

**Oral History Interview of  
Lawrence Guyton Sr.**

**Interviewed by: Cosby Morton  
July 24, 2013  
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:**  
*African American Interviews*

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## Interview Series Background:

The African-American Oral History Collection documents the diverse perspectives of the African-American people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, segregation, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11<sup>th</sup> 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Lawrence Guyton who discusses growing in East Lubbock. Guyton recalls segregation and crime in Lubbock in the 1940s, his struggles to graduate from high school, as well as how people in his neighborhood were able to work and survive with very little.

**Length of Interview:** 01:19:41

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## Keywords

African American Communities, Lubbock, The Flats, Dunbar, segregation, poverty, crime

**Cosby Morton (CM):**

Good afternoon. Today, I have the honor of talking to Mr. Lawrence Guyton. My name is Cosby Morton, and I represent the Texas Tech Southwest Collection at the museum. Good afternoon Mr. Guyton.

**Lawrence Guyton (LG):**

Good evening.

CM:

Would you give me your full name please?

LG:

Name is Lawrence C. Guyton.

CM:

All right, and today is July the twenty-fourth, I didn't say that. All right Mr. Guyton, where were you born at?

LG:

Born in Washington County.

CM:

Where is that, sir?

LG:

That's in Wichita Falls, Texas.

CM:

Ah, Wichita Falls, Texas. When were you born?

LG:

Born April 13, 1927.

CM:

Okay. All right, what were your parents' names?

LG:

Father's name was Oran O-r-a-n Guyton. And my mother's name was Florence Harriet Guyton.

CM:

Okay. How long did you stay in Washington County? So by Washington County, you were born out in the county?

LG:

I don't remember how long we stayed. My family was there on a migrating cotton-picking campaign that year, and it just so happened that she gave birth to me in a cotton field.

CM:

Wow, in a cotton field. A lot of people were born back then in the houses, rather than in a hospital cause all my mother's folks, you know, were born at home. So did you have any siblings?

LG:

Had four. Two of them preceded—before I was born—they died. Brother and a sister that passed away. And so I was the first one to actually live out of the four siblings. So, then I had a brother named Luther that was also one of the four of the siblings.

CM:

Do you remember when you moved to Lubbock or when they moved to Lubbock?

LG:

Family came here in 1929. I understand that we were here for another cotton pick, I understand, and my brother was young at the time, and we came here because my father had a sister that lived here. And we come here at a place just east of Lubbock here called Acuff. And that's where we stopped. And then my aunt that lived here found out that we were out there, and she come out there to talk to with us. And then from that particular trip we wound up in Lubbock.

CM:

So you came here basically it looks like to me when you were two years old.

LG:

Right.

CM:

How old were you, or do you remember how old you were when you moved into Lubbock from out at Acuff?

LG:

I probably must have been about three to just remember that.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

I remember about three years old I guess.

CM:

Oh, okay. Do you remember where you first lived at when you were in Lubbock?

LG:

Not really, I'm not quite sure exactly where. But I remember I must have been about four or five I guess when I first remembered that we were living on West Broadway. I think it must have been about Avenue T I think it was, somewhere.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

I had a friend of mine that I remember, and he was living on that corner. And above him—that was living above a chicken house.

CM:

Wow. By chicken house what do you mean by chicken house?

LG:

It was just a bunch of chickens.

CM:

Wow. Okay, a chicken coop.

LG:

And they was living above that chicken house. And that's the first time I met—and in fact that was a good friend of mine, but I think what I'm trying to say is, is that that's the first thing I remember about living in a place was there.

CM:

All right.

LG:

Was Avenue T.



CM:

Was it apartment complex?

LG:

No, it was a house.

CM:

It was a house.

LG:

It was a house, like two—was a house in the front, and a house in the back. That's where he was living.

CM:

Oh, okay. And so Broadway at that time was residential.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

So you had people living—

LG:

Yeah, heavily residential.

CM:

Okay, heavily residential. Were there any other African Americans in that area?

LG:

No, this one friend I'm talking about, he was the only one that I knew of.

CM:

Okay, all right.

LG:

The only one I knew of. And we played together, and then I come to find out that we were both about the same age.

CM:

Oh, okay. All right, how long did you stay out there?



LG:

If I can remember, probably if I'm thinking right, may have been three or four years maybe.

CM:

All right.

LG:

And I remember my mother got a job, she went to working for a doctor here.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

His name was Dr. English. And I remember we were living on Sixteenth Street. I know the street, but I'm not sure about the street.

CM:

At the same area?

LG:

In the same area.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Yes. But it was Sixteenth Street. And that whole area was probably, looked like it was a very exclusive area.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

And this time it looked like everybody who lived in that area was very professional people.

CM:

I guess that area now is deemed Overton, the Overton area.

LG:

Yeah, you ever heard anything about the Kirkendall house?

CM:

Yes.

LG:

All right. That particular building I remember.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

I remember that building, and it had a weather vane with a western cowboy on the top of it.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And I used to admire because as a matter of fact it was a western thing, and I admired that. And I remember we lived in the next block just north of it. And we lived in a house upstairs. And the building is still there.

CM:

All right.

LG:

And I remember that the night that John Dillinger got killed.

CM:

Wow, okay.

LG:

And the reason why I remember it is because I heard the newspaper running down through the streets saying, "Extra, extra, extra—John Dillinger just got killed."

CM:

So they actually, at that time they actually had people that when they put out a newspaper—you actually had people doing that?

LG:

Yeah, so just running through the neighborhood for anything extra like that.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

And that was the thing—extra. And I remember talking about—my father said, “Well, they finally caught up with him.”

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And so whatever year that was now, that’s the year I remember that night he got killed.

CM:

So at your house though, this was way before TV?

LG:

Oh, no television, no, no. We didn’t even have—probably had a radio, but I mean we didn’t own a radio.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

We didn’t own a radio. We were just living in the back, what they call servant quarters.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And I remember my mother and father both was working for whoever it was. I can’t remember who they were.

CM:

Okay, all right. So this is Sixteenth Street. Now you later moved over to the area called the Flats.

LG:

Not then.

CM:

Not then.

LG:

No, we moved from there to another place. Like I said, my mother was working for a doctor too called Dr. English. I remember that; we went to work for him. And, I never will forget the situation because my mother used to teach us to read. She'd read to us, because she was a person that believed in reading, so she tried to teach us how to read. We were reading from a book called *Spot, Dick and Jane*. And I never will forget, she said, "This is Dick. This is Jane." They had a dog named Spot. And he had a mother and father. And I never will forget, they took a train trip, went someplace. Can't remember where they went, but I remember they took a train trip. And that's the first thing I remember about reading. And I never will forget, next door to us they had a big fence there, wood fence, that separated us from the next yard, the next family. And I was out there one day, and I was looking through the knothole, and I saw a girl over there. And I told my brother, he was younger, I said "Come here Luther. Come look, there's a girl over there." He said "A girl?" I said "Yeah, look that's a girl over there." And the girl I'm talking about is Edna Ray Walker.

CM:

Ah. At that time she was Edna Ray Wortham then.

LG:

Yeah Wortham, there you go, that's right. She became Walker later on. But that was her name.

CM:

Former educator in the school system.

LG:

Former education in the school system, yeah. Yeah, Edna Walker.

CM:

Now, and this is all out in the same area. That's probably Overton South I would guess is what that's called over there now, or Overton neighborhood in other words. So how old were you when you eventually moved down to Sixteenth Street?

LG:

It was 1940. A lot of things took place between the situation with the doctors. My aunt came here on a cotton pick. This is 1937.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
And so they wanted to carry Luther and I back with them, so that would give my mother a chance to sort of kind of work a while, and give her a break. Let's give her a break, probably because my mother and father is separated at the time. Long history in there. But they had separated at the time. But they came here in 1937, and we left and went back with them. We stayed with them until 1940.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
So we came back to Lubbock in 1940, and we lived on Sixteenth Street and Avenue A.

CM:  
Sixteenth and A. In the area that was called the Flats.

LG:  
The Flats, right, called the Flats.

CM:  
Okay, give me a picture, did you live in apartments?

LG:  
Yeah we lived in an apartment. They were apartments that were joined together. I think along that area where we lived there was about seven apartments I believe it was, seven. And right in front across the street from where we lived were what they called the Hog Pen.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
And they had auctions three times a week.

CM:  
Is that still there now?

LG:

Yes.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Still there.

CM:

All right.

LG:

Still there. And across the street, on Sixteenth Street just across Avenue A, was a meat market.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

And the meat market was Benny Keaton.

CM:

Okay now, this is going to be west of Avenue A. Because east of Avenue A the oil mill was there then, I guess.

LG:

Yeah, but not right there on Sixteenth Street.

CM:

Oh, not on Sixteenth Street, okay.

LG:

Right where you go under the underpass there now.

CM:

Yes.

LG:

Just right across the street on top of that was the packing company.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

And the reason why it was there was because they'd have auctions with the pigs every two or three times a week. And they just picked the pig up, carried him across the street, and they'd slaughter him right there, and then that's how the marketing came in.

CM:

All right. So the railroad tracks were there then too.

LG:

Yeah, railroad tracks were there, run right on straight through to—and we had stopped there for the station, there was a station there.

CM:

Yeah. So I guess back then they probably had steam engines.

LG:

Oh yeah, they had the steam engines. Because Lubbock was just a stopping place for the train. There was major public transportation I guess if you want to call it that. But Slaton was the place.

CM:

Yes.

LG:

Slaton was the place at that time as far as railroad was concerned.

CM:

Still is in some cases, because they have a big influence down there, a big presence.

LG:

Big presence down there. And I remember that was a big thing. But Lubbock was always a place where they stopped, and we'll get to that probably sometime later about the history about that too.

CM:

Now the apartment complex, was it on the same side as the hog pen or on the other side of the street?



LG:

The opposite.

CM:

Opposite side.

LG:

It was on the south side.

CM:

On the south side.

LG:

There was a railroad track there.

CM:

All right. Tell me some more about that.

LG:

Well, like I said it was about eight apartments along there, and they had an outhouse.

CM:

Would the eight apartments just share the outhouse?

LG:

Yeah, it was one where everybody shared it.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

It was an outhouse. And it was sitting right next to the alley, I remember that.

CM:

Okay. And the alley, I would think, probably had the railroad tracks going down it.

LG:

Yeah, had the railroad tracks running right down it. And everybody in those apartment units there, they had to share that outhouse.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And it made it difficult sometimes, because when you got ready to go the restroom, a lot of times you'd find that it was a public outhouse. Anybody who wanted to could come along there could use it.

CM:

Okay. And of course late night if you had to use the restroom. You had to go out there. So if you had to use the restroom then, did your mother get up and go out there with you?

LG:

No, my mother bought what they called—we called it a “slop-job.”

CM:

Okay I know exactly what you're talking about.

LG:

And that's what most of the people used. That was the only little private toilet inside, and they'd always take that out the next day, and empty it down in the outhouse there.

CM:

Ah, okay, all right, okay. I do remember those, because there were outhouses, especially in East Texas, I saw quite a few.

LG:

It wasn't no fun, I tell you.

CM:

Oh, I would imagine. So some of the people that lived around you over there, do you remember some of their names?

LG:

Yes, there was a lady named Prudy House, she was a seamstress. She made her living sewing. And then there was—let me get this straight. Well you know Joyce Childers.

CM:

Yes.

LG:

Her father and mother.

CM:

The McCormicks.

LG:

The McCormicks lived in the house, the last apartment right next to the tracks. And he had a job working at Purina Mill.

CM:

Right. Was that across the street over there, or was it located at a different place?

LG:

No, it's right across the street where the Purina Mills is right now.

CM:

Yeah, it's Econo Mill now.

LG:

Yeah Econo, there you go, yeah. And so I remember they lived along there; I remember that. And, let's see then there was the Shaws that lived there, S-h-a-w-s. And it was he and his wife, and he had one child, there's three living in that apartment. He was a man who worked on a farm. Okay, and let's see who else lived along there, I'm trying to get the people together.

CM:

What about transportation while you're thinking about that. Did the people have cars?

LG:

Nobody lived along there had a car.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Nobody had a car in those days; nobody lived along there had a car. But there were people in Lubbock who did have cars.

CM:

Okay, all right.

LG:

But nobody who lived in that area had a car that I know of.

CM:

So you and your brother, Luther, were living with your mother. All right, where was she working at?

LG:

At the time she was working for Cattleman's Steakhouse.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Cattleman's Steakhouse. It's out on Nineteenth Street.

CM:

How did she get to work?

LG:

She took the bus.

CM:

Ah, the bus was running, okay.

LG:

At times when the bus wasn't—sometimes she'd walk.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

She'd walk. Cattleman's Steakhouse was located west of Avenue Q.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And sometimes she'd walk.

CM:

Over a mile.

LG:

But she during the winter seasons what they'd do is they'd require cooks to wear their garments from home to work. So she'd take the bus going out there, to work at the Cattleman's Steakhouse. And she cooked there professionally, I guess, I'd probably say until World War II.

CM:

Wow, all right. So what time would she leave in the morning?

LG:

I don't know, sometimes it'd be too early, we'd be asleep.

CM:

Wow. And you would have to go to school on your own.

LG:

Yeah, had to get up latchkey.

CM:

You were latchkey kids before, okay—

LG:

Yeah, but—

CM:

What time did she make it home in the evening?

LG:

What time did she get home?

CM:

Yes.

LG:

Sometimes it would be probably night, midnight.

CM:

Wow, even if she had to walk, it'd still be like that.

LG:

Yeah, sometimes she'd have to walk.

CM:

Yeah, that's amazing.

LG:

Yeah, and it was a lot of women that worked at the time. And they had to put up with the same type of situation.

CM:

I remember, you know because when my mother came out here and then my aunt even up until the sixties would call them, and they had to go to the hill.

LG:

That's the hill, that's right.

CM:

And we'd see them on the bus stops with the white uniforms, white stockings, white shoes because they were housekeepers, and they went to the affluent neighborhoods. They'd be out there every morning catching the bus, all of them, and they'd be on the bus together. Going back to the neighborhood again, so on Sixteenth Street you had the apartments, you had the hog pen that still exists there. All right, now tell me about the rest of the neighborhood around the corner there. There's a theatre that was there, right?

LG:

Theatre was on Sixteenth Street and Avenue A.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

It was called the Ritz.

CM:

All right.

LG:

Ritz Theatre. I'm not sure right now about what time or years it was that the theatre came into existence, but it probably maybe had to be sometime during the forties.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
During the forties.

CM:  
Did you ever go to the theatre?

LG:  
Oh yeah, quite often, quite often. And it took the place of having to go downtown Lubbock, to the theatres.

CM:  
Could you go—were you admitted to the theatres downtown at that time?

LG:  
Yeah, only if you went up into the balcony.

CM:  
The balcony—that's the Lindsey.

LG:  
No.

CM:  
Oh the others had balconies too?

LG:  
They had balconies, but not for us. We were not even allowed to go to Lindsey.

CM:  
Oh, okay.

LG:  
And across the street from us was a theatre called the Palace.

CM:  
Okay.



LG:

The same thing with it, we were not allowed to go to either one of those theatres.

CM:

And that is due to segregation.

LG:

Right. But they had a theatre down there called the Lyric Theatre, right across the street from the courthouse, just west of it.

CM:

Now that's the old courthouse, or the new courthouse?

LG:

The old courthouse.

CM:

The old one that was in the middle of the road.

LG:

Yeah, that's the one, yeah. That's where everybody went and sit talked about everything.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

You could find people sitting there talking about everything.

CM:

Right, and you see that quite a bit in small towns now, they still hang around the monuments and stuff talking about—you see people there playing checkers.

LG:

Yeah, whatever, yeah.

CM:

All right, so what type of movies did you see at the Ritz?

LG:

Oh when I was a kid, I loved westerns.

CM:

So they had westerns.

LG:

Western movies, yeah. And most of the time, we'd go it'd be on Saturday mornings. We'd go Saturday morning, what they call the matinee. And all kids went there; I mean all kids, they all went there. The difference was we had to sit upstairs in the balcony. And then whites sit down below on the lower levels.

CM:

Ah, well now at the Ritz, what did you see there, did they have westerns there also?

LG:

Yeah, the Ritz had westerns. But most of it was generate mostly just to Afro-American actors.

CM:

So they had Afro-American movies at that time?

LG:

Yeah, that's what the Ritz sort of kind of produced that for us.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And we got a chance to get acquainted with some Afro-American actors and actresses. I'll never forget Paul Robeson was one of the top actors.

CM:

And I would think Lena Horne.

LG:

Well, we didn't know about Lena Horne then, we didn't. We only knew about entertainers that was on the circuit.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And we knew about people like—we didn't get a chance to see a lot of the greater entertainers. I never saw at the time—Billie Holiday was big, Muddy Waters was big. Characters like this that sort of kind of dealt with the black circuit. And then we had people that came here that done records. But we never did see Cab Calloway, which was very popular at the time.

CM:

Well tell me about the people that came here that performed live here, and where did they perform at.

LG:

Like I said, I was a young fellow, we didn't have clubs, there were no nightclubs here. We didn't have nightclubs. But they had places where a lot of entertainment went on. It was downtown. It was like the sports arena. But we'd go watch all the wrestling matches.

CM:

Oh so you had wrestling back then?

LG:

Oh yeah, back then wrestling was a big thing; it was a big thing then. Big thing back then. We saw the Strangler, the wrestler the Strangler. What I'm saying is that's the type of place we went to for entertainment. Like when they got somebody coming here for the week, you'd get an announcement probably two weeks before that event. But that's where we'd go to see entertainers that came here. That's what they done, they turned that into a place where we could go and watch entertainment.

CM:

Do you remember about how much your mother made working as a cook per week?

LG:

I'll never forget, because in the 1940s, I quit high school to go make money, and I said I'm never going back to the cotton patch. So the pay was, before the war, was twenty-five cents an hour.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

Then when the war come along, it went to thirty-five cents.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

So that was an incentive for me to quit school, to make some money to help my mother.

CM:

How much did you make going out to the cotton field?

LG:

You know, I don't know. I think it must have been maybe a dollar a day, \$1.25—because we didn't get paid full-time pay because we were children.

CM:

Oh, okay, so they actually paid, even though you—okay.

LG:

Yeah, so they got my brother and I for half pay, but they paid my mother full-time pay. So, it was half pay for us.

CM:

And I'm thinking that when you went to cotton field you went very early in the morning.

LG:

Yes sir, and you worked until you can't or couldn't.

CM:

Okay, that's a way to put it. Yeah can't to couldn't, that's pretty good.

LG:

And you had your lunch break, and your water break at the same time. At the time the man said, "Stop, let's stop." And we'll take a break, and you had your lunch and whatever it was. Then you'd go back to work when he'd say go back to work.

CM:

Wow, that is—

LG:

Like I said, it was twenty-five cents an hour. I know if you're working a regular job, and that required sometimes for you to work twelve hours a day.

CM:

Wow. So there was no such thing as an actual forty-hour week?

LG:

No, no, we didn't have no union scales at all, didn't have any. But that's why I quit high school, and that was the biggest mistake I ever made in my life.

CM:

How long did you stay out of high school?

LG:

Two years.

CM:

Two years. What got you to go back?

LG:

Ms. Kavanaugh.

CM:

And who was she?

LG:

It was Mrs. M. K. Lusk.

CM:

Oh, so this is before Mrs. Mildred Lusk was married?

LG:

Oh yeah.

CM:

Oh wow.

LG:

Let me go use—

CM:

Okay, go right ahead.

*Pause in recording*

CM:

All right we were talking about Ms. Kavanaugh which later became Mrs. Mildred Lusk. She married Mr. Willie Lusk, the bootmaker.

LG:

Greatest bootmaker in the world.

CM:

Okay, and tell me about Ms. Kavanaugh, how she motivated you.

LG:

She was my English teacher. And I used to always—I had problems trying to remember diagramming sentences, had a problem with that.

CM:

Yeah, didn't we all. (laughs)

LG:

Yeah probably, because that was meaning that you had to be able to speak the English language better.

CM:

Right.

LG:

Okay.

CM:

Yes.

LG:

So anyway, she knew I had had that problem. Well the year was 1945.

CM:

What grade did you leave school at?

LG:

1945.

CM:

I mean what grade were you in?

LG:

Tenth grade.

CM:

Tenth grade, okay.

LG:

Yeah, so I left ninth or tenth grade. But anyways, I was downtown working, shining shoes at a place called Snappy Shine.

CM:

Which existed well into the nineties and the early 2000s.

LG:

And they had a person there that worked for years there. J. B. Mason. He was one of the best bootblacks in the country I guess. Well he was there, and as it was they had about nine shine chairs in there think it was.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And we just took choice of when it was a first come first serve situation. And that's the way we made our money. But Mrs. Lusk had some shoes that needed special attention, and she knew about J. B. and his ability to fix them for her. And so she come in there that day, and she said "L. C.?" And I said, "Yes, Ms. Kavanaugh?" And she said, "What in the world are you doing?" And I said, "I'm working." So she said, "Working? You mean for what?" And I said, "I'm trying to make some money. I'm trying to help my mother make some money for us; she needs some help." She said, "Well have you ever thought about going back and going to school?" And I said, "I thought about it." And she said, "Well, why don't you just come on back?" And then I said, "Well." And she said, "Think about it." And so I did, I thought about it. So the next week I found myself going back to school again.

CM:

Wow.



LG:

And then she was the motivation for me to go back, I was two years behind. Now I had a job trying to catch up. Big gap. Two year gap in there; it was a big mistake. But I hung in there, really hung in there.

CM:

How did you catch up, I mean did you—

LG:

Trying to, trying to use the tools that I previously had, and trying to find some kind of way to make them fit together. And that was by just studying whatever it was that was presented before me.

CM:

Wow. Going back to the school, let's go back past the high school. Well, before we do that, I want to talk about Snappy Shine. That was a black-owned business, right?

LG:

Yes, it was. It was given to J. B. Mason. The previous owner was a Caucasian. And J. B. had some legal problems, and he had spent some time in prison as a juvenile. But when he got out, he needed some place to work, and so the owner of Snappy Shine, the original owner, decided what he would do was hire J. B. Mason.

CM:

Where was it located at?

LG:

Right next to the Lyric Theatre.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Right next door to it.

CM:

Okay, and I think that's where it ended up years ago, because that was across the street from the courthouse.

LG:

Right, right next to the Lyric Theatre; that's where the Snappy Shine was.

CM:

I remember it because my dad used to take his shoes down there, and they would actually shine them. They would actually re-dye them, because if he got tired of looking at brown, they'd dye them black. Was Mr. Priestly's dad down there then?

LG:

No.

CM:

Mr. Priestly told me—we're talking about Clarence Priestly the ex-principal at Dunbar. Mr. Priestly told me that his dad Roger Priestly did shine shoes.

LG:

He did?

CM:

Yeah, he said he shined shoes for a long time.

LG:

I didn't know that.

CM:

I'm not sure where he did that at.

LG:

Well I knew he had the barbeque place there, that comes up later.

CM:

Yeah, that was later, but he said he shined shoes, but he didn't say where. I'll have to ask him. Now you mentioned there was nine chairs in here. How many shoe shiners did you have?

LG:

Had nine.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

Nine in there.

CM:

How much were you charging to shine a shoe?

LG:

Ten cents.

CM:

Wow. How many could you do in a day do you think, can you remember?

LG:

Oh, I don't know. We had to own our materials, we had to buy that. The only thing that was provided for us was the space.

CM:

Did you pay rent on that?

LG:

No, we didn't pay rent on it, what we done was we paid for the space, and out of every shine, got a nickel.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

So it was ten cents, but everything we had to own was our own stuff.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

We just sort of kind of used the chair. Now, either one of those chairs was open for you to use, but you had to have your own material.

CM:

Wow, so you remember how much you could bring home in a day?

LG:

Oh yeah I brought home probably as much as maybe eight or ten dollars a day.

CM:

Wow. And that's quite a bit more than the twenty five cents an hour.

LG:

Oh yeah, oh yeah. And I was pretty well contented with that.

CM:

And you had a lot of business I would assume, because everything was downtown then, you had the bankers, you had the businesses and everything.

LG:

Yeah, everything was downtown. Yeah and of course they had a black establishment I guess—Mr. John Fair.

CM:

Okay he had—yes.

LG:

He was the one that had the mobile type of restaurant. Best hot dogs in town.

CM:

Yeah and since we're on this subject of talking about the business, let's talk about Mr. Fair. I believe you mentioned that—let's talk about him, tell me about Mr. Fair.

LG:

Well Mr. Fair was sort of kind of an icon for the black community. And he sort of kind of took advantage of that too, you know. He really took advantage of it. So he'd come right down the street, park in the middle of the block if he wanted to, because the people in authority or whatever the case may be—he never got any citations from anybody because of the fact the people that he knew. And sometimes I would, well okay, if anything happens I'll tear that up and throw it away. That's John Fair.

CM:

So by parking over in the middle of the block, you mean over there by the courthouse?

LG:

Yeah. Anywhere in Lubbock.

CM:

Was it a push-cart?

LG:

Yeah, a push-cart.

CM:

So where'd he push it from?

LG:

From I don't know where it come from—

CM:

But he might have kept it the area, or—

LG:

Yeah, someplace where he had his supplies, so he could go back to the cart and get whatever it was. But he pushed that cart. And oh man, made money with it. Oh man, made money with it.

CM:

What all did he sell on it?

LG:

Hot dogs is one thing. Chili dogs. Hot dog, chili dog. Tamales, he had tamales.

CM:

Did he make them himself? I guess he had to.

LG:

I would assume he probably may have.

CM:

Yeah, yeah okay.

LG:

Knowing John, he probably might have got them from somebody else. (laughs)

CM:

It's interesting when you mention Mr. John Fair, because in years later, one of the first, I would call him landlords that owned a bunch of rental property was, besides Mr. E. C. Struggs, was John Fair.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

John Fair was the person. So, he was probably the most influential icon I guess probably so for Lubbock's black community.

CM:

Oh okay.

LG:

Good man, you know he just done what he had to do to get what he—and his son, of course, we knew about D. C. coming up.

CM:

Yeah, D. C. and the grandson, too. All right, now let's go back to Dunbar now, talk about it. When you first started school, first grade, okay where was that located at?

LG:

It was located Sixteenth and Avenue C.

CM:

All right, so this is Dunbar.

LG:

Dunbar, the original.

CM:

Yeah, before Ella Iles, okay, Sixteenth and C.

LG:

Sixteenth and Avenue C.

CM:

Describe that school.

LG:

Right on the corner, right on the corner.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

It was three rooms.

CM:

All right.

LG:

It had three rooms, and if I'm not mistaken, if I'm thinking it right, the center room was probably used as an area room for teaching, and also for administrative purposes. And I remember at the time there was Professor Struggs., as I remember, Professor Struggs was there and Mrs. Struggs. They were individuals I knew that was there.

CM:

I'm figuring if you started school when you were six years old, we're looking at 1943 probably. Somewhere around there.

LG:

Let's see—no, I'm going back a little farther back than that.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

I'm going back now, let's see—

CM:

Oh, 1933, excuse me, because you were born in twenty-seven, I'm sorry, excuse me.

LG:

Yeah, I was just a beginner; you know what I'm talking about.



CM:

Okay, yes.

LG:

And my brother went along to school with me, because of the simple fact that he didn't have anybody home to keep him.

CM:

That's an interesting deal though, because I've talked to several people that mention the fact that their brothers came to school, or they started at five years old—

LG:

They weren't old enough to go yet.

CM:

So it was a different type of deal back then.

LG:

Yeah, so there was nobody home to keep him. So, only purpose we had is he went along to school with me.

CM:

Wow, so they welcomed him in there.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Yeah, and it was sort of kind of like—see Struggs—well people would come from down in the same area.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

Where my parents come from.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
And I remember one time we went home to visit my grandparents for Christmas, and we met the Struggs on the train.

CM:  
Wow.

LG:  
And so we went down there, and then when we came back they were on the train coming back.

CM:  
And a lot of your transportation, I've heard this, was on trains back then.

LG:  
Yeah, trains was the major means of travel.

CM:  
Major means of travel.

LG:  
Yeah. And they were segregated too, so.

CM:  
Oh, okay.

LG:  
Yeah, it was segregated, yeah.

CM:  
I talked to Ms. Burn, and Mrs. Burn told me that she actually remembers—when she went to school over there, that there was another principal. She went to school before Mr. Struggs got there.

LG:  
Okay, yeah.

CM:

And she said for a year, year and a half, she named the other person, but I don't recall his name right now, but I thought that was amazing. And she spent her whole entire career at that school.

LG:

I think I remember him too, and I knew his name.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

But that was another thing that was amazing about that situation, is that the Sedberry's Church across the street—

CM:

That later became Messiah Presbyterian.

LG:

Later became another area for teaching.

CM:

Oh okay.

LG:

And yeah I remember I was, I think, in second or third grade I believe it was, and I went to school in that building too for one year.

CM:

All right, behind the actual church.

LG:

Yeah, the church, the church was there.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

But it was part of Dunbar.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
Part of Dunbar. And I remember the Sedberry's was—they had a restaurant and everything along there, right next door to it.

CM:  
And we're probably talking about the dad, Will Sedberry.

LG:  
Yeah.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
Will and—

CM:  
The park is named after him right now.

LG:  
And, well they had girls and sons.

CM:  
Yeah, Leo, and Charles, and Alma. And I think there was Douglas.

LG:  
Douglas, yeah.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
Yeah.

CM:  
All right.

LG:

So those were his kids, but then he had some daughters too.

CM:

Yeah I remember the daughters.

LG:

And they had the beauty shop.

CM:

Ah, okay that's where the beauty shop comes in.

LG:

Beauty shop was right there. Everything was right there – the restaurant, the barber shop, the beauty shop.

CM:

Did he have the funeral home then?

LG:

The funeral home was around the corner.

CM:

Oh okay, so he did have it?

LG:

Leo had the funeral home.

CM:

So he did have it, served you all kind of ways.

LG:

Yeah. So, whatever it was the Sedberry's could help you out.

CM:

Okay, and they were located pretty much on Avenue C and B, and then Seventeenth Street right there.

LG:

Yeah, well let's see. No, Sixteenth Street, you got to—

CM:

Sixteenth.

LG:

Sixteenth Street.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Because we're talking about a little bit of across the street on Sixteenth Street just on the north side over there.

CM:

Ah, okay.

LG:

That would come up with another situation; that was what they called Coleman's Alley.

CM:

Oh, okay, tell me about Coleman's Alley.

LG:

Okay, so, now Coleman's Alley. I was introduced to it in 1940. We came back to Lubbock, and like I said we were living on Sixteenth Street there, talking about there on the corner there. But then there was a friend of mine that was in school with me, a classmate. Name was Croel Johnson. It was four siblings; Croel was the oldest one, but there were three more. Other one brother was next to him was Woody Johnson. And then there was a sister named Eva Jo Johnson. And then there was the smallest one named Raymond Johnson, and everyone called Raymond Johnson "Pop." Now what I'm trying to say about Raymond, Raymond was quite a character, I mean he had a little talent. He'd always try to do something with his talent to try to see if he couldn't make a dime or nickel or something like that.

CM:

All right.

LG:

So he could sing, and I remember there was a song called "My Sugar Is So Refined. She's one of those high class kind." And so you know, he got a chance to work, get a chance to perform at Dunbar in the school system one day, and he sang that song. But when he'd do it in public

somewhere, they'd throw him nickels and dimes out there to him, and that's what he'd use to try to eat a little bit on something, because his mother wasn't able to do no work for him, she wasn't. And that's another thing is that the father was in the Army. So, I had been introduced to them, and they lived in Coleman's Alley.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
Now, they lived in a boxcar.

CM:  
Oh, wow.

LG:  
They lived in a boxcar. Had a bed in there. One bed. And an old gas heater that sit in the middle of the floor. And you know like you really had to open the door of the boxcar. You had to open it back.

CM:  
So how's the ventilation in there, was there no windows or anything?

LG:  
You had to leave the door cracked.

CM:  
Wow.

LG:  
And, so they called it Coleman's Alley, because it belonged to a lawyer named Coleman. That's where the name come from—Coleman Alley. That had three of those boxcars in that alley.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
On the tracks.

CM:  
Wow, oh really?



LG:

On the tracks. And he rented those boxcars out. Now I don't know how much it cost; I don't have no idea.

CM:

Right.

LG:

But in that same alley there, they had other people who lived in that alley.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And this is where all the crime and everything was committed.

CM:

So let me get this straight where this is located at. This is like between Fifteenth and Sixteenth?

LG:

It was between Sixteenth and it was between—no, Fifteenth—wait a minute, let me get this straight, between Sixteenth and Fifteenth—no let's see Fifteenth—Sixteenth and Seventeenth.

CM:

Sixteenth and Seventeenth.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Okay, and then between the streets of B and C, or A and B?

LG:

Between, let's see A, B—no, between, let's see, between B, C.

CM:

Okay, wow B and C. So there were tracks there too, okay.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

All right.

LG:

There were tracks.

CM:

You see I knew there were tracks between A and B, and you had them over there too.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

Because my in-laws lived right next to—well yeah Seventeenth and C, that's where it was, yeah.

CM:

All right.

LG:

Okay. So I'm saying this, but they had all of the crimes and everything that was committed was people in there, because now there were no jobs here.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

They ain't got no jobs, nobody's working no place. So Lubbock is wide open, and it's open for anything—prostitutes.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

Bootleggers.

CM:

Gambling?

LG:  
Gamblers.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
Murderers.

CM:  
What kind of police—did police come down there?

LG:  
No, they had one—they had a policeman.

CM:  
Was he black?

LG:  
Yeah.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
Yeah his name was Cat Means [?], you might have heard about that, I don't know.

CM:  
Yeah, I think I had, yes.

LG:  
Cat Means [?].

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
He was the appointed black man down there.

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CM:

So was he actually on the police department, police force?

LG:

Yeah he was; they gave him a little authority, but nowhere else but just right there. Nowhere but right there in the area where nothing but just most of the black people hung around in the area.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

They had the Flats now, you get down to the Flats.

CM:

All right.

LG:

See the big flats, really to tell you the truth about it, located on Sixteenth—no let me see—wait a minute, let me make sure I get this straight. Seventeenth Street and Avenue A.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And they had a place there called the Mickey Mouse.

CM:

Oh, okay, I'd heard about that. Is that a club?

LG:

No, just a restaurant.

CM:

The Mickey Mouse?

LG:

It was—everything went on in there in a way. (laughs)

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Everything. Then across the street from that there was Butler's.

CM:

Okay, what was Butler's?

LG:

That was right across the street from Mickey Mouse.

CM:

That'd be on Avenue A then?

LG:

On Avenue A.

CM:

Okay, now I know there was a hotel in there at one time.

LG:

Yeah, well that's way down. You'll get back down there down where the theatre is there.

CM:

Okay, about Sixteenth, okay yeah.

LG:

Way back up there.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

See, we down here on the corner where the Flats is.

CM:

Oh, okay so Seventeenth, yeah Seventeenth.

LG:

This is the Flats. This is real Flats. See this is where people get shot and killed every day and you know.

CM:

Oh, okay. So the entire area was called the Flats, but it wasn't necessarily everything over there the Flats.

LG:

No, just—

CM:

Why was it called the Flats?

LG:

Because—I think it was because of the simple fact it was the area where a whole lot of activity went on, I mean nightly stuff. You know what I mean? Nightly stuff went on down there. And then they had Mama Becky's, you probably might have heard of Becky's there. You know where that tire company is there on—

CM:

Yeah, used to be Trambell's [??] Grocery Store.

LG:

Yeah, that's Mama Becky's place right there.

CM:

Oh, okay. Was that after the grocery store, or before the grocery store?

LG:

Oh no, this was before the grocery store come in, man.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

Yeah later on we get another messed up bunch of people down there over us too, down there too. The Trambell's [??].

CM:

Yeah, Trambell's [??] Grocery Store was there.

LG:

Yeah that was on the corner of Seventeenth and—

CM:  
And C.

LG:  
And C.

CM:  
Okay, and commonly referred to now as Snake's Tire Place.

LG:  
Yeah, right there on the corner.

CM:  
Yes.

LG:  
That's it.

CM:  
Okay.

LG:  
And then Mama Becky's was across the alley just east of it.

CM:  
Ah, okay.

LG:  
And there was Butler's right next to hers right on the corner. Ah man, it was ooh goodness. But you talk about money, ooh goodness, those people made money, man.

CM:  
And now that you mention that, when I was coming up in the late fifties, there was a pool hall there on one corner, and then the place across there, I can't remember what the name, but I do know where you say Mama Becky's was, there's a garage there or something there, but I do remember that as a club back in the old days, where a lot of people got shot.

LG:  
Yeah.



CM:

Okay. So I know exactly where you're talking about.

LG:

Devil's Alley, what they call Devil's Alley, because people got killed in there man. You know what, and like I said they had one policeman.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Cat Means. And he shot and killed several people down there.

CM:

Is that right?

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

Shot and killed us like I don't know what.

CM:

Man that's—

LG:

But I mean that's the essence of that. But like I say, that's where all the dirt went on, was in Coleman's Alley.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Coleman's Alley. It's different from the Flats.

CM:

Yeah. Yeah see I didn't know that, because see I know a lot of people come out of the Flats, and the Flat generally got that connotation years later.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

But I didn't realize there was a certain area where that was, because I know tons of great people like you. I had kinfolks who lived down there that came out of the Flats.

LG:

So that's basically some of the essence of some of the Aryan activities that probably went on. The reason why is that the town was open, and I think that's the reason why my father got here and stopped, because they land on us. They had never worked with nobody.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

But themselves.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

So when he got here, he come out here for the cotton pick, but then he turned around and go back home during the regular season, go back to Brenham.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

But I never was able to understand this, and I guess I don't know if I want to put this on record or not, but I had this aunt of mine that was here.

CM:

Yeah.

LG:

And I never can be able to understand, there was only two women in the family of my father.

CM:

Yeah.

LG:

One of them, the older girl lived in Galveston.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And the youngest one comes to Lubbock. And I can't understand why, but must have been very attractive. My aunt was a very attractive woman.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And she was in the lines of prostitution and gambling.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And she got killed.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

Got stabbed to death.

CM:

Where did she get stabbed? Where was she located?

LG:

Well they had a baseball park here, and my father, uncle—they were great baseball players, and they were part of that original Lubbock Hubbers team.

CM:

Wow, the Black Hubbers.

LG:

Black Hubbers.

CM:

Oh, wow.

LG:

This goes back to—I'm not talking about the one where my brother-in-law was on.

CM:

Right, that was in the fifties, that one was the fifties, yeah.

LG:

That was later, but originally, they were part of that team.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And they had some pretty good baseball players on there, and my father and my uncle—my uncle was the catcher. He'd catch three innings of baseball in a rocking chair.

CM:

Your father's brother?

LG:

Yeah, my father's brother. And my father was a pitcher.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And he played outfield also. So I'm saying is that she got killed at a baseball game on a Sunday. She was drunk and had with somebody else's husband.

CM:

Oh, no.

LG:

And as a result of that, the woman stabbed her to death.

CM:

Oh. You know when you talk about baseball and bringing things together, I remember when I was a kid I'd to go to East Texas, Paris, Texas, and on Sundays they played baseball. Everybody played at a park there, the adults, and they had baseball games. And that was just like a picnic, a Sunday evening picnic.

LG:

Yeah that was a picnic man, yeah.

CM:

Where did they play the baseball at?

LG:

As far as I can remember, I've tried to keep it in mind, but I can't say specifically exactly where, but it was somewhere right there—do you know where the—where are we, yeah, let me see—you know where this hamburger place is right back here?

CM:

Yes.

LG:

Down the street?

CM:

Yeah.

LG:

On Avenue A.

CM:

Those apartments that were in that area?

LG:

Well, there wasn't no apartments there then, it was a baseball park.

CM:

Wow, okay.

LG:

Somewhere right there in that area. And the reason why I say that's all I can remember, because I remember the next day after she died is that they had to go back to the place where she got stabbed, and it was at the park. So the baseball park was somewhere right along in there.

CM:

Okay, so you talking about—

LG:

Later on came the apartments.

CM:

Yeah, so you talking about west of Avenue A, and south of Nineteenth Street, right there before you get to the warehouse, and bordered on the west side by the railroad tracks?

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Somewhere in the there.

CM:

And it's interesting, because I've talked to other people that lived in those apartments, you know where you had that apartment complex like you lived in, and there was only one bathroom there.

LG:

Right, okay.

CM:

Okay, so it was in that area.

LG:

Somewhere in there.

CM:

So basically, and I'm guessing that during this time when you were small, that they really hadn't started populating this area over here too much, because you only had I guess east Avenue A,

which is Ash now, east Avenue B which is Birch, east Avenue C which is Cedar, and so on. And I remember talking to Mr. James Otis Price, he lived on Globe, and he said it wasn't too much past him. Okay.

LG:

But I never have been able to understand why two sisters, only two sisters in the family, would be that far separated, looked like they would've been closer together.

CM:

Yeah.

LG:

And like I said, my aunt had no children.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Had no children, as I far as I know. And then my aunt in Galveston, she lived for years down there, and she didn't ever have any children, I never understood that.

CM:

Yeah, now you mentioned about the unemployment. So you had a bunch of unemployment—so that's the reason probably that there was a lot of entrepreneurship.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

People had their own businesses because they couldn't get jobs from the main establishment, so that's why they had their own businesses, because when I look at it, I look at the amount of grocery stores that were over here, and I knew carpenters, and we had plumbers. We had quite a few businesses.

LG:

Yeah, and that's what I said, a whole lot of businesses man, individuals like I talked about Sister Lee.



CM:

Now, you mentioning Sister Lee's, whose husband was actually a carpenter? Is that the one you're talking about?

LG:

No, Sister Hubbard.

CM:

Oh, so you're talking about—okay yes.

LG:

Yeah, Sister Hubbard.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Now, she was part of that. She grew out of that type of business.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Right there on Avenue A and Sixteenth Street, I mean Avenue A and Seventeenth Street.

CM:

Right.

LG:

They had a person there, name was Willie Pearl.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And she had a son named Billy Jack.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And a son named Sonny.

CM:

Oh yeah?

LG:

And that's what Mrs. Pearl—she raised those kids.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

But they probably was sorry individuals, and the reason they were sorry is because she wouldn't ever let them do nothing—said, "Whatever it is, you're going to stay right here with me." And as a result of that, that's what they done. They didn't do anything else. Billy Jack, he was a sorry fellow I will tell you, he drank himself to death man. But I'm saying, that's the type of situation I'm talking about with those people. I don't know where they are, I don't know what ever happened to them, I don't.

CM:

Okay. Avenue A, okay you had Coleman Alley there. Now this is way prior to Mr. Lusk having his shop on Avenue A.

LG:

Yeah, Coleman's Alley, yeah. It was long before that.

CM:

Long before that, all right.

LG:

Because I don't think that Mr. Lusk had his shop after the war, because he also had a school training individuals to make boots.

CM:

Oh, did he?

LG:

And Sonny John—

CM:

Yes.

LG:

—was one of the students.

CM:

Oh, Alexander Johns Sr., okay.

LG:

Yeah, yeah.

CM:

That's leads me to asking you, going back to the school district, you mentioned a story that you told me before about Mr. Sonny Johns's mother, when the school was located on Sixteenth and B, and she lived in the apartments over there, that she would actually—

LG:

No, she didn't live in apartments.

CM:

Oh, she lived in a house?

LG:

She lived in her own house.

CM:

Oh, her own house.

LG:

Yeah, she lived in her house.

CM:

Tell me about that story where she cooked for the school.

LG:

Okay, Mrs. Johns had six children, six of them. But she happened to have a house.

CM:

All right.

LG:

She got a house.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And like we all lived right there on Sixteenth Street, in that area. And down that alley we had a whole lot—all the friends, and all of them had boyfriends and girlfriends, and everything was in that alley back in there.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

So—

CM:

And the streets were dirt back then, right.

LG:

Dirt.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And the alleys were dirt.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Everything was, you know? But she took to feeding her family, and she had what they called a boarding house.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And, of course the boarding house was provided for people—sometimes who were just men traveling, and they had the railroad come through here, and they'd work on the railroad. But they'd come in every night and—

CM:

So you actually had Afro-Americans working on the railroad.

LG:

Yeah, oh yeah, that was basically the whole thing.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Most all of them were black. But they were railroad workers. So she had a setup in her backyard, she had about, I guess, three or four tables, and nothing made out—maybe but six-by-eight plank boards.

CM:

Yeah.

LG:

Tables, what I'm talking about, for them to sit on. And she served pig feet. All this coming from over there at Benny Keaton's, that's the throwaway, the waste.

CM:

Ah, okay.

LG:

She'd post up pig feet, pig ears, pig tails. And she served chitterlings.

CM:

And chitterlings—which we might say are hog intestines.

LG:

There you go.

CM:

All right.

LG:

There you go. And she served along with it—she served some greens every day with it.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

She served some greens with them every day. But, she fed them, and that's how she fed her family, and that's how she kept her property.

CM:

All right.

LG:

That's how she kept her property.

CM:

And now she was located I guess between Sixteenth and Seventeenth on B?

LG:

Right round the corner.

CM:

All right.

LG:

Right around the corner from where we were on Sixteenth Street. She was between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Street, because right on the corner from there was the Sedberry's Church.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

See all of us were right in there together, everybody right in there in that area together in there. Nothing but them kids, we all played together man. Fight one another, whatever the case may be. But don't you dare insult no adult.

CM:

Ah, okay.

LG:

Don't you dare insult no adult in that community.

CM:

Yeah.

LG:

Don't you dare.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

That's one thing you done, you gave respect to them regardless of what they done. Whatever kind of lives they lived, that'd be one thing, man they'd tell you "Boy, get out of here with this!" So you gave respect to them, that's what I'm trying to say, you gave respect to them.

CM:

All right.

LG:

So, but, Willie Lusk, like I said, back to him. I went back to school, and then my last year in high school, the last year I was in high school—

CM:

What year was that, sir?

LG:

1947.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And last year in high school I remember Miss Kavanaugh married Mr. Lusk.

CM:

Oh, okay.



LG:

And so there was an article in the *Reader's Digest*—

CM:

Wow.

LG:

—about him. And she asked me to do a speech on that.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And that's when I discovered the fact of how important this man was.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

Best bootmaker in the world. And I said, "Wow, you done married my high school English teacher? Golly!" So but then, I know after that—now that's what I'm trying to say, this is after the war, this is after the war.

CM:

How'd the war affect the neighborhood? World War II we're talking about.

LG:

It affected the school system greatly.

CM:

Oh really?

LG:

Yeah, because it took all of our teachers away.

CM:

All the men?

LG:

All the men. Prof. Damon Hill was one that went also.

CM:

All right.

LG:

So, and that left us without any strength.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Because all the teachers were men in those days, most of them were.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And I mean all of our music instructors, science teachers.

CM:

Tell me some of the names of these teachers.

LG:

Well there was Professor Carmichael.

CM:

All right.

LG:

He was one of the male teachers, also a musician, but also math teacher.

CM:

All right.

LG:

And then we got Carmichael, and then we got—what's this other name? A history teacher, good history teacher, golly—

CM:

It's okay.

LG:

He was one that they took. I mean it's just like overnight.

CM:

So all these guys were drafted?

LG:

All of them were drafted.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

They took them all.

CM:

All right.

LG:

And which I thought was a terrible thing to happen to the educational system of Lubbock.

CM:

So, and once again we're talking about a segregated system.

LG:

Right.

CM:

Your teachers were black, so you don't have men teachers, so your athletic programs and stuff, what happened to them?

LG:

That sort of kind of went down the drain too.

CM:

Oh, okay.

LG:

So we had just a little bit of athletics left. So then that's when Mr.—came here from Boston, then after the war was over he left and he went to Slaton. Oh gosh, can't remember the name of him right now, but that's when the athletic program started again.

CM:

Now while you're thinking about that, how many years did you spend down in the Flats at Dunbar, the original Dunbar?

LG:

Let's see, 1940 until, let's see, high school, college. Let's see, yeah—

CM:

Now, I'm assuming they built the new Dunbar probably in '39, '38, somewhere in there.

LG:

Well they moved from down on that Avenue C. They moved from down there.

CM:

But they didn't move all the school, right?

LG:

No, but they moved in '37.

CM:

Oh okay.

LG:

They moved in 1937.

CM:

All right, but you still had portions go down there, right?

LG:

Yeah, but the original building stayed right there.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

On Sixteenth Street, it stayed there.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Until later on they moved that up to Wheatley, that's when.

CM:

Oh, okay so the original building at Wheatley was the one that they actually moved from the original Dunbar.

LG:

Yeah, that was the original Dunbar.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And that was the basis for Wheatley.

CM:

Phyllis Wheatley.

LG:

Yeah.

CM:

Okay, on Redbud. East Twenty-Eight. Okay, wow.

LG:

But they built Dunbar, which is now Ella Iles.

CM:

Right.

LG:

It must have been 1937 or '38.

CM:

Okay, and it was about that time because I remember Mr. David Crockett Jr. told me he was looking to buy a house, and he didn't want to buy one up there where they were building a school. He could have, but he said that was nothing but rock.

LG:

Yeah, nothing but rock.

CM:

And that was prior to when they built the school. He actually told me that. And of course I lived in that neighborhood, I lived at the corner there. And it is, it's caliche.

LG:

Yeah. David come from a family, the Allen family. He married somebody—

CM:

Oh you actually knew Mr. Crockett.

LG:

Oh, yeah I knew David well.

CM:

Okay, all right.

LG:

Yeah, oh sure, yeah. I remember when he married—

CM:

Ruth.

LG:

His wife, yeah. And all the kids. But he married into a family that was related to the Allens family here.

CM:

Ah, okay.

LG:

He had twenty some odd kids, man.

CM:

Okay, is that right?

LG:

And that women—I'm going to tell you, she was amazing.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

Because she left here during the war and went to Oregon, and she had some more kids.

CM:

Wow. Wow, wow.

LG:

Allen family, ooh boy it was a big family.

CM:

Other teachers you had—did you come in contact with Mrs. L. R. House?

LG:

Oh yeah I knew her, she was my first teacher.

CM:

First grade teacher?

LG:

Yeah, Mrs. House was, yeah.

CM:

Tell me about her.

LG:

Firm.

CM:

Okay.



LG:

Strong. What I mean by that is very consistent.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And she kind of put the paddle on you.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

When you got a little slowful, put the paddle on you.

CM:

All right.

LG:

And she'd write a letter home to your mother.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

If you wasn't doing what you thought you'd supposed to do.

CM:

How many people were in your first grade class, do you remember?

LG:

Oh goodness, a bunch of us.

CM:

Oh, really?

LG:

Oh yeah, I guess Ms. House probably had I guess maybe—room full of kids, must have been. I'm thinking maybe thirty-five, forty, I don't know.

CM:

So you're dealing with this school that only had three rooms?

LG:

Yeah, three rooms and four teachers.

CM:

Wow.

LG:

And Mrs. House was one of them, she was the first one.

CM:

Okay, and then you had Mr. Struggs as the principal, and then Ms. White there too, and then who was the other teacher?

LG:

That was it.

CM:

Okay, all right.

LG:

Far as I can remember.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

That was it.

CM:

Okay. We're at a point right now Mr. Guyton that I'd like to go ahead and stop, and we'll pick this up at a later date. Because you've got a lot of information, and there's a lot to digest here. But, I want to keep these concise, and this is great. I appreciate it, because you've opened my eyes, and you're surely going to open a bunch of other people that listen to this of how it was. Because a lot of people don't realize that, and they don't know what that was. Is there anything you want to say in closing right now, before we—

LG:

There's an element that I don't think is with us today; I don't think it is. Not knowingly we knew who the criminals were in our area, neighborhood in those days.

CM:

Yes.

LG:

And today I don't think we know who they are.

CM:

Okay.

LG:

And I'm thinking maybe that that's something that's missing, is knowing who your—

CM:

So it took a neighborhood to raise the kids, so everybody in your neighborhood pretty much knew everybody.

LG:

Everybody.

CM:

And what everybody did, so you knew of them. Okay.

LG:

So you knew, the bad ones, you know the good ones, and you knew the so-so ones. And I think probably that's one of the elements that's missing today.

CM:

Well I want to thank you today, and then we're going to close this today, but Mr. Guyton, thank you for your input, and all the information that you've given, and we'll pick this up at a later date.

LG:

Okay.

CM:

Thank you very much sir.

LG:

All right, thank you.

*End of interview*

