Interview with Mary Awkard Fairfax
Celebrating Simms: Lucy F. Simms School Oral Histories

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Name of interviewee: Mary Awkard Fairfax
Name of interviewer: Cherly Metz
Name of transcriber: Kayleigh Bishop and Kate Benson

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TAPE 1, SIDE A:

Cheryl M. 0:09
Today is October 24, 2005. My name is Cheryl Metz and I'm with the Massanutten Regional Library in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Today we're with Mary Frances Awkard Fairfax. She was born here in Harrisonburg on April the 2nd 1912. [To Mary] So you've been a native of Harrisonburg all of your life?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:36
A native...?

Cheryl M. 0:37
of Harrisonburg?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:38
Yes, I have.

Cheryl M. 0:40
You were born and raised here?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:42
Yeah.

Cheryl M. 0:43
Right here on Gay Street or?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:45

No, I was born on Effinger Street. As I became nine years old, my daddy, moved us down to the corner of Broad & Gay, in one of the houses that he'd built for the family. It's a big white house, that is facing Broad, but the side is on Gay Street, on the corner of those two streets.

Cheryl M. 1:14
What was it like growing up in Harrisonburg? What was Harrisonburg like while you were growing up?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 1:21
Oh a very pleasant place to live. [Clears throat] We enjoyed it very much. We grew up... I had one sister and two brothers. And I was oldest of all of the four. And my sister's next to me, her name was Leona and next is my brother Joseph, the picture so long ago, and the baby was Fred. Fred Awkard. His picture's over somewhere around here.

Cheryl M. 1:58
Where did you go to school at?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:01
Oh, at first, I went after finishing Effinger high school. I didn't go to Simms. Because Effinger was the first school. And I went to... I finished with my... I graduated with my high school graduation diploma from Effinger Street school. And from there...

Cheryl M. 2:27
Now that school is not here anymore, is it?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:29
No, that's where you see Roses. Down in there is where it was in through there.

Cheryl M. 2:36
Now what about elementary school? Where was that?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:39
That was the same place. The elementary school was in the lower floor, and the upper floor was the high school. So I was there a long time [laughs] everything in one place.

Cheryl M. 2:52
How many students were there in the school?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:55
There weren't too many at that time though. There were plenty too because by having an elementary school in the bottom of the high school that made quite a few, but they only had Harrisonburg here then... Only Harrisonburg students when I was in school. And...

Cheryl M. 3:21

What was your favorite subject? [Mary says "huh?] What was your favorite subject?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 3:27
Well, I liked history and especially English. I liked English grammar and English literature, both. And I liked simple science. I didn't like chemistry too well. I wasn't too much in love with algebra. But I liked other math and not the higher though you know. And Latin, the professors taught Latin. I have three years of Latin.

Cheryl M. 4:05
That's great.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:06
You ever have Latin?

Cheryl M. 4:07
Yes ma'am. [Overlapping dialogue from the two before Cheryl resumes] Yes ma'am [laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:10
And people said, "Well, you should've had something else." But I'd say to them that a lot of our English words came from the Latin language.

Cheryl M. 4:23
Exactly.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:24
And you can speak it and you can give, for an example, water was aqua and we have aquamarine...

Cheryl M. 4:33
Aquatic...

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:34
We have aqueducts and all those things mean water. [degraded audio] ...nowhere after that.

Cheryl M. 4:38
[laughs] So how was being a teenager here in Harrisonburg? What did you do for fun?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:54
Oh, parents were so strict, it wasn't too much fun you did. You came to school and jobs were paying for you to do when you got home. My mother had something for your ironing it was one of those sadirons, if you know what a sadiron is.

Cheryl M. 5:11
Yes ma'am I know, the cast iron ones that you heated up.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:15
Heat on the stove, [Cheryl says "Yep"] and then take a potholder and by the time you got to where you were ironing you had to go back and get another iron to finishing a pair of pants. I had to press and do my sisters and brothers things and my Daddy's shirts or whatever or if the steps need dusting, something was always home to do.

Cheryl M. 5:38
Now living here in Harrisonburg you had running water and...

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:42
Well now on Effinger street we had spigots out in the yard, and outdoor toilets at that time. Harrisonburg doesn't have toilets right there now but even when we came to Broad Street to live they still had outdoor toilets and then below King I guess [degraded audio]. My father built one of those [degraded audio] on our back porch with a door and they had a [degraded audio] you just pushed on it and everything went down. It's not like [degraded audio]... it was straight out. They had a name for it but I can't think of the name right now.

Cheryl M. 6:30
Hmm. Well what year was that? Do you remember?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:38
[lengthy pause as she considers the question] Oh, let me see it must have been somewhere in the 20s

Cheryl M. 6:42
In the 20s? And that was when the town decided that you had to have... [the two start speaking simultaneously]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:49
...a spigot out in the yard.

Cheryl M. 6:53
When did you get running water?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:56
We got running water... How soon did we get running water? It might be getting close to the 30s maybe.

Cheryl M. 7:07
30s?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 7:07
Because we had water in the kitchen then, with Mom & Dad, you know.

Cheryl M. 7:13
And what about electricity?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 7:15
Well let's see when did we get that? Because I know we use it lanterned chimneys for awhile, you see, because I know my little sister was sitting [degraded audio] next to the old [degraded audio]... and one chimney broke a piece of glass on her little face [degraded audio] how she worked [degraded audio] you know ugly place or... and that must have been [degraded audio]... must have been around 1919. Something like that, maybe. It must've been around that time.

Cheryl M. 8:09
Were there a lot of cars here in Harrisonburg?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 8:12
Oh no, not a whole lot. A few people had some of those, what you call reels [?] now I think and they were just sedans you know, and [degraded audio]. I would have [degraded audio] cars or [degraded audio] you know, and there were sport cars that the young people had, some of them you know, a few of the younger people. But parents were strict and you didn't get to go out with boys like they do now, 'cause my daddy would greet him at the door [degraded audio] and ask him, he said "What is your" umm... what was his main words? Umm... let's see here, let's get it straight.

Cheryl M. 8:14
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 8:19
[laughs] "First, what you wanna see my daughter for?"

Cheryl M. 9:07
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:11
Yeah he was real strict about that, about his girls, he didn't want anybody to mess his girls up.

Cheryl M. 9:17
Now how did you get around to places? Did everybody just walk or did you have horses?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:22
Most of the time you walked.

Cheryl M. 9:23
You walked? So you walked to school?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:25
Yeah I walked to school, even after I started teaching at Simms, I walked to school. We haven't always had buses. No we haven't. Not in the city, we didn't have buses. Because then they started coming from other places like some came from Grottoes and some came from Linville. Andrew Tampers' [?] children's down in Linvile.

Cheryl M. 9:56
And that's because the schools were segregated back then right?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:59
Entirely segregated schools. Oh they were segregated up until I left Simms as a teacher; up till 1966. That's when I went to Waterman. They were still segregated when I went to Simms, and Bridgewater too and Staunton. Well, here's the funny one here: I finished school--uh, high school in 1930 and my grades were high, you know, and I loved school, I just loved it. And I tell you who was the teacher who taught us to sing. Roberta Webb. To the nursery up at the nice place that's named after... But she--her name at that time was Morgan and she married a man named Revernd Webb, that's where the Webb came from, but she was a Hampton graduate. Miss Lucy Sims was a Hampton graduate. And those women were very knowledgeable. And Professor Harris came from... I think he went to... it seemed like he went to Harvard, but I want to make no mistake. He was very proper. He taught the--he taught the Latin, and the history, and civics. And you know he was still principal when I went to Simms but just for a short time because he was principal when I went to school as a little girl six years old. And when I came to teach under him he always called me little Mary Frances. He could never accept the fact that I was going to teach beside him.

Cheryl M. 12:18
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:21
And so one day he brought me a civics paper that he had kept through the yeas. It had my grade, an A.

Cheryl M. 12:32
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:32
I like civics, but they don't teach civics anymore.

Cheryl M. 12:37
They do they just teach-

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:38
Do they?

Cheryl M. 12:39
Eighth grade I think, instead of in high school now they teach it in eighth grade.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:43
Oh they do? I thought they'd stopped teaching it. I hadn't heard anybody say-- [coughs] Oh I'm sorry, I can't talk good today.

Cheryl M. 12:52
My son had civics when he was in the eighth grade.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:57
Can you understand?

Cheryl M. 12:58
Oh, yes ma'am. So when you graduated from high school in 1930 and you wanted to go to college...

Mary Awkard Fairfax 13:06
[degraded audio] went to college. Down in New Market, near Mount Jackson, there was no school for Black children. And the people in Mount Jackson places began [degraded audio]. Cause [degraded audio]. And they had an old school building there that they had used some years way back. And then of course [degraded audio] it had a downstairs to it. So, the superintendent, down in Woodstock became worried because the people were so upset. So he called Mr. Keister. Are you from here?

Cheryl M. 14:01
Keister Elementary? The one that...

Mary Awkard Fairfax 14:03
W. H. Keister. He said "Mr. Keister, do you have anybody that'll come down here and teach these people's children?" Well, my daddy worked with schools in the wintertime because carpenters didn't have much to do in the winter. Because houses like this were built--they had to have plaster walls and those walls had to dry and they couldn't dry in cold weather, and they didn't have-- [coughs] a couple of the apparatuses they have now. And then they come in on trucks that day they'd have to meet and they'd saw the old wood and measure it, and everything and he and his brother of course were carpenters in Harrisonburg [degraded audio]. Well Mr. Keister asked Daddy, he said, "Joe," he said, "What if Mary would go down and work with those children? She's such a stable girl and everything." Dad says, "I don't know," he said, "I'll talk to her mother about it." So they talked it over and they said if I wanted to try I could, and if I didn't they would tell him no or something. So I thought maybe I will try this. [degraded audio]. [coughs] See I would've been 18 years old. [degraded audio] He said, well he'll take Mary and her little sister and brothers down in my car and take it down to Woodstock and see this man, but first I went by to see the school. Well, windows all broken up, floors holes in them, blackboard hanging off the wall all ragged. I said "Hmm, I don't think I want to be down here.

Coal house all broken up, toilet falling down. So [clears throat] so when I went to see him I told him I said "I was told that you wanted someone to teach the Black children." But I said this place up here that you have I said "There'll be no way I could go in there." I told him what all was wrong with everything and then they had a great big... the place had water in a spigot. [degraded audio]. And I said the stove's no good for winter. Well, he said "Young lady," he said, "If you will come I'll get this thing fixed up for you by November, and I'll write and tell you. Well, I waited around and I was just doing little jobs here and there at the [degraded audio] high school. [clears throat] One day the letter came and said the school was ready. Well, then we went back down to see. New blackboard all the way across the room, new floors, new stove.

Cheryl M. 17:40
[laughs] Well, that's wonderful.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 17:42
New everything. New coal house. Stuffed with wood and coal. Toys, new toys for boys and girls. And then I started. And I worked with him two years, but you had to go on a permit because I ain't ever done any work before. Well what I did, I taught from the first to the sixth grade [degraded audio]. Because some of those children were in older childhood, some of them were 18, 19. I had at that time longer hair and wore them all in the back. My mama showed me how to fix it.

Cheryl M. 18:23
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 18:26
So I worked with them two years.

Cheryl M. 18:28
Where did you stay?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 18:30
I stayed with a family in the community.

Cheryl M. 18:35
A Black family or...?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 18:36
Yes [degraded audio]. Well they just had the one daughter. She was just a little bit, well, she might've been five years older than I was but I didn't teach her, cause they'd had--they'd had school once before but for some reason it had gotten worn down. Well then the New Market children came to school and they may have brought them down in the car. First I was staying in New Market. I didn't like it there.

Cheryl M. 19:05

How come?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 19:06
Well I just didn't like staying there for some reason. It was kind of like a void and I just, I didn't like it. And [clears throat] so [degraded audio] had this one daughter. She must've been about in her 20s and we all she and I had an entirely good time. And then there's other people in the community that have us down and we [degraded audio] the house and do things, you know, for fun. Then I started playing for the churches. They had a Methodist church [degraded audio] and a Baptist one on the other side, and they would have service one Sunday at the Methodist Church and then another Sunday at the Baptist [degraded audio] and they had a community, a beautiful [degraded audio]. Well, then, when my time was up they wanted me to stay, you know, but I couldn't and then that... [clears throat]

Cheryl M. 20:17
How much were you paid for teaching there?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:20
$50 a month.

Cheryl M. 20:22
Well that's pretty good.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:23
Was a good amount in those days.

Cheryl M. 20:24
Yeah!

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:25
A whole lot of money [Cheryl says "yeah"] it got me some clothes and I gave Mama some. They had stores there and one dress shop. And I get me something and pay on it you know [degraded audio]. So that's when I decided I wanted to be teacher.

Cheryl M. 20:45
Did you get to come home at all during those two years?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:48
Some.

Cheryl M. 20:49
Some?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:50

Sometime the nurse would come and get me, cause I was playing the organ in my church and he wanted me to play you see, so I told him I'd come home most of the weekend or sometimes I might get to the little bus down there. They wake me up cause it's not comfortable, walk up Wolfe St., turn the corner around to come to Broad Street. I stayed out in Bridgewater those two years and then came back.

Cheryl M. 21:26
In Woodstock you mean?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:28
Yeah we taught at Mount Jackson.

Cheryl M. 21:30
Mount Jackson. Two years?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:32
Now Woodstock had a two-room school. The Black children in Woodstock had somewhere to go. And the children in Strasburg had a school. But it's just the Mount Jackson children, and the New Market children, that didn't have any schools. They had a white school, but no Black school.

Cheryl M. 21:54
So you taught them for two years and decided you wanted to go to college?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:59
Well, I decided that I did... well being a poor family, you know, my people worked but you know, you didn't make much. Mama couldn't make but $7 a week if she [degraded audio] to work with somebody. And the only job that you would get would be a cook or something like that, or you would be a nursemaid or something. And we just didn't have very good jobs you have to do except to do house work or laundrey for people. And my mother was a seamstress. So she did a lot of sewings for people. And then she did some laundry work. She would mend shirts and things for rich people, you know? Well, she said, "I don't know how you're going to school, we don't have any money." I said "I know, Mama," but I said "I wanna go so I can be a teacher." And so, at that time my brothers and sisters they were coming along down the lower grades of Effinger. We had only one brother that went to Simms, and he went only one year to Simms his last year in high school. So I said "Mama," I said, "Miss Royal taught Leo and Joe," I said, "maybe she'd let me stay up there, on Petersburg." So I wrote to Mrs. Royal, and Mrs. Royal said, "Oh," said my mother, "It'd be so great to have you Mary." Because she didn't teach me. She said, "I have sisters going over to Virginia State, and they walk over as day students," and she said "you can stay with us." Well I had a grandmother that was living with us, she used to, she and my grandfather lived in [degraded audio] You know where that is I assume, if you're from Harrisonburg. They had a farm, but when granddaddy passed away, Momma was the only child and Momma said "I don't want my mother [degraded audio]. And she brought her to Harrisonburg to live with our family. We went to stay with Mrs. Royal's family. Oh I loved it there.

My grandmother would send me loose change, loose pennies and change. Or she sent me a box of food like cookies and different things that I'd share with this lady's girls. And we walked to school. It was two miles. We walked those two miles every morning going from up on where they lived to Virginia State.

Cheryl M. 25:09
Where was that at? You said Petersburg, Virginia?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 25:13
Petersburg, Virginia. It's still there yet, it's expanded now but it wasn't as big then as it is now.

Cheryl M. 25:21
What's it called now is it still called Virginia State or...?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 25:24
They call it Virginia State University. Well I stayed [degraded audio] people until Christmas. Christmas time that first year went [degraded audio]. The Dean of Women saw me one day. She said, she said "Your name is it Mary Frances Awkard?" I said "Yes ma'am." She said, "I see you girls coming and you not from here, and I thought maybe you'd like to come up on the campus." And I told her then I said "Well," I said "I can't go up on the campus because I don't have the money." She said "You know how to work?" I said "Yes ma'am." She said "I could let you come as a work student, and bring you up on the campus." So I asked my Mama. She said "Well, I'd like to have you, but see you have to keep your grades up there. If you get a job you have to keep your grades up." Well I said "I can do that." And so I told Mama about it and my Mama said "Well, whatever you want to do. We can see how it goes."

Mary Awkard Fairfax 26:47
And I went and I told Miss Royal. Of course the girls cried about it. You know they didn't want me to leave. But I told them [degraded audio] would be easier for me. So I went and the first year, most of the first year, I mopped halls, [degraded audio], cleaned bathrooms, and did things [clears throat]. And you had to get up early in the morning cause you had to be on time for school. And so I worked hard, kept my grades up. So then she said the Dean of Women said, "Well, summertime's coming" and said "These lady school teachers come over here don't want to wash that floor, their room, and do all the things they supposed to do, and sometimes they give the girls a little money to clean for them. And said if any of them want you to wash the floor, go ahead and do it, and they'll give you something to keep doing it for them, a quarter something like that. So I said "Well I have to ask Mama if I can stay this summer." She said "Well you write and ask your mother, can you stay." And Mama said yes I can stay. And we had a bunch of girls, Lord it was a bunch of us. And so we have to clean beds and go from dormitory to dormitory to clean for the next session, you know, the next school session. And they had a little room up on the third floor with a piano. And we girls would get to work and [degraded audio] sing and dance. Of course there weren't any boys there. The boys' dormitories were way over somewhere else. Well, I was still working, and that summer I worked in a--there's a group it was a organization from the government that paid for youth who--to work if they didn't have

money and you put in the office in school if you want to draw some of it, okay. Well just leave it in there. I left mine in there. And the next thing Miss White did--that was her name, Dean of Women--she said "You know, the men can't go to the women's room to bring them the clothes from the cleaners and they like to have somebody to go around and collect up the clothes and, and bring them downstairs and give them to 'em." And said "You're going to get a little comission... since they'll give you a little something to collect the clothes." She said, "I'm gonna get some of the girls do that. Would you like to do some of that? I said "Yes ma'am Miss White." I would go around knock on every door [degraded audio] because it was the nature of things. I'd get them up and take them down and give them to the cleaners and they take them back to their room. And the women would give me a little tip you know for doing it because that way. That went on that first year and then the next year, Miss White didn't have any kind of [degraded audio]. [degraded audio] professional two years teaching. The next I did my practice teaching. They came up and I was still having the job carrying letters to put [degraded audio] on the door of the students. [degraded audio] office and she said "Now Mary," she said, "You don't have to clean this year, I want you to carry mail for me and do errands for me." And then at the same time I made such a good grade in English over there that the English teacher had me to check her freshman papers, and she paid me something to get me my stockings and stuff that a girl needs you know. And then my mother made me some clothes. She made me skirts and things. And I was one of the honor students [degraded audio] honor students, and I was allowed to be an usher. For we have our devotion at certain days of the week. And I was one of the usher girls and Mama would have me wearing a blue Navy skirt and a white blouse to be like the other girls and [degraded audio] so that when the end of the school term came I went before that [degraded audio] we took another almost a half year or so of the teacher training in the class room.

Cheryl M. 32:13
Now where did you do that at, on campus?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 32:16
On campus, it was a campus school there. And we had to do our practice. They called it practice teaching. Make these charts for children to read. You had to make up the stories yourself. You have to have also have control of the classroom. So the girls, excuse me, the girls who were with me would say, "Mary, how can you make your children behave and do and teach and do all this stuff?" I said "Mmm mmm, secret."

Cheryl M. 32:53
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 32:54
They said, "There's something funny about this." They said, "We don't ever get some of those grades. And the children don't listen to us. And you come down here and you're just like [degraded audio] who we work under." And then I told them that I had taught in a one-room schools when I was 18 years old. They couldn't believe it. And so that went on and I finished the two years and got my... what was I talking about, the...?

Cheryl M. 33:30
Teaching certificate?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:31
Yeah, teaching certificate.

Cheryl M. 33:33
So was that four years total? Or

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:35
No, two.

Cheryl M. 33:35
Two years total? To get a [Mary says "two years"] teaching certificate.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:40
And my [degraded audio] and my mother came and we stayed overnight at the college. And she was so proud that I had gotten that. And the first job I got was Staunton, Virginia.

Cheryl M. 33:53
Was where?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:54
Staunton.

Cheryl M. 33:55
Staunton?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:58
The first job I got was Staunton.

Cheryl M. 34:01
Where was that at in Staunton?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:04
It was at the [degraded audio].

Cheryl M. 34:14
Did they--didn't have the Simms school then?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:17
No that was over in--Simms was here in Harrisonburg.

Cheryl M. 34:20
But it was here then?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:21
No this was up there in Staunton. It was a Thomas C... umm... [stands up] Walk over there to get that. Oh, TC Edmunds School. It was [degraded audio] the high school they had up there. It was a high school—was higher up on the hill—on Johnson Street. If you ever been to Staunton [Cheryl affirms verbally] you know about Johnson Street. It looks like you'd fall and break your neck coming down that street. But Mrs. Edmunds they lived right straight across the street because her husband, Mrs. Edmund's husband, had been a principal for that school for a long time; and when he died, they named the school after her husband.

Cheryl M. 35:07
Now this was in 1934?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 35:10
That was in 19... [pause] let me get that [degraded audio]. Yeah, something like that.

Cheryl M. 35:19
34. Now, had they already built Simms school in '34?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 35:25
No.

Cheryl M. 35:25
No?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 35:26
Simms school wasn't built 'til 1939.

Cheryl M. 35:29
Oh, okay. So you got to teach in Staunton.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 35:32
Well I was in Staunton. After I was there two years, or maybe when I was on my third year there, I got married to some fella who was a teacher in Harrisonburg, but he [degraded audio] me too, too good or something or other. So, after a time, I got my divorce. But when a young teacher got married at Staunton, you had to quit anyway.

Cheryl M. 36:03
No!

Mary Awkard Fairfax 36:04

Because to the young mother, you'd be a young mother sometimes, and have to miss too much time from school. But an older woman could get a job there, as long as she wanted to; but see I wasn't but 26 years old, and so, that meant I had to stop when I got married. Well then after that marriage, I had to get another place to teach. And so Bridgewater came up [overlapping dialogue from Cheryl and Mary] down to a one-room school. I taught first through seventh grade again.

Cheryl M. 36:39
Ahhh.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 36:39
I stayed in Bridgewater four years, and as I said about the teacher's certificate I had. Well, Mr. Keister said to Daddy... Back then he worked for Mr. Keister in wintertime, repairing school furniture and things... "Here he is on me again." [Cheryl laughs] He said, "I want Mary to come home now." Said, "She's been to other schools," and said, "I can have a place for her up at Lucy Simms, the new school. [Cheryl starts to speak but Mary continues]. Well, at that time, one girl named Jean Frances, she had quit, she got married and she quit there and was going to school going to Washington DC, Maryland to live, but she stayed a half year of the year that I would have had, but Mr. Keister said he didn't want nobody else to get it. So my, my youngest brother had married a girl from Staunton. She was pregnant at the time, only slightly. And she took that half a year that was left in the second semester. Then when the school opened the next year, and I was in, [mic interference] for years.

Cheryl M. 36:39
You were up there for 24 years?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 38:14
Yes at Lucy...? [Cheryl interjects "At Lucy Simms?"] I went in there in 1942/43 came out in 1966. That's when they closed the school. And I was there longer than anybody. Because Ms. Lucy Simms, never taught up there. She was dead before that school was built.

Cheryl M. 38:38
But they named it after her?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 38:40
Because she taught 50 years [Cheryl starts to say "Here in the community?"] at the old school.

Cheryl M. 38:47
The one that you went to?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 38:49
At Effinger. Well she taught down there over there at the place they called, um... [degraded audio] what was the name of that place it was um...

Cheryl M. 39:04
Cedar Run?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 39:05
No, it wasn't Ceda--Zenda. [overlapping dialogue] Really called Zenda. [overlap ends] Is it still Zenda?

Cheryl M. 39:12
Well, I know the person researching. I'll tell you about that later.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 39:17
Well anyways, she taught at Zenda. Then she taught--then she came to Harrisonburg. And of course the school [degraded audio] Effinger, because they didn't have a high school and things like that.

Cheryl M. 39:31
How do you spell that? [Mary asks "Which one?"] Effinger?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 39:34
E-F-F-I-N-G-E-R. It was named after the street. I think a man named Mr. Effinger must have owned the street like there's some of those people like the Grattans, like Margaret Grattan's mother, you heard [degraded audio] and see old houses and we lived in Miss Grattan's house and my daddy said "Well," he said "I'm not gonna be paying this woman rent. And he [degraded audio] over on Broad Street, just a corner lot. And he bought that lot and built that house that's still standing there now.

Cheryl M. 40:18
Your daddy was a master [Mary says "the big white house] master carpenter? Your daddy was a master carpenter?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 40:25
Yeah they were builders, he and his brothers, all of them were builders.

Cheryl M. 40:29
And you said he was part Irish and part Native American?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 40:32
Part Irish and Indian, yes. [Cheryl starts to say "What"] You saw his picture over there?

Cheryl M. 40:36
Mhm, I saw his picture. Do you know what tribe he was with?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 40:41

I know his mother was Irish, because his sister when she got older, I was the only child that saw her, because she was bedridden then, she was real old, and my father's sister was taking care of their mother. All of them, all of them looked like white people. The sisters, a whole bunch of them, they all were, all of them, very fair-skinned ladies. And my daddy thought mama was peaches and cream [both laugh] and she was a good woman, a real good woman, good Christian woman. She was the one that taught me my first music.

Cheryl M. 41:27
Your mother?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 41:28
My mother went to school in Staunton, Virginia. She'd go to those schools [degraded audio]. They didn't have but one child, and her father told her he wanted her to get the best, so he sent her to Staunton for school. And so after that, when I came to Simms, well, I was a musician for the school then; I'd had more and more music, take more everywhere I could get music, I would get it you know. I wa-- [clears throat] I was up there, had first grade, and sometimes, first and second. Well I just loved those little kids and those times were hard for older Black people. They didn't have very good jobs. The men, if you couldn't work on the city, you know, pick up trash and stuff. That's what made my daddy and them special. They could do carpenter work but some of the men could just do common street labor or digging ditches and stuff like that.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 41:28
You talking about in the 40s or... in 1940?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 42:46
Well let me see when was that now? Yeah, during the 40s. And then my brother Fred--well his picture's around here somewhere--he was, around 18 and it was time to go to the army, and both my brothers had to go. But my daddy went to Newport News to work, so he could have some money to send mama to stay at home during that time. [degraded audio]

Cheryl M. 43:27
You were talking about it's hard for the men here in town. They didn't have any jobs.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 43:31
No jobs much. Nothing much to do [degraded audio]. And, so then I came, as I said, to Simms to teach. And we have had a lot of nice activities going on. Operettas, some of the most beautiful operettas you have ever seen. We used the stage [degraded audio] and they'd say "Ask Miss Awkard over there." We had "Peter Rabbit and Farmer McGregor." We had "Around the World," where we had different nations, and we did the dances. We had one lady at our math school had been to uh... I don't know if she went to Hampton or where, but she knew all those foreign dances. And we'd take--when we had our [degraded audio], we use children from the first through seventh grade, because the high school people had their own things to do. Then you had one operetta a year when you have one out really a year. We had "The Kitchen Clock" one year, and we get these catalogues and I go through 'em to see which music I

thought that children could do best, and I would work with the music, and the other elementary teachers would work with speaking parts, and then I get to design. I could draw and make stuff, and I'd sometimes draw pictures of the costumes and the teachers up in domestic science... What do the call it where they're teaching cooking [degraded audio] [Cheryl says "Home Ec"]. She'd send me some girls down sometimes as one of my other teachers would take my other children out for recess, and I'd show the girls how to make those paper hats like [degraded audio] and rosettes and all kinds of hats, and my mother would make some of the costumes and some of the other women in the community would make costumes, and you'd send a picture home. And then when they when they have this, this operetta, oh my goodness. And then I had to do May Day, wrapping the May Pole and May Queens and stuff. I did all the music for that, and all of the musical commencements. In fact, I did music all year round. And you have a picture of my choir there didn't you? [Cheryl confirms] All of these things happened at Simms, and those 24 it was almost my [tape ends]

TAPE 1, SIDE B:

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:04
And so this little boy said "You see her? She took all my marbles."

Cheryl M. 0:08
[laughs]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:08
I said "Yes I took your marbles, 'cause you couldn't keep 'em in your pocket." And I said [degraded audio], and I said "I gave 'em back to you in the summertime [degraded audio] I said "No, [degraded audio] going to see that boy shooting marbles now. And girls had jack [degraded audio]

Cheryl M. 0:42
Yep, playing jacks. I remember playing jacks.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:45
And jump rope; one girl she'd [degraded audio] computer stuff. Toys all year and things. We got one thing at Christmas and a little candy; that's all we got, and glad to get it. They didn't have trick-or-treat there either.

Cheryl M. 1:20
They didn't? No trick-or-treating?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 1:22
No, not way back they didn't.

Cheryl M. 1:25

They didn't?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 1:25
It wasn't meant to go around like that. They have one lady sometimes that'd give some donuts [degraded audio] no, we didn't have no trick-or-treat. They say in sometime the mothers would have- those [degraded audio] would have their children come and play, and it was supervised. But they said Halloween was devil's work, that's what they called it. But oh my goodness. And I like I said, I really enjoyed Simms school. Because I had to do so much work there. Then when I went to [degraded audio] school, I didn't have to work as hard.

Cheryl M. 2:21
And you taught for 24 years at Simms school until 1966?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:27
Includes '66, I was one of them tenures(?).

Cheryl M. 2:31
Why did it close?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:34
On account of the...

Cheryl M. 2:36
Desegregation?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:37
Desegregation. It closed in '66 and I went to [degraded audio] in '66, September of 66. The first thing they wanted me to do was to bring the children up to [degraded audio] to get to get to see the place because I didn't have many black children, because it took them most of winter would [degraded audio] this area. And so I went there to teach first grade.

Cheryl M. 3:15
First grade.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 3:16
We had three first grade teachers moved about that's what the date was some more years and see the high school went in 1965. [degraded audio] to do this thing. And then in '66, all the black schools closed. And then just everybody went to the same school and my little niece was 14 work(?) called Mary Anne [degraded audio]. She was 14 and she went to high school over there, and me and one white teacher and one black man [degraded audio] one year. We went to Wegman and when [degraded audio] [Cheryl starts to speak, but Mary continues] We had - it was [degraded audio] country school in 60 before we left up here, and we had a nasty white principal; nasty, he would say the things he wanted to say. And he said that Mr. Moore and me because Mr. Moore was the [degraded audio] teacher, [degraded audio] I told him, "Let me tell

you-" I forget his name now, I said "I like children." I said "I like children and I'm not worried about it," because I said "I treat all children alike," I said "If you treat children," I said "children know who they- who likes and who doesn't, and that nobody'd love 'em the way you taught 'em(?) really lazy and since I do, I'm not worried about [degraded audio].

Cheryl M. 5:24
Well he said that he thought they wouldn't like you?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:27
That principal, he was up there for one year, he was there one year we were trying to [degraded audio] his name was Nicholas.

Cheryl M. 5:39
Was he white or black?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:41
White. [degraded audio] two black teachers stayed up there. So I went back home to the home community [degraded audio] was real nice and quiet. Now I said "All I have to do is teach them like I taught the children at Simms." [Cheryl says "That's right.] And that's what I did, and the children loved me too, and they never said anything ugly to me, not the parents either. The parents were just as nice to me as a parent can be. At Christmas time I'd have a shopping bag full of stuff to bring home; some of them would bake me cookies, some of them would send me this and send me that, and the children would bring me things; and the two white teachers, we would have the best time with those children, because they would know music, and I was already doing music for the black school. So I told Mr. O'Donnell, I said "Mr. O'Donnell, I want a piano for my room." I said "Could I have the piano that's coming from the Simms school, since it's going to close?" He said "Oh yes, I'll get some men out to talk to the school board and get somebody to get that piano in your room that you have there, and they'll put it in here." And that's what he did. And that piano was there the whole time I was there.

Cheryl M. 7:28
Oh that's wonderful.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:43
[degraded audio] when the children sat around the floor like that. We'd sing all kinds of nursery rhymes and "Jesus Loves Me"—that's before we kicked Jesus out of schools—and "Jesus Loves The Little Children," and all those things and Mr. O'Donnell sometimes would come down from his office and he'd stay outside and listen a while [laughs] that's why we'd open the door. He's always [degraded audio] and some days, we take him out on the yard; that's when um, when, one school had a hillside, they cut that hillside down [degraded audio] and at the bottom was kind of a little stream [degraded audio] And so one of the teachers would bring peanuts in the shell [coughs], and [degraded audio] while the children were doing something; throw the peanuts up in the air and have a peanut scramble. [Cheryl laughs] Children scramble for peanuts. All kinds of things we did. And I had the most—even now—the most beautiful

relationship with the Waterman(?) teachers. Now Mrs. [degraded audio] died. [degraded audio] This lady's name was white, because she married [degraded audio] Oh, what was her name? She was a second grade teacher at Waterman(?). She died several weeks ago.

Cheryl M. 9:35
And you taught(?) with her? [Mary says "huh?"] You taught with her?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:38
Yeah. Well she was with that group you know, and Caroline Rowling(?), have you heard of her? [Cheryl says "mmm mmm" (no, presumably)] and [degraded audio] all the schools all the teachers at Waterman, they're gone(?), and a couple have died and Mr. O'Donnell's dead, he was such a good principal, and [degraded audio] can you get his stuff together that'll do it? [laughs] While I was up at Simms school, I had been driving(?) and going back [degraded audio] and got my bachelor's. [Cheryl says "Ahhhh"] In education.

Cheryl M. 10:33
What years did you do that?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:35
The bachelor's I got in... [lengthy pause as she thinks] let's see... it must have been... [another pause] in the 40s, it must have been.

Cheryl M. 10:59
Oh, so it's right after you started teaching then. [Mary says "huh?"] Right after you started teaching then?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 11:05
Yes, well not right away, [degraded audio] that's the summertime [Cheryl says "Mhm"] [degraded audio] teach in winter and thinking how [degraded audio] this time I get paid on the way. And also the state gave money to the black students, if you promise to teach in Virginia. [Cheryl says "Oh?] Well perhaps I'd been up there a long time, 'cause I said [degraded audio] "Well maybe if I had a Master's, I don't know what'll happen. So before I left Simms in 1952 [degraded audio] that's when I went to New York [degraded audio] Staunton, when I was up there [degraded audio] came to Harrisonburg, he said "Mary we're going to take teachers from Columbia University. Why don't you come and go with us?" [degraded audio] And Momma said "Why do you want to go up to New York City?" I said "Well Momma the girls want me to go, and I ain't never been to New York before," and I said "I'm old enough to go to New York." [both laugh] So then we started going to New York every summer. And so, we got our master's in four summers and they gave me credit for my bachelor's, they gave me credit for this, which was [degraded audio] to teach this special workshop; they even gave me credit for that. So I just had to go four even(?) summers with nothing left over. So then that way I got my master's degree in early childhood education [Cheryl says "wow"]. So, one day I'm walking to school, already had my master's but I don't brag(? about what I have. [degraded audio] Up here. So Mr. Dove down is sitting around and he wants to have [degraded audio] teacher [degraded audio] where the

white teachers could go to work or go to James Madison, Eastern Mennonite, Bridgewater, and they had opportunity, to go to any one they wanted to go; but I would have to go somewhere else. [degraded audio] to go walk to school. So [degraded audio] I got grants and things to go to other schools. And so they paid from that for me to go to New York [degraded audio] room and board [degraded audio] paying for your subjects and classes and things like that. [degraded audio] and so I finished that in 1956 [pause before the 6] I guess. And during that time, it was time for graduation, Momma died; and I couldn't go back and get my diploma, but they mailed to me because I wanted to be there [degraded audio] way up there at Columbia [degraded audio]. Oh it was a wonderful summer, bunch of good things they had; I'd be scared to go to New York now. But New York was wonderful. So I stayed up there, I went for four summers [degraded audio] and one teacher had a master's. And he had one, and the rest of them, some still had the normal paper(?), two-year certificates [degraded audio] opportunity and they said "Hmm, wonder who else up here's got a masters." [degraded audio] I just had to come to get one of those [degraded audio] sodas(?), and I said "I have it. Honey you got [degraded audio] and Lord they were shocked; you should've seen them get down there trying to get their bachelor's [degraded audio] when someone would come [degraded audio] New York, but I did. I came [degraded audio] out of there and my niece has come to see me now. She was born in 1952. Sometime I go by her age, and [degraded audio] and she got her master's from Petersburg University, but they call it uh... what'd they call it over there? [degraded audio] something or other. But she took, she took her bachelor's and master's from there. And then my brother Joe, I think [degraded audio] don't work. [coughs] He had the same problem that I had. [degraded audio] My brother Fred wanted to be a carpenter, he didn't want to have nothing to do with all that stuff. So my brother Joe ended up as a doctorate, a doctorate from University of Virginia.

Cheryl M. 17:16
From UVA?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 17:16
From UVA, he became a doctor. But he's on- I don't think he's on there because [degraded audio], and I cried about it, because I love him so much. And I [degraded audio] to help him in his school, and he was a work student too. Both of us started as work students. And they found what kind of man he was(?), because they didn't even have a bookstore, to sell the books and things, and tabs and papers. He worked at that, when they found out that he was a good guy. And then he had married- he married when he was in the army. And he has three daughters. One is a lawyer and one has a TV show on acro- not acrobats but some kind of physical(?) thing. And the other's um...

Cheryl M. 18:14
Aerobics? [Mary says "huh?"] Aerobics?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 18:16
Yeah, aerobics, and the youngest one is a bank executive and she's in Pittsburgh. He has had three daughters. But we all try to do something. My sister was a beautician. And so we all tried to- and we kept [degraded audio] parents and to do things and so they could be comfortable.

And my daddy was 10 years older than Momma. [degraded audio] at Newport News working and [degraded audio] he couldn't get the job. There was nothing to do. But the army needed men to build things and fix things. And Daddy said [degraded audio] what you're saying somebody down there. And he thought he had [degraded audio] that day. He had a heart attack and died. [Cheryl says "Aww"] Well, Daddy would always send Momma money by wire [degraded audio] Well he was my grandmother's brother. My grandmother [degraded audio] since my grandmother had passed. She was 79 when she died. And she was Momma's momma [degraded audio] because her husband had died. And so, my uncle came back up to [degraded audio] that evening a telegram cane and Momma laid it on the table there and he said "Nanny aren't you going to open the telegram?" and she said "[degraded audio] to save us some money [degraded audio]" and then Thomas said to her "You better open this telegram, your husband is dead [degraded audio]." Momma started screaming, we girls and boys started screaming, we just- it just killed us and they wanted someone to come and identify his body, and so Uncle Sam said "Well, me and Mary(?) will go; catch a bus out of here tonight, and go to Newport News and claim his body and Lindsay(?) can come and get it." Well my brother Fred had just got home(?) from the army, because this is 19...

Cheryl M. 21:23
'45, 46?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:28
Somewhere in there, yeah.

Cheryl M. 21:30
The war was over in '45.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 19:49
Uh huh, 'cause they were(n't?) in the army too long, 'cause they take 18-year old boys, and he and another friend from Bridgewater, they'd seen each other, so [degraded audio] and the one boy he said "No," he said "me and Fred'll go." And so Momma [degraded audio] so he and Fred took a late bus out of here—that's when you had good Greyhounds—and went to Newport News and claimed Daddy's body and then [degraded audio] went and got him. My mother got into bed and wouldn't get out. She said "I just buried my mother so many weeks ago. I can't bury nobody else close like that to me." Well here we are, children, and of course my sister, she had a nervous breakdown. Well there I was and there was Joe- no Joe, Joe didn't get home, the Red Cross was [degraded audio] but the army wouldn't let him loose because he was an officer at the army, because he'd had ROTC when he went to University of Virginia [degraded audio] so we had one of these ministers [degraded audio] he said [degraded audio], he said "Mrs. Awkward, get out your bed. YOU are the one who's [degraded audio], not your children, YOU are the one to go." Momma said "But I can't." and he said "Yes you can. I'll pray for you here, you can go(?)." Well see Daddy's sister lived here too. Well, Momma got up and tried(cried?), 'cause she had to [degraded audio] clothes and things you know? And so his sister lived here, and she and Aunt Fanny(?) they went down to [degraded audio] and got the funeral together and Mama went home but she was, she decided she just could not [degraded audio] for her

husband after her mother died just about six weeks before. But here's another stranger. [degraded audio] and I saw somebody, it looked like a man's legs, sitting by the stool but they couldn't [degraded audio] You couldn't see the whole body; and I went back upstairs, I'd just come midway to get a drink of water downstairs. [clears throat] So I went back and told Momma, I said "Momma, I saw a man, sitting in a chair by the stove downstairs, and I think it was Daddy." Oh man she flew out(?). She said "You haven't seen nothing [degraded audio], you know your Daddy's still [degraded audio] I don't know what you saw, I don't think you saw anything yet, because you're still not right from your grandmother dying." Because our grandmother had, she had a stroke, and still lived with us eight days, or something like that. [degraded audio, cut off by end of tape]

TAPE 2, SIDE A:

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:08
She did [degraded audio] and I saw him, and I told you I saw him but you said I didn't." But I said "I knew my daddy—because I'm a daddy's girl, you know how it is. So, Daddy's funeral, my sister couldn't go, she had a nervous breakdown. They wouldn't let my brother Joe come. They said he just went wild because they wouldn't let him come to his father's funeral from the army. Fred [degraded audio]. We buried Daddy; he was sixty-five years old. He was sixty-five, and when he died Mama was fifty-five because he was 10 years older than Mama. Mama didn't marry anymore and in 1952--no, let's see... [pauses] 1955 it must have been, because Mary Ann was born in '52 and...

Cheryl M. 1:25
That's Jerry's daughter.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 1:26
That's, that's one of the girls, that does everything for me now, Mary Ann. And [pauses] that's when Mama died, when she became 65. After ten had passed when she became 65. And both my parents died when they were 65 years old. Mama was sick for, oh about 9 or 10 days clarity and days. She had one of those things where you get blood in the spine. What do you call them things? It wasn't exactly a stroke.

Cheryl M. 2:05
Where you get blood in your spine?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:07
Yeah. And I well remember how we'd go- hers was some kind of a stroke, it was some kind of blood thing [degraded audio], I don't know what they call it now. And so they had her in a dark room and the nurses said "Now be careful what you say; she can hear you but she can't talk back to you, or say anything. So we go in and talk to Momma, but we kinda, we were careful what we say, as she couldn't talk to us. So it just got so bad to where—and not being able to talk to Mama—so I decided one day I couldn't do it, I said "I can't take it." So Sunday came, and

I said "I guess I'm going today to see Mama. Yes I am." That time Dr. Helbert, Hollen Helbert was our doctor, our family doctor. That Sunday morning the doorbell rang, 'cause the kids and I were getting ready to go to the hospital to see Mama, then Dr. Helms(?) said "Come in children." Well me and all of us, me and Leona, and Fred, though we didn't have Joe—I guess, Joe was home from the army, because the war was over. And he said "Your mother's gone now. Your mother passed away this morning." Oh Lord, there it was again [degraded audio], Daddy was dead, and Leona was sick [degraded audio] me and Joe and we did the best [degraded audio] Daddy's funeral from the church. Well, after Mama died we had no funerals or nothing; for years and years, nobody died. But those were the tough years.

Cheryl M. 2:26
Now? Did you keep the family home? [Mary says "huh?"] Did you keep the family home?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:21
We kept it a long time but my sister wanted because after Herman(?) died she said she couldn't keep it up so she sold it and she had already [degraded audio], so we don't have [degraded audio] out there anymore. Somebody else lives there and they're not keeping it painted or nothing, it's going down now. But oh, those were the days, oh I've seen some days. You know, I know that God's been with me, he's been with me through those years, and I wouldn't go ahead and do something against His commands for nothing.

Cheryl M. 5:05
Well you've lived 93-and-a-half years, you've seen... [Mary starts to speak]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:09
Just about and.... So that's what I trust in, I trust in God Almighty. And...

Cheryl M. 5:20
What's the greatest invention you think we've had? You've lived a long time you've seen the automobile, the airplane, the computer.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:28
Well one of the uh... [Cheryl finishing with "telephone"] Well the one first big thing this was the TV. That let you see people of the world on there. How'd they get them pictures? And at first they were real jumpy and jerky, like the first movies, real jumpy and jerky. I remember down to, the theater was Downtown Virginia Theater, we used to have organ music, plays, and shows, and there were silent movies, and if people were walking jerky like that [Cheryl laughs] we were gonna see the movies. And of course the Black people who went to see the movie have to sit up there in the 'attic room' we called it.

Cheryl M. 6:10
'The Balcony' we'd always call it.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:12

Well do you know, that's where you see the movies the best? [Cheryl says "Mhm"] [degraded audio] 'cause down on that first floor, you couldn't hardly see anything, but we were up high, and the seats came down like that, and you could see. Oh, I think what I have, have you heard of Harrisonburg Then and Now? From WVPT? [Cheryl affirms] That's--I'm on there.

Cheryl M. 6:38
You are? On--about what?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:42
On the tape, on the, one that has the pictures on it; what you call it? [pause] What's the tape that has the talking and the pictures on it? Because a man from... [pause] [degraded audio] interviewed me. I'm on there, Elon Rhodes is on there [degraded audio]... Wilhelmina, you know Wilhelmina Johnson?

Cheryl M. 7:19
Yep.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 7:19
'Cause she was the third social worker long time. She's on there and Red Bundy. [Cheryl says "I know him.] Red Bundy's dead. But, Elon Rhodes and me and Wilhelmena, when people want to know anything, they ask the three of us. [Cheryl laughs] They ask Elon too. They ask Wilhelmina and they ask me. And, 'cause we know more about the things, but Wilhelmina comes from Luray, but she came early in life and lived here most her life, all of her life mostly, since high school days when she married, she married Bud Johnson's son, Edgar, who worked for [degraded audio] for years and years and years. 'Course he's dead now. And all those boys who came along in World War II days are in their 80s, 82 or something like that.

Cheryl M. 8:24
Mr. Bird is--[Mary says "huh?"] Mr. Bird is 84, I think? Wilmer? W.C.?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 8:34
Who's that?

Cheryl M. 8:34
Mr. Bird over on Dawson street?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 8:37
Oh, he's 87(?) now, because he was eighty-something, and [degraded audio] was 80 when he passed away. And my brother Joe is 83.

Cheryl M. 8:49
Is he? So back to inventions. Besides the picture shows? What else do you think has been good? Innovations and inventions, which ones do you think have been good?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:09
I would say I know that these others are good, but I'd say that TV kind of opened up the way, because we used to have to play records to get our music, you know? [degraded audio], play records and things. But I think when TV came in, that was the first of the great inventions. Because you could see people from around the world doing things. And the rest of them have improved and improved that one. Even with the internet, all those things they started with TV. [Cheryl says "right"] To me the TV is the best one of them, and these others have been added on to.

Cheryl M. 9:59
That makes sense [Mary asks "What do you think?"] I agree that makes sense.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:02
Of course [Cheryl says "or communication lines"], telephone, telephone was wonderful too, but you didn't see anything on the telephone, but you could hear. It was all, you may see a [degraded audio] New York [degraded audio]

Cheryl M. 10:20
It made the world a lot smaller.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:25
Yeah but then the next thing that came along was TV. That was really smart. But I think, and then everything else was built away from one of those things.

Cheryl M. 10:39
Now you lived through the Civil Rights Movement. [Mary says "huh?"] I said you lived through the Civil Rights Movement.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:46
Yes, Martin Luther King. [Cheryl starts to say "Did you participate-"] Did you see my Martin Luther King award?

Cheryl M. 10:50
Yes, ma'am. Did you participate in any of the movements?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:56
There wasn't anything up here to do. Most of the people down south did that, and Rosa Parks and all of them. [Cheryl says "Right."] But no, we had NAACP you know they definitely [degraded audio] ...as in the south, you know.

Cheryl M. 11:19
Did you have many problems here?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 11:22

Here in Harrisonburg? No. We just had our own things, our own restaurants and barbershops and things.

Cheryl M. 11:32
What restaurant? What restaurant?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 11:37
Colonnade--that big tall building down there on... what street is that now? Wolfe Street. It's not there anymore, it's been knocked down. A man named [degraded audio (Mr. Petty Brown?)] built that Colonnade. It was a dance hall, a restaurant, a barber shop [degraded audio] business for Black people. They tore it down during that time that they tore down everything in Harrisonburg that was Black [degraded audio]. People's homes [degraded audio] projects.

Cheryl M. 12:23
They tore down their homes?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:24
Mhm. Mason Street had some homes, the people named the Tolivers [degraded audio] built a beautiful brick home. Just blow 'em up, but they pay you for it, paid you for it. They didn't pay a good price, but that's because it's gonna make the city bigger. [degraded audio] ...on Mason Street right down there near Mason Street. Those homes [degraded audio] back in there, 'cause everybody owned their own place.

Cheryl M. 12:55
And they just took them away?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:56
Took them away.

Cheryl M. 12:58
Eminent domain?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:59
They said they had a real nasty man over at the city there. He wasn't a mayor, [degraded audio] [Cheryl says "Housing-?"] Housing Authority [degraded audio]. And he saw to it that their barber shop, and everything they had, except [degraded audio (Ricky's?)] shop, and the stores and, they had a little place called--what people use today to dance and have a good time. And, so they wanted to take our house. My name was in the paper: that Mary Awkard fought for her home. I didn't miss a meeting. And I knew that they were going to have a meeting. [degraded audio] I made my reasons openly for me to be there. [degraded audio] I said, "You all are not going to have my home, 'cause my daddy built it." And I said, "It's not for sale." And I said, "Y'all don't need no house," because I said, "It's not on [degraded audio] Street, it's on Broad Street. Y'all said y'all were taking Gay Street, and Mason, but this is Broad Street [degraded audio] it was facing, and it's not going out of here." And then they talked around, to the city and they

finally- they told me I had to do it. And so they gave me a check for $9,000. At that time the house was beautiful. And so I talked to my brothers and to one of my sisters, I said, "Listen, I'm going to give it back to them." I said, "They're not going to do that to us." So the next time they had a meeting, I said "I brought y'all your money back." I said, "My brothers know, we grew up [degraded audio] and here's your money." I guess he left me alone after that. The house's still standing there. But you see, you gotta be- look I wasn't being nasty [Cheryl says "right"], but I was telling 'em through the teeth, that you're not gonna have that house, because my daddy built it. His [degraded audio] was that house [degraded audio] you're not gonna have it.

Cheryl M. 15:22
So where did they- [Mary starts to speak again, but then stops and says, "huh?"] Where did they expect everybody to go?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 15:27
They wanted to get us to come to projects. [Cheryl says "projects?"] Projects, 'cause they've got a few of 'em there, you know out on West Water Street and around-- up in this area up on Kelley Street they still got those projects, you paid rent to the city you know? [Cheryl says "Well that just doesn't make a lot of sense"] and then a lot of those Black people, some of them got themselves something built somewhere. That's how Broad Street got rebuilt again, because people started buying lots in there, and they had their houses built and then Black churches in that area, because they took our church too, on Wolfe Street, they took our church [degraded audio].

Cheryl M. 16:12
Well what was their reasoning for taking it, though? I don't understand--

Mary Awkard Fairfax 16:15
[degraded audio], and it was the longest kind of time before [coughs] before anything was built on that Mason Street [degraded audio] seven men came over there. Those lots were vacant for years; and then after a while this tire company came over there. And then the [degraded audio] company came over to Rock Street because [degraded audio] was downtown. I mean, number four. He's over there, over on Rock Street, up on Rock Street. So they had this thing called "Harrisonburg, Then and Now," and that's what they--I don't know- where's is that tape uh... do you know where it is uh... Heather? [Heather replies, "Yes ma'am?"] [degraded audio] Do you have one of those machines? I forget what it's called.

Cheryl M. 17:21
I'll watch it; if I can take it with me I'll watch it. [Mary says "huh?"] If I can take it with me I'll watch it.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 17:27
Now will you be careful--[Cheryl says "yes, ma'am"] I don't want that [degraded audio]. I gave it to that preacher and I said, "Listen, [degraded audio], I said "I want that back." Now what they did, there was four people that I named to you, but WVPT had this program. They were selling

these tapes for 75 dollars. They gave them to only four of us, and they gave each one of us a tape for, y'know, being-- giving the news. Mine was about how the Black people were treated during that time. Red Bundy talked about how he had [degraded audio] to go to the movies. And I think Elon Rhodes talked about the black [degraded audio] how they were done, because he was a barber. And Wilhelmina, she talked about some of the things, then-- then we talk about the "now" things, how things have changed. And then I talked about the "now" things, how Black people were coming back, and how things were at the school and everything. But they have my picture, I'm on there talking, right in this room like you are [Cheryl says "Mhm"] and they had the same kind of-- their machines were bigger than yours. And I wanna say it was three hours long [degraded audio.] And they tell me [degraded audio] that they come back with [degraded audio] [laughs]

Cheryl M. 19:18
I think the library can order a copy, I'll see if we can order a copy.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 19:22
They might have it, but that there, that's the recent one right there. And [degraded audio], she taught at... which one [degraded audio] schools? It wasn't Spotswood [degraded audio]. She talked about things that happened in Harrisonburg and about their school and different things and I said um... we talked about what we've talked about. And Julian, he's dead and gone now too, well he talked about the police force when it happened. He was on the committee, they had different committees, to talk about different things, they happen to--one time, you know, down the way you pay your water bill. That was a school once, that was a high school elementary.

Cheryl M. 20:31
That was?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:31
Years ago, yes.

Cheryl M. 20:34
For white people?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:35
White. And then the downstairs elementary appeared at Effinger. And upstairs was the high school, 'till they built it [degraded audio]. There used to be a racetrack right there, when I was a little girl, [degraded audio] And so that's why the high school was built out there now. Because that new one [degraded audio]. That's the old one. Now, the older school was one of them, built in 1912. [degraded audio] teacher at that time; it was just an old-fashioned school. But...

Cheryl M. 21:30
How do you think- how do you think education has changed. You taught for... 34, 40--

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:37

42 years.

Cheryl M. 21:39
42 years?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:41
It was 35 in Harrisonburg, 35 years there.

Cheryl M. 21:45
How has education changed, do you think?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:48
Well at that time, education was good. You had dedicated teachers, where they weren't there for paychecks, right? You know what I'm talking about [Cheryl says "right"] The generation now, they want paychecks.

Cheryl M. 22:04
Right, it's not a vocation anymore.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 22:06
Like when I was at the Simms school they started getting some of those folks coming in. Someone said to me one day, they were [degraded audio (rushing?)] on payday. And the, the school board was sending checks up to our school for somebody, and of course you had to go to the principal's office to get 'em Some of them would wait and wait as soon as they thought that [degraded audio] they'd look and see if they had their checks. So then there was somebody in there who said "Ooooooh, here comes Mrs. Moneybags." I said "What do you mean with that?" "Well, we don't see you in the office to get your check." I said, "Let me tell you something. If you got one, I got one." I said "I don't have to peep." I said, "If your check is in that box in there, so's mine. And I go at the proper time when school's out, or if the principal wants to come to the door and give it to me, whichever, but I don't have to peep, to see if it's out here. [starts laughing] So they--[laughs harder] they left me alone after that.

Cheryl M. 23:21
And you say that started at Simms school? And you said that started at Simms, that kind of attitude? Where teachers were more worried about pay than...

Mary Awkard Fairfax 23:32
Oh only a few those newcomers, who didn't last very long; first thing we knew they were gone, but the ones who had been there, they didn't bother going around looking for their check, because they knew that they would get their check. Wasn't too big you know, let me see how much was it? It was... $600 a month [degraded audio] I first came to Harrisonburg. Mr. Keister, promised me $100 dollars a month, because I came out of Bridgewater, $50 a month; Staunton, $50 a month. And I was at Bridgewater four years, and the superintendent didn't want me to leave, and he was gonna try to up it but, Mr. Keister, Mr. Keister said "Boy don't, I'm taking Mary

home now." [Cheryl laughs] And that's when I came to Harrisonburg and Simms school. He brought me on in.

Cheryl M. 24:44
Now there's a lot of talk today about children too, and Attention Deficit Disorder--[Mary says "huh?"] There's a lot of talk about children with Attention Deficit Disorder, and all these HDD, ADD. Did you see much of that, when you were teaching? [Mary makes a sound indicating "no"]. What do you think has caused that?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 25:09
Well, you can't correct anybody now, [degraded audio] but it was parents' fault(?) and administration's fault(?) too, because now you'd like--little Johnny would come to you, and little Johnny is five years old, six, little Johnny has a stomachache. Well sometimes if he's crying, you might take little Johnny up on your lap, and pat him on the head; and [degraded audio] a little medication for him, and you can't touch him. And little children love to be touched. Well that makes a hard child(?) he's hard you know? And the whole time I worked at Waterman, I could touch him. not for any kind of ugliness, just pat him on the head or something like that. I'd just pat him on the shoulder or take him by the hand or something like that, or "You'll be alright honey." Especially those children that'd be coming to school for the first time and want to go back home to their mothers; and the mothers'd make 'em stay and wait, and they'd cry. And I'd bring them up to my desk, or [degraded audio]. And often they'd stop crying, and start playing with the other children. But, you're not allowed to do this and that and other, and the children know it. [degraded audio] they'll tell the principal to call 911 on them. Can't even spank your children at home. They'll call 911 on you, and have you arrested. [degraded audio]You know? And, but if you tell the parents what they do--"Oh no, my boy's not doing that. No." And now see my niece came out of teaching here this past year. Mary Ann taught fif- no taught... 30 years in Richmond [degraded audio]. And then she had a master's, then she went to... what's the name of that--Chesterfield, Chesterfield. And that's where she retired to here. And she said "I..."--she was teaching middle school. She said "All those children want to know is about sex and stuff." And she said, "You can't hardly teach a thing. And she said, "I'm coming out. I'm not really sure what it [degraded audio]." She said "Just because you taught 42 years, don't think I'm gonna last as long." She said, "As soon as I make my 30 years, I'm coming out." And she did. She quit this year, retired. She said, "I know enough computer and things like that, that I can get a job. Be in a doctor's office, be a secretary for somebody, or just work in a store," but said, "They're making me sick, they're making me have a backache." Said, "When school starts, that's when my back starts aching. Because I know they gonna get on my nerves so bad," and said, "I want them to learn what I'm teaching." And she was an excellent teacher 'cause she had my ways

Cheryl M. 29:01
Now you're not allowed to discipline them anymore either. Did you ever have to discipline children?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 29:06

Not too much. I didn't have to be whacking them to do it. Because we did--one thing, I had so many things for them to do [degraded audio] because they could sing, they could [degraded audio] and they had a lot of activities and [degraded audio] high school music. We tell them that if you don't want to sing, we're not going to make you sing if you don't want to; well everybody wanted to. So that's the reason we had 62 children in our choir. Mr. Moore, was the director and I played the piano. Miss Hackman was the school supervisor of music, and she did music at the [degraded audio] high school. Well then she knew I was doing music at Simms, and she come, and we worked together, and we'd have a concert with the community. Miss Hackman would play the piano. And we'd get an organ from [degraded audio], and [degraded audio] didn't charge us, they would loan it to us as advertisement to them. I'd play the organ, and Miss Hackman would play the piano, and we'd practice together. Then we'd do the group, then we'd have the concert. She was on piano—I've got picture of 'em somewhere, and not the picture you saw, but another one—and I was on the organ; and believe me, those children could sing. Oh Lord, we had a Christmas concert, little Christmas tree, well they had candles, and the boys in the shop would make stages so they'd look like that. And the bravest people would stand near the top, and do the Christmas carols, not just any junk, because Mr. Moore didn't allow junk singing, the stuff had to be like "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and all the songs that [degraded audio] things that meant something to people, and good hymns, like um... like I said, "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Ave Maria" and stuff like that. We didn't have no trashy music. And he has a nice, gentle voice. When he sang, "Like A Bridge Over Troubled Waters," the tears would run down your face. "Like a bridge"--do you know that? [Cheryl says "Yes I do"] "over troubled waters, I will lay me down." I'm thinking about those days.

Cheryl M. 32:12
Now at Waterman, did you get to do as many programs like you did at Simms?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 32:16
No, those teachers didn't do as much. They had one [degraded audio] because I had a doll show at Simms school. And we had different kinds of dolls. And we had Indian dolls. I had a group do an Indian dance. The children themselves, or if they had Chinese, they would do a little-- some would have little stuff like that. [degraded audio] We had the dolls in chairs. And the children would dance for 'em. Well, we had that one year I think. I don't know. They wanted to get home, they didn't want to be bothered with that kind of stuff. So I didn't have to work as hard up there as I did at Simms school. They were more [degraded audio]. They did a good teaching job, I'm not saying that, but those extra activities--but they had May Day, though. They had May Day and May Pole winding and things like that. [degraded audio]

Cheryl M. 33:37
They don't have much anymore. How did you teach children to read? Using phonics?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:48
Phonics and, some of it was... well, I didn't like too much of that. Memorizing, I didn't like much of that. But I would sometimes draw things on the blackboard. Maybe I would have a [degraded audio] and have words printed on the [degraded audio]. See who could go up and get [degraded

audio] or something like that. Most of my games that we played, well they were reading words. Or if we had a lesson, we'd make a spelling lesson out of the new words, have a spelling bee, and have them stand up and I had flash cards. That was more like phonetics, and...

Cheryl M. 34:37
'Cause now they teach them sight context or something like that?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:42
Something like that, I don't know how to teach any of that.

Cheryl M. 34:44
It doesn't work, it doesn't seem to work.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:46
Lot of children can't read so well now. And we wouldn't let 'em go—if couldn't read—to the next grade. We'd keep 'em, keep 'em another year to be sure that they could read. Because I told the children that if they couldn't learn to read, they wouldn't be able to do anything else that well. I said "Even your math problems have to be read sometimes." And I said "Reading is the most important." And I'd tell that to the little children, and I had big children sometimes. Your English grammar is most important to that too. Because you have to know descriptive words which would be your adjectives, your adverbs, your prepositions, and all those words, you're going to have know what your diacritical marks are, like periods, commas, dashes, quotation marks, and all that kind of stuff. And those are some of the things I insisted on when I went into any high school children that I'd have to tutor sometimes. And science, well you could read that. And of course the science teacher would have you do experiments, and taking things to pieces and taking pieces out of fish and frogs, and all that kind of business. And then, civics, when I got into high school you have to learn civics and your community, how it works, how it operates, and all those sort of things, and what democracy was; and you had to learn the Articles of Confederation. All your presidents and their vices, and sometimes their wives, like that. And part of Lincoln's... address, you'd have Lincoln's--you'd have Lincoln's address...

Cheryl M. 36:10
Gettysburg Address.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 36:27
Gettysburg, you had to learn that one. By memory. You had to learn your timetables from 1 to 12. You had to recite them.

Cheryl M. 37:15
I had to do that, second grade.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 37:17
[degraded audio] Up here. And some of those things I'm saying [degraded audio]. But you really had to put that into their heads. I told my first-graders and seconds, "You have to know these

things" I said, "Because something might happen to your parents, and you might not get to go to school. And you will know something about something. So I just want you to pay attention. Because I'm gonna give you everything that I've got to give. And we had—because I had Latin three years—had Latin. And of course I said, "That's the basis for a lot of our English words. Right? From the Latin. And so I had three years of that. Professor Harris taught it, because I think he went to Harvard for his school I think, and he was a real, real college professor. But he taught to high school. And then we had good science teachers. Had to do a lot of drawing in there, lot of children asked me to draw pictures of fish or animals or whatever I could draw. My brother Joe, well I thought he was gonna be an artist because he could draw anything. He could draw [degraded audio]. It was--it was interesting. The work was very interesting. But you had to really keep on some children to get them to do something. And some children would be late coming into school, because [degraded audio] polio or something like that; and it wouldn't--and then after a while, they had teachers go into the [degraded audio] on Saturday, teaching children. [degraded audio] then I went to teach who had something like polio or something like that. And the school board would pay you, for teaching them. You didn't get much [degraded audio] and that went with that. But mostly I thought of- sometimes I would, like on the days of that long Spring, I'd teach after school, but then other times I'd go on Saturday. I know one child now that I didn't teach, but Mrs. Hollands() had him; and that boy would [degraded audio] Oh, he was a big boy, and [clears throat] he became a big-time minister in Washington D.C. at a big church.

Cheryl M. 37:17
So he was thankful.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 40:22
He retired not long ago [degraded audio] and she taught him at home till he was able to come to school. That's the kind of work we did, especially because community mothers, because Ruth never got married but I did, but Ruth didn't. She stayed a maid, till she died. [degraded audio] somebody would say well, Luther(?) would call me, "Miss Awkward, would you play for this person's funeral? They don't belong to any church." I said "Okay." They had one of them, some kind of organ [degraded audio] it had two keyboards, I know that; and I said [degraded audio] and I liked it pretty good; so I would play for funerals. My church, sometimes [degraded audio] wouldn't have nobody, I'd play for that church and the church didn't have a program, didn't have nobody; and I said "Well," I said "You know I have to play at my church first, but if I have some extra, I don't mind helping." And all those things you do, you would get somebody to [degraded audio]. And they didn't bother me either.

Cheryl M. 40:40
Yeah and now you see the ads in the paper for a church organist.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 42:13
Well now you can't get anybody. Nobody plays, nobody takes music, they're probably out there singing something wild, you know. That nobody ever heard of before. Those good old hymns, like... do you see my keyboard over there? [Cheryl responds "Mmm hmm, I saw it."] My two

brothers—the one who's dead and the other [degraded audio] for me for my birthday one year, 'cause I know that they paid over $100 for it. And then I got another thing in there that my one brother gave me about five or six years ago, that I keep in my room in there. I don't play that. I play my tapes and my CDs on there and other records all the time. But I have some good brothers that love me. And um...

Cheryl M. 43:10
Well, what would your advice for the future of the world be? If you could send a message to the world right now, what would it be?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 43:17
[pause as she thinks] Have some one-to-one talks with the children. Have them to--teach them to like each other. You know, have things together. Talk about good things, then try to keep them away from the evil things. Have as many good things for them to do, because some children really want to learn. And the ones that don't want to learn, well, just kind of give them all the [degraded audio] you can, because they're not going to do anything that's good, but don't let them stop others who want to learn. And sometimes some children will want to stay after school together. I would do that. And give them some one-on-one. Children do better on one-on-one. Now one time, since I retired, and Red Bundy's wife, and... let's see [degraded audio] do you know him? He's part of the [degraded audio]. Amelia Jones—she lives down at [degraded audio] now—she was a high school secretary, and a gem. Well when the integration came, they just sent her out to the white high school [degraded audio]. But we were the ones they depend on because Amelia had everything ready. When they wanted to know something [coughs] about something, they would get Amelia. [degraded audio]. Amelia told me, she said, "You know, we got some black student that don't have the right attitude up here. And they're not taking part in anything, and so they're not doing any singing, they're not doing- they're not being in plays," and said "We oughta have--we need to have some counselors up here." And said, "Could I ask a couple reliable people, that I know who are reliable [degraded audio], to come up here and talk to these children?" Well, what they wanted you to do is bring a whole bunch of them. And I told the principal, "No. One-on-one is what they need. Because," I said, "They don't want to talk in front of the other children." And I said, "I can draw more out of them if it's one-on-one." And that's [degraded audio] one-on-one. And I said "Well what's your problem?" "Well they don't like me." I said, "Well, do you like them?" I said, "Love's(?) a two-way street." [tape ends]

TAPE 2, SIDE B:

Mary Awkard Fairfax 0:08
She did [degraded audio] and I saw him, and I told you I saw him but you said I didn't." But I said "I knew my daddy—because I'm a daddy's girl, you know how it is. So, Daddy's funeral, my sister couldn't go, she had a nervous breakdown. They wouldn't let my brother Joe come. They said he just went wild because they wouldn't let him come to his father's funeral from the army. Fred [degraded audio]. We buried Daddy; he was sixty-five years old. He was sixty-five, and when he died Mama was fifty-five because he was 10 years older than Mama. Mama didn't

marry anymore and in 1952--no, let's see... [pauses] 1955 it must have been, because Mary Ann was born in '52 and...

Cheryl M. 1:25
That's Jerry's daughter.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 1:26
That's, that's one of the girls, that does everything for me now, Mary Ann. And [pauses] that's when Mama died, when she became 65. After ten had passed when she became 65. And both my parents died when they were 65 years old. Mama was sick for, oh about 9 or 10 days clarity and days. She had one of those things where you get blood in the spine. What do you call them things? It wasn't exactly a stroke.

Cheryl M. 2:05
Where you get blood in your spine?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 2:07
Yeah. And I well remember how we'd go- hers was some kind of a stroke, it was some kind of blood thing [degraded audio], I don't know what they call it now. And so they had her in a dark room and the nurses said "Now be careful what you say; she can hear you but she can't talk back to you, or say anything. So we go in and talk to Momma, but we kinda, we were careful what we say, as she couldn't talk to us. So it just got so bad to where—and not being able to talk to Mama—so I decided one day I couldn't do it, I said "I can't take it." So Sunday came, and I said "I guess I'm going today to see Mama. Yes I am." That time Dr. Helbert, Hollen Helbert was our doctor, our family doctor. That Sunday morning the doorbell rang, 'cause the kids and I were getting ready to go to the hospital to see Mama, then Dr. Helms(?) said "Come in children." Well me and all of us, me and Leona, and Fred, though we didn't have Joe—I guess, Joe was home from the army, because the war was over. And he said "Your mother's gone now. Your mother passed away this morning." Oh Lord, there it was again [degraded audio], Daddy was dead, and Leona was sick [degraded audio] me and Joe and we did the best [degraded audio] Daddy's funeral from the church. Well, after Mama died we had no funerals or nothing; for years and years, nobody died. But those were the tough years.

Cheryl M. 2:26
Now? Did you keep the family home? [Mary says "huh?"] Did you keep the family home?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 4:21
We kept it a long time but my sister wanted because after Herman(?) died she said she couldn't keep it up so she sold it and she had already [degraded audio], so we don't have [degraded audio] out there anymore. Somebody else lives there and they're not keeping it painted or nothing, it's going down now. But oh, those were the days, oh I've seen some days. You know, I know that God's been with me, he's been with me through those years, and I wouldn't go ahead and do something against His commands for nothing.

Cheryl M. 5:05
Well you've lived 93-and-a-half years, you've seen... [Mary starts to speak]

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:09
Just about and.... So that's what I trust in, I trust in God Almighty. And...

Cheryl M. 5:20
What's the greatest invention you think we've had? You've lived a long time you've seen the automobile, the airplane, the computer.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 5:28
Well one of the uh... [Cheryl finishing with "telephone"] Well the one first big thing this was the TV. That let you see people of the world on there. How'd they get them pictures? And at first they were real jumpy and jerky, like the first movies, real jumpy and jerky. I remember down to, the theater was Downtown Virginia Theater, we used to have organ music, plays, and shows, and there were silent movies, and if people were walking jerky like that [Cheryl laughs] we were gonna see the movies. And of course the Black people who went to see the movie have to sit up there in the 'attic room' we called it.

Cheryl M. 6:10
'The Balcony' we'd always call it.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:12
Well do you know, that's where you see the movies the best? [Cheryl says "Mhm"] [degraded audio] 'cause down on that first floor, you couldn't hardly see anything, but we were up high, and the seats came down like that, and you could see. Oh, I think what I have, have you heard of Harrisonburg Then and Now? From WVPT? [Cheryl affirms] That's--I'm on there.

Cheryl M. 6:38
You are? On--about what?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 6:42
On the tape, on the, one that has the pictures on it; what you call it? [pause] What's the tape that has the talking and the pictures on it? Because a man from... [pause] [degraded audio] interviewed me. I'm on there, Elon Rhodes is on there [degraded audio]... Wilhelmina, you know Wilhelmina Johnson?

Cheryl M. 7:19
Yep.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 7:19
'Cause she was the third social worker long time. She's on there and Red Bundy. [Cheryl says "I know him.] Red Bundy's dead. But, Elon Rhodes and me and Wilhelmena, when people want to know anything, they ask the three of us. [Cheryl laughs] They ask Elon too. They ask

Wilhelmina and they ask me. And, 'cause we know more about the things, but Wilhelmina comes from Luray, but she came early in life and lived here most her life, all of her life mostly, since high school days when she married, she married Bud Johnson's son, Edgar, who worked for [degraded audio] for years and years and years. 'Course he's dead now. And all those boys who came along in World War II days are in their 80s, 82 or something like that.

Cheryl M. 8:24
Mr. Bird is--[Mary says "huh?"] Mr. Bird is 84, I think? Wilmer? W.C.?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 8:34
Who's that?

Cheryl M. 8:34
Mr. Bird over on Dawson street?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 8:37
Oh, he's 87(?) now, because he was eighty-something, and [degraded audio] was 80 when he passed away. And my brother Joe is 83.

Cheryl M. 8:49
Is he? So back to inventions. Besides the picture shows? What else do you think has been good? Innovations and inventions, which ones do you think have been good?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 9:09
I would say I know that these others are good, but I'd say that TV kind of opened up the way, because we used to have to play records to get our music, you know? [degraded audio], play records and things. But I think when TV came in, that was the first of the great inventions. Because you could see people from around the world doing things. And the rest of them have improved and improved that one. Even with the internet, all those things they started with TV. [Cheryl says "right"] To me the TV is the best one of them, and these others have been added on to.

Cheryl M. 9:59
That makes sense [Mary asks "What do you think?"] I agree that makes sense.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:02
Of course [Cheryl says "or communication lines"], telephone, telephone was wonderful too, but you didn't see anything on the telephone, but you could hear. It was all, you may see a [degraded audio] New York [degraded audio]

Cheryl M. 10:20
It made the world a lot smaller.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:25

Yeah but then the next thing that came along was TV. That was really smart. But I think, and then everything else was built away from one of those things.

Cheryl M. 10:39
Now you lived through the Civil Rights Movement. [Mary says "huh?"] I said you lived through the Civil Rights Movement.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:46
Yes, Martin Luther King. [Cheryl starts to say "Did you participate-"] Did you see my Martin Luther King award?

Cheryl M. 10:50
Yes, ma'am. Did you participate in any of the movements?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 10:56
There wasn't anything up here to do. Most of the people down south did that, and Rosa Parks and all of them. [Cheryl says "Right."] But no, we had NAACP you know they definitely [degraded audio] ...as in the south, you know.

Cheryl M. 11:19
Did you have many problems here?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 11:22
Here in Harrisonburg? No. We just had our own things, our own restaurants and barbershops and things.

Cheryl M. 11:32
What restaurant? What restaurant?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 11:37
Colonnade--that big tall building down there on... what street is that now? Wolfe Street. It's not there anymore, it's been knocked down. A man named [degraded audio (Mr. Petty Brown?)] built that Colonnade. It was a dance hall, a restaurant, a barber shop [degraded audio] business for Black people. They tore it down during that time that they tore down everything in Harrisonburg that was Black [degraded audio]. People's homes [degraded audio] projects.

Cheryl M. 12:23
They tore down their homes?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:24
Mhm. Mason Street had some homes, the people named the Tolivers [degraded audio] built a beautiful brick home. Just blow 'em up, but they pay you for it, paid you for it. They didn't pay a good price, but that's because it's gonna make the city bigger. [degraded audio] ...on Mason

Street right down there near Mason Street. Those homes [degraded audio] back in there, 'cause everybody owned their own place.

Cheryl M. 12:55
And they just took them away?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:56
Took them away.

Cheryl M. 12:58
Eminent domain?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 12:59
They said they had a real nasty man over at the city there. He wasn't a mayor, [degraded audio] [Cheryl says "Housing-?"] Housing Authority [degraded audio]. And he saw to it that their barber shop, and everything they had, except [degraded audio (Ricky's?)] shop, and the stores and, they had a little place called--what people use today to dance and have a good time. And, so they wanted to take our house. My name was in the paper: that Mary Awkard fought for her home. I didn't miss a meeting. And I knew that they were going to have a meeting. [degraded audio] I made my reasons openly for me to be there. [degraded audio] I said, "You all are not going to have my home, 'cause my daddy built it." And I said, "It's not for sale." And I said, "Y'all don't need no house," because I said, "It's not on [degraded audio] Street, it's on Broad Street. Y'all said y'all were taking Gay Street, and Mason, but this is Broad Street [degraded audio] it was facing, and it's not going out of here." And then they talked around, to the city and they finally- they told me I had to do it. And so they gave me a check for $9,000. At that time the house was beautiful. And so I talked to my brothers and to one of my sisters, I said, "Listen, I'm going to give it back to them." I said, "They're not going to do that to us." So the next time they had a meeting, I said "I brought y'all your money back." I said, "My brothers know, we grew up [degraded audio] and here's your money." I guess he left me alone after that. The house's still standing there. But you see, you gotta be- look I wasn't being nasty [Cheryl says "right"], but I was telling 'em through the teeth, that you're not gonna have that house, because my daddy built it. His [degraded audio] was that house [degraded audio] you're not gonna have it.

Cheryl M. 15:22
So where did they- [Mary starts to speak again, but then stops and says, "huh?"] Where did they expect everybody to go?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 15:27
They wanted to get us to come to projects. [Cheryl says "projects?"] Projects, 'cause they've got a few of 'em there, you know out on West Water Street and around-- up in this area up on Kelley Street they still got those projects, you paid rent to the city you know? [Cheryl says "Well that just doesn't make a lot of sense"] and then a lot of those Black people, some of them got themselves something built somewhere. That's how Broad Street got rebuilt again, because people started buying lots in there, and they had their houses built and then Black churches in

that area, because they took our church too, on Wolfe Street, they took our church [degraded audio].

Cheryl M. 16:12
Well what was their reasoning for taking it, though? I don't understand--

Mary Awkard Fairfax 16:15
[degraded audio], and it was the longest kind of time before [coughs] before anything was built on that Mason Street [degraded audio] seven men came over there. Those lots were vacant for years; and then after a while this tire company came over there. And then the [degraded audio] company came over to Rock Street because [degraded audio] was downtown. I mean, number four. He's over there, over on Rock Street, up on Rock Street. So they had this thing called "Harrisonburg, Then and Now," and that's what they--I don't know- where's is that tape uh... do you know where it is uh... Heather? [Heather replies, "Yes ma'am?"] [degraded audio] Do you have one of those machines? I forget what it's called.

Cheryl M. 17:21
I'll watch it; if I can take it with me I'll watch it. [Mary says "huh?"] If I can take it with me I'll watch it.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 17:27
Now will you be careful--[Cheryl says "yes, ma'am"] I don't want that [degraded audio]. I gave it to that preacher and I said, "Listen, [degraded audio], I said "I want that back." Now what they did, there was four people that I named to you, but WVPT had this program. They were selling these tapes for 75 dollars. They gave them to only four of us, and they gave each one of us a tape for, y'know, being-- giving the news. Mine was about how the Black people were treated during that time. Red Bundy talked about how he had [degraded audio] to go to the movies. And I think Elon Rhodes talked about the black [degraded audio] how they were done, because he was a barber. And Wilhelmina, she talked about some of the things, then-- then we talk about the "now" things, how things have changed. And then I talked about the "now" things, how Black people were coming back, and how things were at the school and everything. But they have my picture, I'm on there talking, right in this room like you are [Cheryl says "Mhm"] and they had the same kind of-- their machines were bigger than yours. And I wanna say it was three hours long [degraded audio.] And they tell me [degraded audio] that they come back with [degraded audio] [laughs]

Cheryl M. 19:18
I think the library can order a copy, I'll see if we can order a copy.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 19:22
They might have it, but that there, that's the recent one right there. And [degraded audio], she taught at... which one [degraded audio] schools? It wasn't Spotswood [degraded audio]. She talked about things that happened in Harrisonburg and about their school and different things and I said um... we talked about what we've talked about. And Julian, he's dead and gone now

too, well he talked about the police force when it happened. He was on the committee, they had different committees, to talk about different things, they happen to--one time, you know, down the way you pay your water bill. That was a school once, that was a high school elementary.

Cheryl M. 20:31
That was?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:31
Years ago, yes.

Cheryl M. 20:34
For white people?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 20:35
White. And then the downstairs elementary appeared at Effinger. And upstairs was the high school, 'till they built it [degraded audio]. There used to be a racetrack right there, when I was a little girl, [degraded audio] And so that's why the high school was built out there now. Because that new one [degraded audio]. That's the old one. Now, the older school was one of them, built in 1912. [degraded audio] teacher at that time; it was just an old-fashioned school. But...

Cheryl M. 21:30
How do you think- how do you think education has changed. You taught for... 34, 40--

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:37
42 years.

Cheryl M. 21:39
42 years?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:41
It was 35 in Harrisonburg, 35 years there.

Cheryl M. 21:45
How has education changed, do you think?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 21:48
Well at that time, education was good. You had dedicated teachers, where they weren't there for paychecks, right? You know what I'm talking about [Cheryl says "right"] The generation now, they want paychecks.

Cheryl M. 22:04
Right, it's not a vocation anymore.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 22:06

Like when I was at the Simms school they started getting some of those folks coming in. Someone said to me one day, they were [degraded audio (rushing?)] on payday. And the, the school board was sending checks up to our school for somebody, and of course you had to go to the principal's office to get 'em Some of them would wait and wait as soon as they thought that [degraded audio] they'd look and see if they had their checks. So then there was somebody in there who said "Ooooooh, here comes Mrs. Moneybags." I said "What do you mean with that?" "Well, we don't see you in the office to get your check." I said, "Let me tell you something. If you got one, I got one." I said "I don't have to peep." I said, "If your check is in that box in there, so's mine. And I go at the proper time when school's out, or if the principal wants to come to the door and give it to me, whichever, but I don't have to peep, to see if it's out here. [starts laughing] So they--[laughs harder] they left me alone after that.

Cheryl M. 23:21
And you say that started at Simms school? And you said that started at Simms, that kind of attitude? Where teachers were more worried about pay than...

Mary Awkard Fairfax 23:32
Oh only a few those newcomers, who didn't last very long; first thing we knew they were gone, but the ones who had been there, they didn't bother going around looking for their check, because they knew that they would get their check. Wasn't too big you know, let me see how much was it? It was... $600 a month [degraded audio] I first came to Harrisonburg. Mr. Keister, promised me $100 dollars a month, because I came out of Bridgewater, $50 a month; Staunton, $50 a month. And I was at Bridgewater four years, and the superintendent didn't want me to leave, and he was gonna try to up it but, Mr. Keister, Mr. Keister said "Boy don't, I'm taking Mary home now." [Cheryl laughs] And that's when I came to Harrisonburg and Simms school. He brought me on in.

Cheryl M. 24:44
Now there's a lot of talk today about children too, and Attention Deficit Disorder--[Mary says "huh?"] There's a lot of talk about children with Attention Deficit Disorder, and all these HDD, ADD. Did you see much of that, when you were teaching? [Mary makes a sound indicating "no"]. What do you think has caused that?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 25:09
Well, you can't correct anybody now, [degraded audio] but it was parents' fault(?) and administration's fault(?) too, because now you'd like--little Johnny would come to you, and little Johnny is five years old, six, little Johnny has a stomachache. Well sometimes if he's crying, you might take little Johnny up on your lap, and pat him on the head; and [degraded audio] a little medication for him, and you can't touch him. And little children love to be touched. Well that makes a hard child(?) he's hard you know? And the whole time I worked at Waterman, I could touch him. not for any kind of ugliness, just pat him on the head or something like that. I'd just pat him on the shoulder or take him by the hand or something like that, or "You'll be alright honey." Especially those children that'd be coming to school for the first time and want to go back home to their mothers; and the mothers'd make 'em stay and wait, and they'd cry. And I'd

bring them up to my desk, or [degraded audio]. And often they'd stop crying, and start playing with the other children. But, you're not allowed to do this and that and other, and the children know it. [degraded audio] they'll tell the principal to call 911 on them. Can't even spank your children at home. They'll call 911 on you, and have you arrested. [degraded audio]You know? And, but if you tell the parents what they do--"Oh no, my boy's not doing that. No." And now see my niece came out of teaching here this past year. Mary Ann taught fif- no taught... 30 years in Richmond [degraded audio]. And then she had a master's, then she went to... what's the name of that--Chesterfield, Chesterfield. And that's where she retired to here. And she said "I..."--she was teaching middle school. She said "All those children want to know is about sex and stuff." And she said, "You can't hardly teach a thing. And she said, "I'm coming out. I'm not really sure what it [degraded audio]." She said "Just because you taught 42 years, don't think I'm gonna last as long." She said, "As soon as I make my 30 years, I'm coming out." And she did. She quit this year, retired. She said, "I know enough computer and things like that, that I can get a job. Be in a doctor's office, be a secretary for somebody, or just work in a store," but said, "They're making me sick, they're making me have a backache." Said, "When school starts, that's when my back starts aching. Because I know they gonna get on my nerves so bad," and said, "I want them to learn what I'm teaching." And she was an excellent teacher 'cause she had my ways

Cheryl M. 29:01
Now you're not allowed to discipline them anymore either. Did you ever have to discipline children?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 29:06
Not too much. I didn't have to be whacking them to do it. Because we did--one thing, I had so many things for them to do [degraded audio] because they could sing, they could [degraded audio] and they had a lot of activities and [degraded audio] high school music. We tell them that if you don't want to sing, we're not going to make you sing if you don't want to; well everybody wanted to. So that's the reason we had 62 children in our choir. Mr. Moore, was the director and I played the piano. Miss Hackman was the school supervisor of music, and she did music at the [degraded audio] high school. Well then she knew I was doing music at Simms, and she come, and we worked together, and we'd have a concert with the community. Miss Hackman would play the piano. And we'd get an organ from [degraded audio], and [degraded audio] didn't charge us, they would loan it to us as advertisement to them. I'd play the organ, and Miss Hackman would play the piano, and we'd practice together. Then we'd do the group, then we'd have the concert. She was on piano—I've got picture of 'em somewhere, and not the picture you saw, but another one—and I was on the organ; and believe me, those children could sing. Oh Lord, we had a Christmas concert, little Christmas tree, well they had candles, and the boys in the shop would make stages so they'd look like that. And the bravest people would stand near the top, and do the Christmas carols, not just any junk, because Mr. Moore didn't allow junk singing, the stuff had to be like "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and all the songs that [degraded audio] things that meant something to people, and good hymns, like um... like I said, "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Ave Maria" and stuff like that. We didn't have no trashy music. And he has a nice, gentle voice. When he sang, "Like A Bridge Over Troubled Waters," the tears

would run down your face. "Like a bridge"--do you know that? [Cheryl says "Yes I do"] "over troubled waters, I will lay me down." I'm thinking about those days.

Cheryl M. 32:12
Now at Waterman, did you get to do as many programs like you did at Simms?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 32:16
No, those teachers didn't do as much. They had one [degraded audio] because I had a doll show at Simms school. And we had different kinds of dolls. And we had Indian dolls. I had a group do an Indian dance. The children themselves, or if they had Chinese, they would do a little-- some would have little stuff like that. [degraded audio] We had the dolls in chairs. And the children would dance for 'em. Well, we had that one year I think. I don't know. They wanted to get home, they didn't want to be bothered with that kind of stuff. So I didn't have to work as hard up there as I did at Simms school. They were more [degraded audio]. They did a good teaching job, I'm not saying that, but those extra activities--but they had May Day, though. They had May Day and May Pole winding and things like that. [degraded audio]

Cheryl M. 33:37
They don't have much anymore. How did you teach children to read? Using phonics?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 33:48
Phonics and, some of it was... well, I didn't like too much of that. Memorizing, I didn't like much of that. But I would sometimes draw things on the blackboard. Maybe I would have a [degraded audio] and have words printed on the [degraded audio]. See who could go up and get [degraded audio] or something like that. Most of my games that we played, well they were reading words. Or if we had a lesson, we'd make a spelling lesson out of the new words, have a spelling bee, and have them stand up and I had flash cards. That was more like phonetics, and...

Cheryl M. 34:37
'Cause now they teach them sight context or something like that?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:42
Something like that, I don't know how to teach any of that.

Cheryl M. 34:44
It doesn't work, it doesn't seem to work.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 34:46
Lot of children can't read so well now. And we wouldn't let 'em go—if couldn't read—to the next grade. We'd keep 'em, keep 'em another year to be sure that they could read. Because I told the children that if they couldn't learn to read, they wouldn't be able to do anything else that well. I said "Even your math problems have to be read sometimes." And I said "Reading is the most important." And I'd tell that to the little children, and I had big children sometimes. Your English grammar is most important to that too. Because you have to know descriptive words which

would be your adjectives, your adverbs, your prepositions, and all those words, you're going to have know what your diacritical marks are, like periods, commas, dashes, quotation marks, and all that kind of stuff. And those are some of the things I insisted on when I went into any high school children that I'd have to tutor sometimes. And science, well you could read that. And of course the science teacher would have you do experiments, and taking things to pieces and taking pieces out of fish and frogs, and all that kind of business. And then, civics, when I got into high school you have to learn civics and your community, how it works, how it operates, and all those sort of things, and what democracy was; and you had to learn the Articles of Confederation. All your presidents and their vices, and sometimes their wives, like that. And part of Lincoln's... address, you'd have Lincoln's--you'd have Lincoln's address...

Cheryl M. 36:10
Gettysburg Address.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 36:27
Gettysburg, you had to learn that one. By memory. You had to learn your timetables from 1 to 12. You had to recite them.

Cheryl M. 37:15
I had to do that, second grade.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 37:17
[degraded audio] Up here. And some of those things I'm saying [degraded audio]. But you really had to put that into their heads. I told my first-graders and seconds, "You have to know these things" I said, "Because something might happen to your parents, and you might not get to go to school. And you will know something about something. So I just want you to pay attention. Because I'm gonna give you everything that I've got to give. And we had—because I had Latin three years—had Latin. And of course I said, "That's the basis for a lot of our English words. Right? From the Latin. And so I had three years of that. Professor Harris taught it, because I think he went to Harvard for his school I think, and he was a real, real college professor. But he taught to high school. And then we had good science teachers. Had to do a lot of drawing in there, lot of children asked me to draw pictures of fish or animals or whatever I could draw. My brother Joe, well I thought he was gonna be an artist because he could draw anything. He could draw [degraded audio]. It was--it was interesting. The work was very interesting. But you had to really keep on some children to get them to do something. And some children would be late coming into school, because [degraded audio] polio or something like that; and it wouldn't--and then after a while, they had teachers go into the [degraded audio] on Saturday, teaching children. [degraded audio] then I went to teach who had something like polio or something like that. And the school board would pay you, for teaching them. You didn't get much [degraded audio] and that went with that. But mostly I thought of- sometimes I would, like on the days of that long Spring, I'd teach after school, but then other times I'd go on Saturday. I know one child now that I didn't teach, but Mrs. Hollands() had him; and that boy would [degraded audio] Oh, he was a big boy, and [clears throat] he became a big-time minister in Washington D.C. at a big church.

Cheryl M. 37:17
So he was thankful.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 40:22
He retired not long ago [degraded audio] and she taught him at home till he was able to come to school. That's the kind of work we did, especially because community mothers, because Ruth never got married but I did, but Ruth didn't. She stayed a maid, till she died. [degraded audio] somebody would say well, Luther(?) would call me, "Miss Awkward, would you play for this person's funeral? They don't belong to any church." I said "Okay." They had one of them, some kind of organ [degraded audio] it had two keyboards, I know that; and I said [degraded audio] and I liked it pretty good; so I would play for funerals. My church, sometimes [degraded audio] wouldn't have nobody, I'd play for that church and the church didn't have a program, didn't have nobody; and I said "Well," I said "You know I have to play at my church first, but if I have some extra, I don't mind helping." And all those things you do, you would get somebody to [degraded audio]. And they didn't bother me either.

Cheryl M. 40:40
Yeah and now you see the ads in the paper for a church organist.

Mary Awkard Fairfax 42:13
Well now you can't get anybody. Nobody plays, nobody takes music, they're probably out there singing something wild, you know. That nobody ever heard of before. Those good old hymns, like... do you see my keyboard over there? [Cheryl responds "Mmm hmm, I saw it."] My two brothers—the one who's dead and the other [degraded audio] for me for my birthday one year, 'cause I know that they paid over $100 for it. And then I got another thing in there that my one brother gave me about five or six years ago, that I keep in my room in there. I don't play that. I play my tapes and my CDs on there and other records all the time. But I have some good brothers that love me. And um...

Cheryl M. 43:10
Well, what would your advice for the future of the world be? If you could send a message to the world right now, what would it be?

Mary Awkard Fairfax 43:17
[pause as she thinks] Have some one-to-one talks with the children. Have them to--teach them to like each other. You know, have things together. Talk about good things, then try to keep them away from the evil things. Have as many good things for them to do, because some children really want to learn. And the ones that don't want to learn, well, just kind of give them all the [degraded audio] you can, because they're not going to do anything that's good, but don't let them stop others who want to learn. And sometimes some children will want to stay after school together. I would do that. And give them some one-on-one. Children do better on one-on-one. Now one time, since I retired, and Red Bundy's wife, and... let's see [degraded audio] do you know him? He's part of the [degraded audio]. Amelia Jones—she lives down at [degraded

audio] now—she was a high school secretary, and a gem. Well when the integration came, they just sent her out to the white high school [degraded audio]. But we were the ones they depend on because Amelia had everything ready. When they wanted to know something [coughs] about something, they would get Amelia. [degraded audio]. Amelia told me, she said, "You know, we got some black student that don't have the right attitude up here. And they're not taking part in anything, and so they're not doing any singing, they're not doing- they're not being in plays," and said "We oughta have--we need to have some counselors up here." And said, "Could I ask a couple reliable people, that I know who are reliable [degraded audio], to come up here and talk to these children?" Well, what they wanted you to do is bring a whole bunch of them. And I told the principal, "No. One-on-one is what they need. Because," I said, "They don't want to talk in front of the other children." And I said, "I can draw more out of them if it's one-on-one." And that's [degraded audio] one-on-one. And I said "Well what's your problem?" "Well they don't like me." I said, "Well, do you like them?" I said, "Love's(?) a two-way street." [tape ends]