dig deep and...but again, having like, again, like you said...the support system, and feeling valued as a person...

MG: Uh-huh.

45:27 TIME MARK

AB: ...can really help people go a long way...

MG: Exactly.

AB: ...and so, I can only imagine the struggles, you know, that lots of kids really do have to face, especially, when they don't even feel supported in their homes, potentially, or their environment at the school...so, it's...you know, it's so important (MG says "Yeah") to uplift and encourage. So, (MG says "Yeah") I'm glad you were able to do that as a teacher for many years, Mr. Gordon...

MG: Yeah, give yourself a chance (AB says "Yeah")...'cause some people think college is hard. I think college was easier than high school, 'cause you got all day...you finish your class...you go eight...ten (AB laughs lightly in background)...you know, Monday...Wednesday...Friday and then, maybe, one class on Tuesdays and Thursdays (AB laughs lightly) and you got the whole day off...

AB: Hey...

MG: It's just so easy, I thought, so...I try to tell kids that it's easier than high school. But, just try it! You can always stop...

AB: Yeah, it's true...exactly. If it's not for you, you can find something else that is...

MG: Right.

AB: ...that's the beauty of life. Well, thank you again, Mr. Gordon, for speaking with me today and sharing your story and your voice. And, I just really want you to know that your time and participation is truly valued by me and by, hopefully, folks who'll be able to listen and feel inspired by your story.

MG: Well, I hope I was able to answer your questions.

AB: Oh, you did more than...more than not. It was great learning all about the school and the teachers, and all these great things...and I jus...I love the organic flow of storytelling and talking.

MG: Yeah, I was told to mention to you about the, uh, the Law Building...used to be the Law Building.

AB: Yeah, I'm not sure... you tell me...yeah.

MG: It used to be the old library...downtown...

AB: Oh, uh-huh...yeah, the pink building?

MG: That pink building...

AB: Yeah, uh-huh.

MG: ...When we were growing up, that was the library...

AB: Yeah.

MG: ...and downstairs was the library and upstairs was the museum...

AB: Oh, cool! Uh-huh.

MG: ...and they had all them relics and artifacts and antiques...whatever you want to call 'em...from the Civil War.

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: And we used to ride our bikes down there and, uh, we used to play in there.

AB: All right, I love this...I love that!

MG: We used to play in there, and, uh, we'd go up there and look at those guns...you couldn't...they were in glass cases...you couldn't (AB says "Uh-huh") touch them or anything, and, uh, some of the stuff hanging around the walls (AB says "Oh, yeah")...the stirrups and saddles...you could touch them...(AB says "Oh, yeah")...and that would take you back, and, uh, we used to do that a lot...we used to do that a lot.

AB: Did you ever get to go on fieldtrips or anything with Bolling? Did they ever take you to, like again, like how you talked about the, ah, like the park down there, you said was your fiel...did you ever have like field day? Or, like I know you said that everything was a big competition...So, what did you...

MG: Well, not as far as the school was concerned. We had a 4-H...

AB: Oh, uh-huh.

MG: ...and, uh, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Lynch, they were from over, I think, Fayette County and they would come in, maybe I guess, once a week or...yeah, about once a week...about once a month, and we'd have 4-H meetings and so forth. And then in the spring, he'd have field day out here at Dorie Miller Park...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...which was, I guess, Bolling Field then...and we'd have competitions and a picnic, and that was our...

AB: Did you get little ribbons or like trophy things? Did they give you special victory prizes to show that you were the winner?

MG: They may have, but I didn't get any of those...

AB: Uh-huh, that's okay! I usually didn't either (laughter from both AB and MG)...

MG: It made me try harder...

AB: ...there we go...

MG: ...Yeah, but we had that, and then in the summer, we could go to 4-H camp over at Hill...Cliff...Clifftop...

AB: Oh, yeah!

MG: ...but we'd go over there and we'd get homesick (AB says "Oh, yeah") and our parents would come and get us, 'cause we weren't used to goin' anywhere...you know, bein' away from mom and dad... brothers and sisters.

AB: Yeah, your family...everything is... your community is a big deal...this is your area, you know, especially when you're a kid, this is your whole world, you know...

MG: Right, and we tried to take the community with us...be like five or six of us...

AB: Well, hey...

MG: ...all of 'em ready to come back home...homesick! (MG and AB both laughing together). So, but that was...that was the only like field trips or...

AB: Yeah.

MG: ...or anything like that that we ever done (AB says "Uh-huh"). And, uh, they had a Boy Scout troop...

AB: Oh, great! Yeah!

MG: ...Yeah, they started that...we couldn't get into the Boy Scout troop cross town...

AB: 'Cause it was segregated?

MG: It was segregated. So, Phil McLoughlin, who passed a couple years ago, he came up and started a, uh...uh, Boy Sout troop because it didn't think it was fair that the black kids couldn't join...

AB: Yep...and, it's not, yeah.

MG: ...the one across town. And he stayed with us then...and he was a big...we loved Mr. McLoughlin.

AB: Was he...was he a white man?

MG: Yeah, he was a white man (AB says "Uh-huh"). And he was former president of, uh, Greenbrier Valley Bank...

AB: Oh, uh-huh.

MG: ...which is City National now...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...And, uh, he, uh, then he got us where we could go to...we went to Dilley's Mill camp...

AB: Uh-huh.

MG: ...up in Pocahontas County...

AB: Yeah!

### 50:07 TIME MARK

MG: ...and he was... and then, finally...I don't know, he must've gotten busy where he couldn't do it anymore...and, then they had a black troop in White Sulphur...

AB: Oh, okay, uh-huh.

MG: ...so we joined up with the troop in White Sulphur and we went to Dilley's Mill with them (AB says "Uh-huh")...you know...with them. So, those were the only organizations where any kind of field trips that I recall...nothing relative to the school (AB says "Yeah") takin' us anywhere, hun-huh, ah, 'cause like I say, we didn't have any busses...

AB: Um...yeah.

MG: ...everybody just walked to school.

AB: Yeah. And did they, uh, Mr. Gordon, did they have...I know you had mentioned the cafeteria later on came in here, but when you were here, did you, like, bring your own lunches? Did they have a cafeteria? What was that usually like?

MG: Well, go back to the landscape...

AB: Yeah.

MG: ...up here in the back where the parking lot is (AB says "Uh-huh"), they brought in all these...well, they were there...I don't know when they brought them all in...they were army barracks...

AB: And I think you and said they were younger kids and stuff were in two, right?

MG: Yeah, they were in two like where we are now...

AB: Yeah, uh-huh. Okay

MG: ...were barracks...

AB: And then up in the parking lot was another one...

MG: ...it was like four of 'em...

AB: Oh, wow!

MG: ...one come down this way toward the driveway (AB says "Uh-huh")...that was the football dressing room (AB says "Okay") and there was one went that way...that was the one for special ed. students...

AB: Okay...

MG: ...and over on the side was the cafeteria (AB says "Uh-huh")...and, uh, Mr. Clay, the principal, his mom was the cook...

AB: Oh, uh-huh!

MG: ...and a lady...a student council officer would come by every day and she'd have a list and you'd sit...you'd give a quarter...you'd sign up for lunch. And they were good lunches.

AB: Oh, I can...I can imagine...Home cooked lunches...

MG: Yeah.

AB: ...by, you know, by a community member who probably loved dearly and plus a principal's mom...you know it's gonna be a good lunch...

MG: Yeah...that's right...so, we had lunches.

AB: Oh...

MG: Yeah, so, that was...I forgot about that part...and eventually tore the barracks down (AB says "Yeah"), and, uh, caf... tore all that down...

AB: Did they ever bring anything special...like, lecturers or like people to talk to you all, I mean like you know how in high school today, like there's different programs or like, you know, "Say no to drugs!" types of programs and stuff, but did they ever sponsor any, like, lectures or anything for you all here?

MG: None that I recall...

AB: Yeah, 'cause I know how you said the auditorium...how you guys put on your plays (MG Laughs lightly) and different things...I just didn't know (MG laughs lightly) if they brought folks in to like to do music shows, or...you know...

MG: No, none that I recall. (AB says "Yeah") The only shows or...they used to call them assemblies (AB says "Uh-huh") was us entertaining each other...

AB: Hey, that's right. That's entertainment in itself.

MG: Yeah, we, uh, didn't have any lectures...

AB: Did any teachers do like a talent show or anything with you all? Did they get silly, too, or was it...were they more... too...more serious?

MG: They were much more serious...

AB: Oh, okay...

MG: ...they were okay...I mean...they were okay. But, they never did a talent show (AB says "Get into those") with our group (AB says "Yeah")...maybe later on...when it was intermediate

school...they may have done that... loosened up...but, back when we were there, back in the sixties. Hun-huh, no, so...

AB: So, my last question to you: Did you keep all the marbles that you had won from your 1950s tournament?

MG: (MG laughs lightly) I wasn't very good. I bit my fingernails off...you can tell...I bite my fingernails...

AB: Ah, trust me, understand that...

MG: ...and I couldn't really shoot real good...so, I didn't...I wasn't really good at marbles...but I...I tried to play...yeah, I tried to play. I was into ball...playin' football...

AB: Hey, that's right, though, hey...Well, I really, again, appreciate your time, Mr. Gordon...

53:39 TIME MARK

**END – Transcription completed by Charles Balasko**

\*\*\*\*\*TRANSCRIBER NOTES:

If a word or phrase is unintelligible, I have shown it to be so within parentheses in red following the word or phrase.

I have made some parenthetical comments about the speaker's manner of expression following words or phrases to enhance the reading experience. These are in black type.

I have underlined in black type words or phrases that the speaker stressed.

I have spelled some words or phrases in colloquial format to express how I heard the speaker pronounce those words or phrases.

I have inserted in parenthesis brief statements of speakers inside another speaker's dialog to avoid constant separate entries for words or phrases that are simply acknowledgements of what the other speaker has said.