

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

LEROY "POP" MILLER  
June 8, 1998

PAMELA GRUNDY: This is Pamela Grundy, and I'm here in Charlotte, North Carolina. I'm interviewing Mr. Leroy Miller, and it is the eighth of June, 1998.

LEROY MILLER: My name is Leroy Miller, but my friends and students call me Pop. I came to Charlotte November 19, 1945, after spending four years in the service. I started out as an industrial art teacher at West Charlotte High School under the administration of C. L. Blake. I was an industrial art teacher from 1945 until 1963. Prior to that time I had had the opportunity to become a principal, but I refused it because it was going to take me away from the kids. I continued to stay at West Charlotte and in '63 blacks were determined to have assistant principals in all of the black schools like they had in the white schools, but at that time Mr. Blake wasn't particularly interested in an assistant principal. That's what he said. He had had about fifteen or twenty people that Craig Phillips had sent to him. Craig Phillips at that time was superintendent of schools. I think it was Labor Day, 1963, we always had a teacher's meeting on Labor Day and started school the day after. Dr. Phillips' secretary called and said that Dr. Phillips would like to see me the following morning in his office. So I went down to Dr. Phillips' office, and when I went in there Dr. Self and Dr. Hanes and the other Dr. [John] Phillips were all there. So when I walked in I said, "What did I do?" A black man walking into an office with four white men. I said, "White did I do?" They said, "You didn't do anything." Dr. Phillips said to me, "Mr. Miller, I had lunch with Dr. Garinger one day last week, and he said I've sent at least fifteen or twenty people out to Blake to interview as assistant principal. He's turned all of them down. In talking to Dr. Garinger, Dr. Garinger said to me," to him, Dr. Phillips, "that the only person that Blake

would be satisfied with as assistant principal would be you." He said, "You know the city and the NAACP, and all the blacks want an assistant out there, and we want you as an assistant." I said to him, I wasn't surprised, but I asked him, "Are you going to tell Mr. Blake that you appointed me assistant principal?" Dr. Self said to Dr. Phillips, "No, Bob Hanes is secondary superintendent. Let Bob call." I said, "No, don't you call him. You wait and let me get back out there." So I came on back out to the school. We were in teacher's meeting, orientation for the teachers. I guess I got in there and sat down and the secretary said that Dr. Hanes would like to talk him. I knew what it was. So he went in and spoke to him and he came back out. He said, "I'd like to introduce you to your new assistant principal." That's the way I got in administration, but I got in administration because I was an industrial art teacher. Being an industrial art teacher we worked ten months a year. We worked two weeks before school and two weeks afterward. Mr. Blake didn't have an assistant principal, but I would do all of my work, and when he had to go to a meeting, he'd always say, "Look after so-and-so." I'd look after it. When he'd start scheduling for the opening of school and he had to go to a meeting, I'd mess around there doing stuff working with him. That's the way I got into administration. After getting into administration I worked with Mr. Blake. I was just as happy as I could be with him.

PG: What were your duties as assistant principal?

LM: You looked after the busses. You did all the dirty work, more or less. Disciplined kids. Kept up with the teachers. In fact, working with Mr. Blake you had lots of exposure to the different things that were taking place. I did that until he retired. He retired, and then they had Dr. Spencer Durant. He was named principal. I worked

with him for three years. I enjoyed working as assistant principal. Then Dr. Durant left to become superintendent. When he left they sent another person out there, and I worked with him for one year. Working with him for one year I knew there had to be something better than working with him. That was the first year of integration, and Ed Sanders was associate superintendent. He was assigned to West Charlotte. He would come out to the school to work with the principal, but the principal assigned me to work with Ed Sanders, and we go to know each other. One day we were downtown. He said to Dr. Self, "Bill, you've got a man here that should be principal." About that time Dr. Hanes came in, so Bill said, "Tell that to Dr. Hanes." He told Dr. Hanes the same thing. Dr. Hanes said to him, he called the principal by name, "What's he going to do if he moves up?" Ed Sanders said to him, "He's going to get off his butt and do some work." It was like that. We had a meeting downtown all of the assistant principals and principals one Saturday morning. I guess it was in April. That was the year when they decided that if you had a black principal they wanted a white assistant principal. When I walked in down there Dr. Hanes was chairing the meeting. He said, "The two most popular people we have in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are Pop Miller and Charles McCullough." He proceeded to say then, "Pop, Harold wants you at South. Bill wants you at North. T. C. wants you at West." He said, "You don't have to give me an answer now. You can give me one before you leave after the meeting's over." When the meeting was over I started out. I was going toward the car. He said, "Pop, you didn't give me an answer. Where do you want to go?" I said, "I ain't going no damn where." I had made up my mind that I did not want to be an assistant. I'm not prejudice, but I felt that I was just as competent as any of those white principals were. I had to go to Penn State to get my advanced degrees,

and I felt that I was just as competent as anybody they had in the system at that time. But feeling that way, I had right at thirty years, I knew that I still had three years of credit that I could get from the Army. I wasn't worried. I kept walking. I guess about a week later I got a notice saying that I'd been assigned as administrator for the displaced kids at Harding High School for the summer. They had the regular summer school at Garinger and Myers Park. They had about twelve hundred students that had had problems during the school year. They had to provide summer school for them, and they did that at Harding High School. Mr. Sanders was in charge of the three administrators for the summer programs. So we met with him, and he said he'd had another meeting that next Tuesday or Thursday morning, and he would like us to bring a list of our expectations and just how we proposed to run the summer school. That following week I presented mine to him. He looked at it, he said, "( ) do you think you can do it?" I said, "I certainly do." When summer school opened I had about twelve hundred students that were supposed to be there. I think I had about a thousand and sixty that showed up. We collected the money from them and deposited it into the NCNB Bank. We would turn our deposit slips in to the education center on Thursdays to Miss Betty Cunningham. He was Mr. Sanders' secretary. When we would go down there and meet with him she would check everything out, and she would tell Mr. Sanders whether or not everything was okay. We went to the meeting and he said to me it was okay. I always felt that students and teachers should be in class on time. I had a policy there at Harding that if a student was late for class he had to pay five dollars for being late and spend an hour after class. I'd sign the duty roster for the different teachers to keep those students. I guess that first week I had quite a few of them that were late. But they found out that they were

going to have to pay the five dollars. When they paid the five dollars, Bessie Gleaves was the secretary, and I turned it in just like I did the rest of the money. Ed Sanders said to me, "If you're going to keep a teacher an hour after I think you should pay that teacher." I guess after the second week I didn't have nobody that was tardy. I think it was sometime during the third week the PTSA board had been meeting out at Harding High School. They'd asked to have a conference with me. I met with them. They'd been out there several times and they were amazed at the way the school was being run. A lady said to me, "You're the only person here." I said, "Yes." She said, "You don't have an assistant?" I said, "No, I don't have an assistant." She said, "Well, Dr. England and Mr. Lingerfelt say they don't have they don't have any more than that during the regular school year. We've been impressed." She wanted to know if she had permission to go down and ask Dr. Hanes that I be principal of Harding High School. I said, "Yeah, you have my permission." I thought it was a joke. She went down. A week or so later Dr. Hanes' secretary called and said that he'd like to have lunch. So I went down to his office on the day that I'd been invited to have lunch. When I got there Joe Hunt was there. I said to him, "I'm the only administrator out there. I don't ever like to leave school when students are there." I said, "I'd like to take a rain check on this lunch and get back to school before the students are dismissed because the beginning of school and dismissal of school are the two most vulnerable times of day for kids." He said, "Okay, well let's get to the point. This is Joe Hunt. We're having problems over at Cochrane. He went out and finished the year for Joe Davis," or somebody. He said, "I promised him the first high school that came open. I said that I would give it to him. The people down there have asked for you, and I'd like for you to go to Cochrane." I looked at him,

and I said to him, "Listen, I haven't been around junior high school kids since 1954. I'm not too familiar with the curriculum. If you're going to send me to a junior high school it seems to me you'd give me a smaller one, and give a more experienced principal Cochrane." That year Cochrane was the largest junior high school in the state. I knew that because I was at West Charlotte and Cochrane was feeding into West Charlotte. Cochrane at that time was all white, and the type of student we had from Cochrane were some healthy students. I said, "I didn't say I didn't want to be principal. I said I want to be a successful principal." I left and came on back to school. His secretary called that Friday morning asking me how did Carmel and Randolph sound. I said, "Either one of them would be fine with me." That following Saturday I got a letter saying that I'd been assigned to Carmel Junior High School. I didn't know where Carmel was until that Sunday after church. My wife and I decided to drive out and see where Carmel was. We went out there. That was the first year the school had been open. Harold Deal had planned the school and had opened the school. I went out there that Monday and Harold was out there. I knew Harold. He was a fine young fellow. He was quite innovative. He introduced me to the secretaries that were there. They had a secretary and another lady there, then he left. He told me that he had set up a meeting for me to meet the school committee and the PTSA board. I think that was the following day sometime. He would introduce me to them. After being introduced to the PTSA board, I'm trying to think of the fellow. He was an editor of the Charlotte News, Darrel Sifford and his wife. After he introduced me to the PTSA board and the school committee, I think there was one black lady there, they began to quiz me about what my philosophy was. They would ask a question, and I would answer it. I didn't pay very much attention to it. I think that

Friday afternoon Darrel called me. I said, "Yes, sir Mr. Sifford." He said, "Call me Darrell." I said, "I'm not accustomed to that, but if you're going to call me Pop I don't mind that." He said, "I'm going to send my photographer out to make pictures of you because I want the kids to know what their new principal looks like." But I had no idea that during that meeting with the PTSA board and the school committee that the questions that they asked me, they had the questions listed in the paper and the answers that I'd given. I remember that Saturday I was out working in the yard. When the paper came my wife came out there. She said, "Miller, Miller." She always called me Miller. She said, "They've got your picture on the front page of the second section. They've got two pictures of you in the paper and the answers." That was the Saturday before Labor Day. I guess I must have given some pretty good answers because the teachers came in that Labor Day for orientation. I had orientation in the library for the teachers. It looked like every other one of them had a copy of that paper. I'd stated my philosophy. I think that any success I had was due to that. I had one teacher, in fact she's counselor out at Butler High School, and she said, "Mr. Miller this is my third year as a teacher. My first year I had Mr. Byers at Ransom. My second year I had Mr. Deal here. This year I have you. Am I going to have a principal every year." I said, "No, you're not going to have one every year." When the teachers came in I had a list of duties that I wanted them to perform the first day, the second day. I'd listed the things for the first ten days of school that I wanted to take place. My philosophy has always been expectations are your seeds of success. You're not going to get any more out of life than you expect. I remember the first day a teacher said to me, "How do you think we can have an assembly with over fourteen hundred students when last year we couldn't have one with seven hundred

students?" I explained to them why. By the same token when I was at Carmel the previous year they only had around six hundred students. That's the reason I didn't want to go to Cochrane, and I'd selected Carmel. When I first went out there August 1<sup>st</sup> there wasn't but about six hundred students. And I'd scheduled all of them. My wife and I left and went on our vacation. While I was on my vacation I got a call saying come back and come to the Ed Center. Bill Anderson and Bo Davis were going to help me. I had to select thirty-eight more teachers.

PG: Wow. Good grief.

LM: I came back and selected those teachers. They sent out thirty some trailers at Carmel. I scheduled them.

PG: Did you meet with all of them, with every student?

LM: Yeah. I scheduled them. They wanted to know how are we going to have an assembly with fourteen hundred student. So I told them. I recall the first year of integration at West Charlotte. Prior to integration we'd have a pep rally in the afternoon the last period of the day. When we were all black, I'd say to the students, "Let's move quickly and quietly to the gym," and then follow them down there because I was an assistant principal. You never get to old to learn. That first pep rally we had down at the gym was a learning experience for me.

PG: When you had the integrated school?

LM: Yes. That was the first year of integration. I told them to move quickly and quietly to the gym, when I got down there all the white students were on one side of the gym and all of the black students were on the other side. The white cheerleaders were over with the white students, and the black cheerleaders were over with the black

students. I suffered through that thirty to forty-five minutes, but that didn't happen ever any more. From that time on I met with the teachers and I'd say, "Now, we're going to have a pep rally, but I've assigned places for each one of the classes." And I demanded that the teachers would go down there and take those seats. In that way you had true integration. I followed that same procedure up until I retired. Of course, out at East Mecklenburg I got to the point where I didn't have to worry about that because the kids knew what my feelings were, and I had a good student congress. At Carmel I'd call the ninth graders to go to the gym first. They sat on the top bleachers, then the eighth graders, and then the seventh graders. Tom Harris and Mr. Porter and Jane Scott, and I forget the other fellow's name on the school board, they were out there for orientation. I had my minister out there to pray, give the invocation. When we met down there in the gym, one old boy lived over in Myers Park. He was a big old white boy, a ninth grader. He was going to show off. He was in Mel Brown's class. He was in ninth grade. We hadn't even gotten started. I said, "Mr. Brown, I believe that's coming from your class." He said, "It is, Mr. Miller." I said, "Identify him for me." I left the speaker's stand and started down. He said, "He's up there." Mel asked him to come down. He wouldn't come down.

PG: What had he been doing? Was he yelling?

LM: He was going to heckle. I told Mel, "You need to heed him then." Mel got up there and kind of gave him a shove. When he gave him a shove he was coming down the bleachers and he fell right in my arms. When he fell in my arms I just pushed him on out the door. I kind of talked to him out there, and sent him to the office. I went back to the stage to start over. About that time here come a black boy. I guess they were friends.

We did the same thing to him. I said, "Listen, we're going to have this assembly, period." I said, "If you want the same fate those two fellows got, you can get it because I'm not backing up, period." About that time you could hear a pin drop on cotton. We had a nice orientation program for the students. Miss Porter was president of PTSA. I recall that after the program was over and I was dismissing the kids, I walked up behind her and she was saying to Mr. Harris, a member of the school board, "Thank God. You all sent us a man out here this year." I didn't have any problems with the kids. I've got a gold whistle back there that the PTSA gave me. I had a whistle. When I blew my whistle the kids would get quiet. Kids learn to run before they learn to walk. That's the same with a bunch of junior high school kids. When the day was over they'd take off just running to the busses in the afternoon. Just before the bell would ring for dismissal in the afternoon, I said, "Listen. Nobody passes me going to the bus lot. Nobody. If you pass me I'm going to sock it to you." So I'd just take my time and walk out there, and they'd walk out behind me. The parents thought it was the funniest thing. I said, "No, I don't allow them to run." I think it was that October. Evelyn Crutchfield came out there. We were supposed to be carrying on a self study. In fact, Harold was supposed to start it the previous year. We had until that April to conduct that self study and get the school accredited. I worked my fanny off. I had some nice, young teachers. We all worked. The accreditation team came in there. It just so happened that Jay Robinson was on that team. He was superintendent in Concord, and there was another superintendent from High Point. Then you had Dr. Durant. They came out there. I think the funniest thing about it, the hostesses for the people were students that were being punished. There are so many tools that you can use in working with kids. That was

during the time when kids were wearing jeans with patches in the wrong places. There was a little girl, and I said, "You can come to school tomorrow, but you'd better have a dress on, period." I'd have conferences with their parents, and I'd tell their parents, "Yes, she can come back tomorrow, but she must have a dress on." They had dresses on and they reported to the office this morning. When they reported to the office I assigned them to members of the committee. We were having a general meeting and the superintendent of schools from High Point, North Carolina, said to me, "Mr. Miller, in talking to my young lady here, my escort, she tells me that she's being punished." The rest of them began to ask theirs. They were amused that the kids were being punished. He said, "You mean to tell me you'd take a chance and assign someone as a punishment to be a guide? And they're still saying nice things about you." I said, "Expectations are your seeds of success." I've never had a kid to tell a lie on me. I always believe in kids. If I sent a kid home for something, when the kid would come back, I'd say, "You say it to your parents while they are here." And they would do that. We had a lot of things that at West Charlotte that I don't think we go the credit for.

PG: What were some of those things?

LM: We had academic courses. When I got to East Mecklenburg we did the same thing that I'd been doing over there. I'd say to the kids how many Morehead scholars we needed, how many Angier B. Duke scholars we needed. I'd say to them just what my expectations were during orientation of the sophomore class. I think I was at East ten years, and after ten years I'm sure we had a Morehead scholar just about every year that I was there. I remember one year because they just dedicated a building over there. I remember Billie Branner and Elizabeth Coby. I think it was the class of '78.

That was the year I was thinking very heavily about retiring. That's the year I had two Morehead scholars. We'd won the state championship in football. We'd run up in soccer. It was a good year. I said "I'm going to quit now while I'm ahead." But I said, "Stay another year." I stayed out there ten years. I regret that I didn't leave early because we had eleven good years of retirement prior to my wife's passing. I think about it now. In fact, last night I was talking to my son. He was saying to me, "Daddy, when are you going to move out here?" I'm going back out there in July, but all of my friends and things are here.

PG: Where's your son?

LM: He's in Kansas City, Missouri. I've got two fine grandsons there. In fact the oldest one was saying to me last night when I was talking to him, "Guess what? I went to work with daddy Friday. Daddy's co-worker called me little Will. And guess what? My daddy said that's the same thing that your mamma used to call him." Those are pictures of them.

PG: You were starting to tell me about Barbara Ledford.

LM: I didn't ask to go to East Mecklenburg. I'd been assigned to Carmel Junior High School, and that year-and-a-half I was out there I enjoyed it. Darrell Sifford and his wife were president of PTSA. On Thursdays and Fridays, one Thursday it would be a riot at South Mecklenburg, and the next one it was a riot to Myers Park. I called Darrell. I said, "Mr. Sifford, this is Pop Miller. When I met with PTSA board I said to you I was going to give you 110 percent. I'm giving you more than 110 percent. It pisses me off. Every time you have a riot at Myers Park the parents come here picking up the sisters and brothers of those kids that are in attendance at those schools, and it's disrupting my

whole academic program." He said, "Cool it, Pop. Cool it. I'll see what we can do. I've got a scanner." That following Thursday there was a riot at Myers Park. I never will forget that. I was out in the trailers. When I came out I came around the side, and I guess I saw about fifteen or twenty whites out there. It was Darrel and his wife. As the people were coming up he was stopping them. He said, "Now, education is taking place. Let's don't disturb these kids." He said that to the parents. As the parents would come up he had them out there stopping other parents. And they stopped that. They said, "The man is trying to do a good job." He had his photographer come out, and take pictures of the students at Carmel, and take pictures of the riots that were being held at the other schools. From that time on they found out ( ) they had good order and education at Carmel Junior High School. They were having problems at East Mecklenburg. I think Brumit Delaine came out and said, "Pop, I was told to tell you to apply for East Mecklenburg." I wouldn't apply for nothing. Waddell and John Phillips came out and said, "Did you apply for superintendent?" I said, "You can do anything you want. When I was in high school I wasn't getting enough. I'm out here, and I'm satisfied. I ain't going no where." Then they had a committee, I think it was Gwenn Cunningham, Harold Deal, Sam Haywood and myself. We were supposed to be interviewing people for the principalship of East Mecklenburg. That afternoon we met in Dr. Jones' office, in his conference room. He sat beside me. He grabbed me by the knee. He said, "Pop, so-and-so said you said so-and-so." Well, he was telling the truth because I said they could go to hell. I wasn't interested in going to East Mecklenburg. He said, "Did you say all those things?" And so I looked at him. I was being corny, and I said, "Did you hear me say those things?" He said, "The second item on the agenda, who do you

recommend for your replacement at Carmel?" I said, "I'm not going anywhere." He said, "Nobody is larger than the system. It's the belief that you're the only one that can save East Mecklenburg. It's as simple as that." So I said to him, "I'm not going any place until I talk to my wife." So he sent for my wife, and she came down to the office. We were in the conference room, but when she came to the office we went into his office and sat down. We talked for almost forty-five minutes or an hour. I guess it was in November. She said, "The people at Carmel have been real nice to you." And they were. We'd been to Houston to receive the accreditation. The school board sent me, but the PTSA sent my wife along with me. And she thought—

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LM: ( ) semester. I say I owe it to the parents and students. I can't leave them in the middle of a semester. They accepted it. I said I don't want it announced. Please don't announce it, because I'll lose control of the students. They agreed, so over the Thanksgiving holidays and the Christmas holidays, when the semester was over they announced it, during the time of class examinations, that I was the new principal at East Mecklenburg. I went out there. They wouldn't let me take my secretary. Back then they wouldn't let you take nothing. You had to start from scratch. It's not like it is now. I had a curriculum coordinator when I was at Carmel. I started the curriculum coordinator position. It didn't exist. That was my request. I think they still have them in all of the secondary schools now. When I went there I said I'll take mine. They said, "No, we aren't going to let you take her." Ann Wilson was my curriculum coordinator. I wanted to take Ann. They said no, I had to select one from the staff. I had ten days to select that

person, and when you've got 160 teachers and about 2,600 students at a place it's a job. I went around. I was watching them. Of course, being black, I wanted a white. I was looking that all the way. I didn't ever look black, because being black I wasn't being prejudice, but I wasn't going to get no black curriculum coordinator. Not back then. I narrowed it down. I had two people in mind. I didn't know either one of them. I didn't know Barbara Ledford and I didn't know Diana Bagwell, but I'd narrowed it down to those two. After narrowing it down I told John Smith. He sat down and got the personnel files for both of them. Diana Bagwell, that was about her second or third year, but Barbara Ledford had more experience, she was just a model of energy. I'd been watching her, and I called her in. I told her what I was thinking. I grew up in Salisbury. As a boy my mother always said, "It's bad luck to look at a white woman." That was instilled in me as a child. Back then they were lynching black men. I said to Barbara, "I know you must think I'm a dirty old black man, but I'm looking for a curriculum coordinator, and I've decided that that person is you." She said, "What are the duties?" I said, "Before I say anything to you, I'd like for you to talk to Ann Wilson. Miss Wilson was my curriculum coordinator at Carmel. She did one hell of a job. I'm going to have a sub come in your place and let you go talk to Miss Wilson." So she talked to Ann Wilson.

PG: Is she white, too, Ann Wilson?

LM: Yes. Back then you couldn't take secretaries and curriculum coordinators and things like they're allowing them to do now. Barbara talked to Ann, and then she came back. I gave her all the exposure that I knew how. She came through with flying colors because she'd come in and say something, and I'd say, "You can't do that. What

about so-and-so." I threw her to the wolves, and I threw her there gradually. I didn't throw her there all at once. She'd always come out shining at whatever task I gave her. I needed an assistant principal. I said to John Phillips and them, "Listen, I've got one male assistant principal. I need a female assistant principal that can go into the girl's bathroom like me and the other one can go into the boy's bathroom." I knew as far as curriculum was concerned Barbara was tops. But now that I needed an assistant principal I needed somebody to go into those girl's bathrooms besides the maids. Maids would go in there but they had no authority. Barbara accepted the job as assistant principal. We'd get to school at the same time and go in there and inspect the bathrooms. We'd get there about six o'clock and go in the girl's bathroom and the boys. Barbara would say, "Oh." She got on the intercom and said, "In inspecting the plant this morning ladies, if I can call you ladies, when I go in the boy's bathroom they are so nice and clean. No writing, no nothing. But when I go into so-and-so, she gave a ( )." She said, "We're going to be ladies. We're not going to let the men do so-and-so." She did a heck of a job. Of course Barbara could have been principal that next year, but I could never get Barbara to leave. She stayed there. I know Dr. Carlin. I'd say, "She's just as ready as ( )." She'd say, "I'm not going to leave until you leave." I said to Barbara, "Miss Ledford, I've worked under three principals. The first two were nice. I would have been satisfied to retire under either one of those, but that last one, I didn't enjoy working for him." I left there in '83 and I think in '84 she was the principal, because I recall she came over here one day about one o'clock. School wasn't out. She was so upset. She said, "You know what we did for ten years? This so-and-so says we can't do so-and-so." I see all of these guns and all of this crap that they're having in schools. Once you get kids involved in

disciplining themselves, I think that's the answer. When I went to East Mecklenburg we had a committee of students, a student congress, and the president of the student congress came in and said to me, "Mr. Miller we're talking now. The student congress says we'd like to have a break during the morning." And I said to him, "Yeah. I'll give you a break if you'll govern yourself, but I'm not going to ask the teachers to govern you twice a day. I've got teachers that are on duty during the lunch period at twelve o'clock. I'll give you a fifteen minute break after the second period class in the morning if that's what you want, but you're going to have to do it yourself. I'll see Miss Feeney in the library, and she'll provide snacks for you at that time." They agreed. I remember one day at the break I called the president of the student body in and I said, "You go in the cafeteria. If you're going to leave it like that you're not accepting your responsibility." He said, "Can I use your intercom?" I said, "Yeah, you have my permission to use it." He got on the intercom, and he said, "If the cafeteria is left like it was left this morning again, I'm asking Mr. Miller to take the break away from us." I think he spoke to them maybe once or twice during the year. Students can govern themselves if they want something. And the same thing with pep rallies. We were having a pep rally. I was down at the gym. When I looked up half the downtown office had come down to the gym, because they'd called up school and wanted to speak to me, and Miss Litaker told them, "Mr. Miller is down at the gym having a pep rally." They were scared. They thought the kids were going to riot. When they came out there they were standing around the wall looking, and I was standing in the door. They came to me, and I said, "Everything is all right." They stood there and watched. I guess it was about ten minutes to eleven, I'd said to the president of the student body, "You're responsible for everything up until such-and-such

a time. At that time, you give it back to me.” He watched the time very religiously. He said, “At this time I’m going to turn it over to Pop. Let’s give Pop a hand.” And the kids yelled. I told them, “You leave here.” I told them where to go. I gave them instructions, and they left. We had football games, and after every home game they wanted to have a dance. We’d have a dance. I’d say to the parents, “Listen, we’ll have a dance after the game, but everything will be over at twelve o’clock. Nothing will go beyond twelve o’clock.” I think we had one incident. We had a couple of kids from one of the private schools. They started some stuff. The two assistant principals were inside. I’d always leave them inside the building along with a policeman, and I’d stay on the outside with a policeman because when you allow kids to come and park on the campus, and sit out in cars, and drink beer and do stuff like that, you’re asking for trouble. I’d always take a policeman and patrol the campus. I had my spotlight. I’ve still got it out there. If I’d catch them in the car and they had something to drink, I’d pull it out and send them home. I remember that night a boy from Country Day was there. He started some stuff. Before the police could get to him the kids had him and carried him in the office. I went in the office and called his parents. I told them, “You can come and get him, but the next time I’m going to put him in jail. We don’t tolerate that foolishness.” My high school days were the happiest days of my life.

PG: Was this in Salisbury?

LM: Yeah. I had a mother. I had a father. I was happy. I didn’t have a care in the world. I always wanted the same thing for all of the students. High school is the time when you start looking at girls. You start dancing and doing the things that you enjoy out

of life. I think you prepare for life. I think every youngster should have that experience. I really enjoyed it.

PG: What else did you like about high school?

LM: Oh, there's never a dull moment. Kids keep you on your toes all the time. I got the surprise of my life. I think it was the 26<sup>th</sup> of April when they invited me over to East Mecklenburg High School. You didn't know this.

PG: Wow, look at that.

LM: This really surprised me.

PG: Look at that.

LM: This little fellow right here, he spoke. That's George Miller. When he came to East Mecklenburg as a tenth grader I made him take the SAT after his first semester as a sophomore. I think he did about a thousand and sixty or a thousand and something. I said, "You want to know what? I don't want you going through high school waiting until you're a senior," like it was when I first got there. You had a man who was waiting until his senior year to take the SAT. I said, "You can take the SAT as sophomores." When he spoke at that dedication I told him when I die, I want him to speak at my funeral. They said so many nice things. It was real nice.

PG: You're talked quite a bit about there being riots, which I gather that there was a period of time at the beginning of integration where there were a lot of disturbances at different high schools.

LM: Yeah.

PG: Why did that happen do you think? What caused those?

LM: When they first integrated schools you had Dr. Garinger. E. H. Garinger laid the foundation for the school system as we know it now. Had it not been for Dr. Garinger, we'd be in the same predicament that they're in in Virginia now. Before integration we had consolidation. We had a city system and a county system. Had we not had consolidation you'd have a city system that would be 99 percent black right now and a county system that would be 99 percent white. But you had people like Dr. Garinger. He saw it coming. Dr. Garinger had a group of blacks. Had they listened to Dr. Garinger we never would have had a lot of that stuff. You had a group that were picking blacks to go to white schools, freedom of choice. The kids that went to Central, those that went to Harding, and those that went to AD, the blacks, they'd been selected. The principal of Harding High School, old man Hawkins, I don't know whether he was a racist or what, but when the little black girl went there he didn't come out and meet her or take her in school or do anything. He let the kids spit on her and do all that stuff. But when Gus went to Central and the whites attempted to turn him back, Ed Sanders went out and met him, and told them he wasn't going to have none of that hanky-panky. But the same wasn't true down there. When they spit on her and did all those things to her down there, then you had radical whites and you had some radical blacks. That's when the blacks took over. They said we weren't going to stand for that. They'd go to places. That's where a lot of that stuff started. Of course when I went to East Mecklenburg they'd been rioting. When I got out there I found out it wasn't racial, though. When I went to East they'd been rioting, and coming downtown and doing all of that stuff. I remember one morning I got down there by the soccer field, I guess it was about thirty-five or forty whites and eight or ten blacks. They were fixing to start something, and I

said to them, "I'm going to give you thirty seconds to get in class. If you're not in class I'm going to have you put in jail." I called for security, and all of them went to class except about six whites and two blacks. I carried them in the office. I was going to put them in jail. The superintendent came out. We sat down in the office. I guess that was about 7:30 and that was about 1:00 or 2:00 that day, and I found out it wasn't a racial thing. You had some whites that were bringing drugs to the campus ( ). You had these black boys that were smart enough to know that they could rip them off and nothing was going to be done about it. They were not only taking the drugs but they were taking the money.

PG: Good heavens.

LM: They were being ripped off. Once that stopped I didn't have any problems.

PG: So things had been blamed on racial things that weren't necessarily related to them.

LM: Yeah, at least that. They were blaming it on racial things. It's just like it is now. Those people that are involved in drugs, you've got some that know they can go in there and rip them off and nothing is going to be said about it. Of course now those that are being ripped off, they'll come back and shoot you.

PG: Violence, yeah. Do you think at that time there were principals who were afraid to discipline in schools?

LM: Well, the thing about it, if you're a black person you had to know how to get along with a white person. Blacks have always had to get along with whites since slavery. But it wasn't true of whites. The only blacks that some of the white principals had ever associated with were maybe their gardener or cook or somebody like that.

They'd never had to associate with any blacks. I can recall when Dr. Garinger was the superintendent. We attempted to integrate the faculties when you had the freedom of choice. When I first came to Charlotte the superintendents used to meet with the blacks on one Saturday morning and the whites on another Saturday morning. Then they started having one meeting, and instead of having a black English group and a white one it was all English teachers and all industrial arts teachers. You'd be surprised. That was something that was hard to come by.

PG: The white teachers didn't want to meet with the black teachers?

LM: No. They were resentful. I think it was just both of them. They were just resentful. You had some that didn't matter. I know the first two white teachers we had at West Charlotte, had one in Social Studies by the name of Ann Fiber and another white teacher in English Anna Wiles, that was the freedom of choice. Ann Fiber she finished the University of Mississippi, and she came to West Charlotte when they said you had to integrate schools and sixty percent of your teachers had to be white and forty percent had to be black. I think it hurt Ann worse than anybody else. It was funny. When she was there by herself she was a little white princess, so to speak. But when other whites came there it sort of stole her thunder. I learned, now this is the God's truth. One was a blond and the other one was a brunette. I remember I used to hand deliver the checks to the teachers on pay day. I'd go to Ann Fiber and I'd give her Miss Wiles' check. She said, "Oh, this is Ann Fiber." Until that time I'd never looked at a white woman, period. I guess about the second or third month Miss Fiber stopped me. She said, "Mr. Miller, if I can take the time to know that there's a difference between blacks, seemingly you can do likewise. Look, I'm a blond. Anna Wiles is a brunette. Her hair is almost as black as

your hair." I said, "Thank you," and I moved on out. I started looking at hair then. I said you can tell them by the hair. You can tell them by the eyes, but I'd never paid that much attention to white, period.

PG: Really.

LM: No. I can recall Miss Ledford, she was my curriculum coordinator. Back when they had the gas shortage we had a curriculum meeting over at Garinger High School. I went out to get in my car and she was out there. I said, "No, you aren't going to ride with me." She said, "I don't have any gas. I don't have gas enough to get home." I didn't want a rider, not in my car. I didn't want to ride no white. When I was at West Charlotte I used to police the campus, to look, because kids would sneak off from school. The same thing was true when I went to Carmel. I remember that first year down at Carmel I had some girls and boys that had sneaked off the campus. They were going down Carmel Road. I went down there chasing them. These cars that were coming up from South Carolina, I was chasing little white girls running, them cars slowing down. I happened to think, "Man, some of these fools out here there's no telling what they'd do." So I came back to the campus and I got Mayor Brown and Sue. I said, "Listen, let's go get them." I made sure that I was going to protect myself. I remember Barbara. She said, "Mr. Miller, everybody knows that you're the principal and I'm the curriculum coordinator. So she got in. I had a little old Mustang. She got in the car and we went over to Garinger High School from East Mecklenburg. On the way back I said, "Miss Ledford, I wish you would sit up straight in your seat." She was turned sideways, and she was talking. I said, "Just sit straight." There was one of those BFI trucks behind us. I saw the fellow when he passed us. As he passed us he was white and he decided he was

going to slow down and see what that white woman was doing in that car with that black man. So he let us pass him. Then he got right behind us. When we go to Independence and Hawthorne there was an ambulance going down Hawthorne Lane. The red light was on, and I was in front of that BFI truck. I had to stop even though I had the light. It was on green, and when I stopped that BFI truck ran right into the back of me. It knocked me over on the corner. I got on the corner, and the ambulance stopped to see if we were hurt, and then proceeded. The police came. That old fellow that was driving the ambulance told the police, "That nigger had that white woman over there." I'd gone over on the corner. I heard him. He said, "That nigger over there he had that little white woman over there." The policeman sat there. He said, "That's Mr. Miller. He's principal at East Mecklenburg." It just so happened that the officers that came out there had been one that worked at some of our games. He came over. I said, "I stopped for the ambulance. He ran into the back of me and knocked me over there." The driver was over there telling George Powell. George was in charge of PE for the school system. He had been at the same meeting we had been at. He was telling George, "That man over there had that white woman." George said, "We've got to take care of that pink half-wit." Made a joke out of it. I said to Barbara after, "I told you. My mamma always told me white women were bad luck." She was the first one that ever rode in a car with me. She was a nice young lady. I knew her mother and her husband, Buster. They were nice. She was just like a daughter of mine. Smart young lady.

PG: You said you grew up in this world where you didn't have much contact with whites, and especially not with women. What did you think about the idea of integration when the *Brown* decision first came out and when they started doing it.

LM: I went to North Carolina A & T. From North Carolina A & T I went in the service during World War II. I went in the service in '42. You had all black outfits and all white outfits. It was like that. I was black, and we started off at Fort ( ), Virginia, in an anti-aircraft outfit. Then from there we went down to Hampstead, Georgia in an artillery outfit. Then they sent us overseas. I guess we were a group of black bastards so to speak. They didn't know what they wanted to do with us. We were an all black outfit. The battalion commander and the company commander were white. We had two black officers. We went overseas in the ( ) area where they made us a trucking outfit called the Red Ball Express. We drove those trucks from the Cherbourg Peninsula all the way to the North Sea, all over France and Germany and Holland. Kept the troops supplied. I learned. Up until B. O. Davis and Eisenhower, they were the ones. They came over there and they integrated the outfits. But even after integration, Old Hickory Division out of North Carolina, Tennessee, and South Carolina. I remember when Paris fell. We went to Fontainebleau. On the way back they let us come through Paris because it had fallen. I wanted to see the Arch d'Triumph and the Eiffel Tower, and the Rue Royale, and all those places. We stopped. They were celebrating. They were having a good time. I think I had thirty-two trucks there. I had a buck sergeant. Sergeant Thorn. He was from Philadelphia. He came back to us. He was crying. Some of the fellows from that Old Hickory Division had him buck dancing, some of the white soldiers. He was real upset about it. At times we had to fight them just like we did the Germans. I learned to get along with them. ( ) to the 320<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, B Battery, 82<sup>nd</sup>, during the Battle of the Bulge. We had about thirty trucks. We carried the 82<sup>nd</sup> up to relieve the 101<sup>st</sup> flank. I'm trying to think of the name of the place. I've forgotten it. We flanked the Germans

because they had surrounded the 101<sup>st</sup>. I found out then going around to white soldiers and black soldiers. There was a distinct difference. We had all white officers. You could put up artillery with ( ). That was frightening to the white soldiers, but it didn't bother blacks. But a sniper would demoralize a group of blacks, and it didn't bother the whites. We had white soldiers, but we had been trained to seek and destroy. Once we got with those white soldiers, I guess they had been trained to seek and destroy, but they destroyed. They didn't seek nothing. If we'd come into ( ), if there was a sniper here, we'd destroy everything in sight or hearing. That was the only difference I saw. When you associated with them you did the same things they did. Let me, I'm cooking.

PG: Oh, sure.

[TAPE IS TURNED OFF AND THEN BACK ON]

PG: In 1954 when the Supreme Court had their decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, did you think the schools should be integrated? Did you think that that was an important thing?

LM: Yeah. I thought it was important. Prior to then, blacks, I couldn't go to Carolina. I couldn't go to Duke. I couldn't go to Wake Forest. But I came out of service in 1945, and I started work then. I could go to NYU, Columbia, Penn State, Minnesota. Those were some of the schools that I could attend. I went to Penn State. I'd go there in the summer. When you go to Penn State and when you come back, well up there they had book fairs, they had everything. At West Charlotte we knew that it didn't take no scientist to tell you that those books that we had were old. In fact, the names of some of them, you'd see Harding High School and Central High School. If you'd gone to summer school we had mimeograph machines and we used to mimeograph most of the

stuff for the kids in order that they would be current. Most of the black teachers, if they didn't have a master's they were working on it. I couldn't go to any of the schools in North Carolina, but the state would pay my tuition to go to any school that I wanted to. They would reimburse you. Being reimbursed, you'd get up off your duff and just go to school. That's why we stayed current with most of the things. We weren't satisfied. You knew what was taking place at good schools. At Penn State we'd go out to the high school and see all the nice things that those kids had. They were all white. I remember in 1950 when East Mecklenburg was built. I was at West Charlotte, but West Charlotte at that time was down there where Northwest is. It was just a little place. They built East Mecklenburg. It was the first consolidated high school in North Carolina.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

BEGINNING OF TAPE TWO, SIDE A

LM: Myers Park was supposed to have been the answer to East Mecklenburg, because at that time you had the city and the county system. Then in '54 they built West Charlotte, and West Charlotte was the answer to those two schools for the blacks. It was an award winning school. This guy from the news, Rand Norton. I guess Rand is about ninety years old now. He was a good old Kiwanian. He came out and did a story on this fine high school for blacks, so to speak. We had J. D. Morgan. He was assistant superintendent for the county. Dr. Garinger, and I can't think of the associate superintendent we had for the city school system, but J. D. Morgan had gotten this black reading specialist for the county. Her name was Miss White, and Dr. Garinger had gotten this Miss Stiles as a specialist for the blacks in the city to correspond to what they had in the white schools. Prior to integration there was maybe a year's difference in the blacks

and the whites, but then after integration things went the other way. A good example, prior to integration we didn't have a smoking place for blacks. We didn't provide that in the black schools. We knew that we had some kids that smoked, and we had some teachers that smoked. There was a rule. When we were down where Northwest is, if you smoked we'd come out on the street and smoke. But then when they integrated the school at West Charlotte, and we had to designate a smoking area, you'd see all of them little white kids. They had been smoking. You'd see them little black kids come out there and try to smoke like the white kids. They didn't even know how to hold a cigarette, half of them. That was the thing that concerned me. If you pick up the good things from each other it would be nice, but it looked like they didn't do that. They pick up the frivolous things. It's just one of those things. I used to observe the students. You go to any school you see cluster grouping. It can be all white or all black or integrated. It doesn't make any difference. You're going to see that cluster grouping. When you observe those clusters I think it's an educational experience for you or anybody else. When I was at Carmel we'd have orientation. I'd always take the activity bus and take the white teachers out and let them see their attendance areas. And I'd stop in those at different places. I'd let the teachers see where the kids were coming from. I think it's important. They don't do it now, but I think they're missing the boat when they don't provide that opportunity. The thing I used to do, each teacher had a home room. Back then home room would have anywhere from twenty-eight to thirty-two students. During that orientation period I would say to the teachers, "We don't have enough phones in school for each teacher to have an individual phone, but Miss So-and-So, you don't have to come to school tomorrow, but I want you to contact as many as those thirty-two people

as you possibly can and let them know that you're their teacher." I still think that's important. To know the parents and the parents to know you and how to contact you. When you do those things I think you may have a successful year.

PG: Did that get harder during integration because students and teachers were coming from further away?

LM: I still used it at East Mecklenburg. I know I used it. When we were all black there wasn't a problem. When I came to Charlotte I went to several churches. I went to Seventh Street Presbyterian Church. I went to First Baptist Church West. I went to several of them. I went to Greenville. When I went over to Greenville that Sunday I was teaching industrial arts. When the kids would come to class you talked to them and asked them what church they belonged to. I wanted to go to the church where my students were coming from. I wanted to meet their parents. I ended up going to Greenville. A lot of the teachers would go to Grace, and they'd go to First Baptist West, and Friendship, but I selected the church of my students. I wanted to meet their parents, and I did. I see the parents, and I'd say, "Miss So-and-So." I see them in church now, former students. They thank you for what you did for them. If a kid didn't do, especially a girl, I'd call their parents, and the parents appreciated it. I couldn't see any difference. The white parents were just as appreciative as black. Black parents are just as appreciative knowing about their kids as all parents. They were the same way. I remember that Billy Branner. He had a lot in common. I was determined that he was going to be a Morehead Scholar. I wanted to make sure that he was able to talk to that male white between thirty and forty years old. I called Dr. ( ) at Central Piedmont, and I called Judge Spencer Tenews and Jim Babb out at WBTV. I said, "Jim, I've got a

student I like you to take out for lunch.” Spencer would do the same thing. Dr. Durant. I’d call them and tell them to take those kids out. You take a young white student, they’ve talked to their daddy and maybe one or two friends, but they need to talk to some intellectuals. Dr. ( ) at Central Piedmont, I’d call him. That’s the reason I had Morehead Scholars. I wanted to give those students that exposure. You take a little black kid, you throw him to the wolves. He hasn’t talked. And the white kid, there’s no difference between them. There’s certain experiences that they need. I think it’s up to you as an educator to provide those experiences for them, and not the parents. I’ve always been a conservative person. I was there at East and even at West Charlotte. Back then in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, that when you had all these so-called freaks where anything goes. They’d wear shorts, and they’d have jeans. They’d cut them off and have them frayed. Then they’d have patches in the wrong places, and all that stuff. I got a group of students together. I started off with the seniors. I said, “You’re seniors in high school. I truly believe that once you get to be a senior there should be certain privileges for you.” And they agreed. I said, “I need your help in securing these privileges.” So they would list the things, and those things that they listed I agreed with. But I said, “I can’t do it by myself.” I left and I went to the juniors. I said, “You’re juniors this year, but next year you’re going to be a senior. This is what the seniors think that they should have.” I did the same thing for the sophomores. They would ask questions, but they would end up agreeing. For ten years at East Mecklenburg, at least the last nine years I was there, the only people that could wear shorts would be seniors. It was a senior privilege. It was something that the students agreed on. It had to be announced a week in advance that the seniors would be wearing shorts on such-and-such a date. They would wear those shorts.

I had one or two parents they wanted to know why. I said, "No, I don't let them wear shorts. This is why, and I'd show them." Because you would have some of them that would take things to the extreme. I didn't believe in that. We had personal issues and driver's ed. I would always pick out those kids that would turn sixteen in September and October, and I'd start them off in driver's ed, personal issues. They'd be in personal issues and driver's ed for nine weeks, and the tenth week they'd have their drivers license. The eleventh week they'd have a car and one or two of them were dead. So I went to Jim Babb, Stewart Spenser, the PTSA board. I told them, I said, "Listen, every thirteen or fourteen days after the first nine weeks of school I am losing a student. It's always a white male. Now and then it's a white female. Sophomores don't have any business driving." With the help of them plus the PTSA board I presented it to them, I said, "Every thirteen or fourteen days I take Miss Ledford and we go to a funeral. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred it's a white one. We don't go to two black funerals a year for accidents." So we came up with a policy there at East Mecklenburg. We didn't allow sophomores to drive cars, period. The only time they could drive was if it was an emergency. They had to bring a statement from home or their doctor, and it had to be checked on by Nick Miller. He was a lawyer out of Matthews. That's the only way they could drive. And old Fountain Odum, he's a state senator now. He had kids out at Olympic. He and Jim started something out there. He said something to me. I said, "Listen, my first loyalty is to the students and the parents of East Mecklenburg. What you do or what you don't do at Olympic doesn't matter to me, but at East Mecklenburg I don't want any kids that's just turned sixteen to drive anything to school, period because they're getting killed." I had a little boy that came to me one Friday afternoon and that

Saturday morning Jim Whittington called me and said, "Pop, we picked up a kid." When I went over to the funeral home the man was back there, he had his head. His head had been severed from his body. He had his head under one of them little sprinklers cleaning the blood and the stuff out of it. I had to go tell his parents. I remember the night we presented it to PTSA. They accepted it. If you're worth your salt you're going to get to know your students. I said, "I get to know them" He came to me that Friday afternoon, and he said, "Pop, I'm not going to ever give you any more trouble. You're a nice person." That next day I'm identifying his body. It's things like that. I can fool you, but you can't fool a kid. Kids, white or black, they know whether or not you're sincere. They look straight through you when they find out you're not. I said, "No, you can't do that. I don't want you to do that. It's not healthy."

PG: I know I could talk to you for hours more. I've gotten just bits of all of your experience. I appreciate your doing this. I did have one more question, if it's okay. I was wondering when you became principal at these different schools, I know you were concerned about being a good principal and concerned about the students. Were you also thinking about being one of the first black principals at some of these schools.

LM: No. I resent that, first black. That's come up any number of times, but to me I've always wanted to be a good person. When I go out and cut my grass, I want my yard to look better than any yard in this neighborhood. Anything that I do I want it to be the best, period. Nobody had a prettier wife than I had. She was a beautiful lady, and I tried to provide for her. I tried to provide her with all of the conveniences that any other person had, any other lady had. I did my best to do that. And I think the same thing is true. I'd say to the kids I wanted them to be the best in the state of North Carolina, and I

wanted to be the best principal in the state. I didn't want to be second to nobody. I didn't hide it, either. I always wanted to be the best. I was watching the game last night with some friends, the Bulls and the Jazz. I said, "Listen, Michael Jordan could play anywhere. He's a winner, and he don't want nobody around him that's not winners." I've always felt the same way. I don't want no losers around me. I want to surround myself with the smartest people I could find, people like Barbara Ledford. I can name all those good teachers I had. They were smart people, and they had a contribution to make. They followed through with it. You don't go around with a bunch of losers. I don't like that. I don't even want to be associated with people like that. In fact, I was over at our church. We're in the process of putting down some new carpeting there. We moved all the seats, half of them. I've got to go back over there this afternoon. That's the reason I said from one to four. We're going to remove the others and put the carpeting down in the church. I'm one generation away from slavery. My grandfathers on my mother's side and father's side were slaves. My grandfather had several brothers and they had the same mamma and the same daddy, but they had different names because as one of the daughters would get married they'd be given to the daughters. They would take that name. My father finished about the fourth or fifth grade. My mother went back to high school. I came from a family of ten. All ten of us finished high school. All ten of us finished college. There's about three or four with PhDs and all the rest of them have got masters, and it was all because of where we lived. Our property was right here and Livingstone College's farm was right there. My daddy was a blacksmith ( ) railroad track. We had about twenty-five acres and it was right next to Livingstone Farm. In the afternoons my daddy would come home and he would come straight out to the field,

especially this time of year we'd be hoeing cotton. President Tripp would be coming down to the farm because he had one of those little surreys, and he had a walking horse. He'd be bringing the horse back up, and he'd always stop. He'd say to my daddy, "You're teaching them how to work." When he'd leave my daddy used to say to all of us, there were four boys, and we'd be out there. He'd say, "You see there, when you get an education you can wear Sunday clothes every day. You don't have to wear these overalls. You see there what an education will do for you." Picking that cotton and hoeing that cotton, I had enough of that. When I got to the point where I could go to school, I wanted to go to school. Now we've still got the home place, and I've got one of the prettiest gardens you've ever seen up there. I've got two tillers up there, and I've got a riding lawn mower. I do all that stuff. In '87 and '88 we restored the home place. Then I had an aneurysm, and I was out in '89. By the time we got to the point where we were really enjoying ourselves my wife passed. I still get despondent. I look around and I wonder. God knows best though. He knows how much you can bear, but in the last four years I lost a wife, two sisters and a brother. I'm seventy-eight years old, and I'm still here. I guess it's God's will. He left me here for something. I don't know. It's just one of those things. Any more questions?

PG: I think that that will about do it. Is there anything else that you feel that you'd like to say.

LM: No, mam. If there's anything I can do that's going be useful to you or young people, that's what God left me here for.

PG: That seems like a pretty good reason to me. It seems like you have much to say. Well, I hope that this project will do that.

LM: The racists can get along. They can get along. I look at India and Pakistan, and sometimes I wonder. I hope and pray to God that we never get like that in this country. It bothers me when they want to do certain things around here. But to me I always thought we were serving the same God. People do some funny things.

PG: It seems like maybe lately that things don't look as bright as maybe they did at one time.

LM: No. I don't know. It's just one of those things. In fact there's an article in this morning's paper talking about the different presidents, how promiscuous they've been. I think we should accentuate the positive and not the negative. If God made anything nicer than a lady, he kept it for himself. They're nice people. I can understand young men. When you get my age father time and mother nature has ways of taking care of you. Can I get you something to drink now?

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE A

END OF INTERVIEW