

Shelden: Okay, good. Today is Tuesday, the – what do we think it is? The 12<sup>th</sup> of July. I thank you very much for helping me out. And I'm here interviewing Barbara Redmond in her home in Heathsville, Virginia. Good morning, Barbara.

Barbara: Good morning.

Shelden: How are you this morning?

Barbara: Just fine.

Shelden: We're doing a little better than we were last time. That's great. Okay, so I have some questions for you about your experience at the Holley School in Lottsburg, Virginia. First off, what's your association with the Holley School? You attended? A family member? Other associations? Tell me all about all the connections.

Barbara: Okay, I started at Holley School. My father, which was Herbert Page –

Shelden: Herbert? H-E-R-B-E-R-T? P-A-G-E?

Barbara: – was one of the builders. And we attended Holley School until the seventh grade.

Shelden: Okay. And your father also attended Holley School?

Barbara: Yes, he did.

Shelden: Okay. How long did you attend Holley School?

Barbara: From one through the seventh.

Shelden: From first through the seventh. Uh huh. And how long did your dad attend, do you know?

Barbara: Seventh grade. That's as far as it went.

Shelden: Okay. Did he start in the first grade?

Barbara: As far as I know.

Shelden: Okay, you said that he attended another school as well?

Barbara: Well, Tellis Run, which was just – I have no idea what that was.

Shelden: Whether it was a regular school –

Barbara: I don't know.

Shelden: You don't know whether it was a regular school. Do you know where it was?

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: Is there still a building there?

Barbara: Yes, there's still a building there.

Shelden: Is it in Heathsville?

Barbara: No, it's in Lottsburg.

Shelden: Lottsburg, okay. And what road is it on?

Barbara: Lewisetta Road.

Shelden: Lewisetta. Like you're going to Lewisetta. Okay. Still getting to know the place. All right, so it's down on Lewisetta Road. What does it look like? Is it still the same building that he –

Barbara: Part of it. But it's been added onto it.

Shelden: And you don't really know how long he attended that school?

Barbara: No.

Shelden: All right. And so during what years did you attend?

Barbara: I have to stop and count now.

Shelden: Sorry [laughing].

Barbara: Uh, [figuring] from 1950 to '57.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: I have to stop and count years.

Shelden: And what years did your father attend?

Barbara: I have no idea. 'Cause back then, the children did not go to school like we did. They went to school – some of them were up to ten, twelve years old before they went to school. So, I cannot answer that.

Shelden: Now, he built the building that stands now, right?

Barbara: Yes, he helped build the building that's there now.

Shelden: So, when he attended, he must have attended the old school building.

Barbara: Right.

Shelden: Okay, so – did he tell you anything about the old school building? What it looked like –

Barbara: Not really. All I know, it was on – the big tree that's there, it was over on the other side, you know, of the driveway that comes in there.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: Other than that, I – and it was pink.

Shelden: So, it's the other side of the big tree from where the current building is?

Barbara: You know the big tree at the gate that you go in?

Shelden: The other building was on the other side, on the right-hand side as you go in. Okay, I'm going to draw a map here. So, here's the big tree, and here's 360, and here is the drive, and here is the school that stands now. So, where's –

Barbara: It would be over on this side.

Shelden: Okay, so kind of in front of –

Barbara: The one that's there, mm hm. Because I can remember that driveway that we go in had bricks there. We used to play with them.

Shelden: Okay, so the bricks were loose from the old building?

Barbara: Mm hm.

Shelden: Okay, all right. That's good to know. I've heard some people say that the old school was in the middle of the road. Do you know anything about that? No.

Barbara: Probably some part of it. I have no idea.

Shelden: And you said that there were bricks there. Were they pink?

Barbara: I can't remember. I can't remember back that far.

Shelden: 'Cause you were saying that the old school was pink. A lot of people have told me that –

Barbara: Yeah.

Shelden: – and I can't quite picture what it would have been made of – whether it was tabby or brick?

Barbara: I don't know.

Shelden: Don't know, okay. Do you think Elizabeth would know?

Barbara: She might.

Shelden: Yeah, if she'll talk to me.

Barbara: Why Liz don't want to talk to you, I don't know.

Shelden: I don't know. Liz and Arneta, I don't know. You'll have to work on them for me.

Barbara: Okay.

Shelden: All right, so – and was it just you and your dad? Or did you have siblings that went?

Barbara: No, it was nine-head of us.

Shelden: Okay, so you and your brothers and sisters. Okay, nine of your dad's children altogether.

Barbara: Well, eight really, because one was crippled and he didn't go.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: He was self-taught at home.

Shelden: Okay. And then did your mom attend Holley School?

Barbara: I don't know.

Shelden: You don't know.

Barbara: 'Cause she – she lived in Callao, so I don't know whether they came, but some of them did, so –

Shelden: – come down from Callao. Okay. Grandparents? Do you know?

Barbara: They went there.

Shelden: Uh huh. Grandparents went there.

Barbara: Well, Grandma Rosie. Grandpa Sam, no, because he came from Essex.

Shelden: Grandma Rosie went. Okay. And what was – was her last name Redmond?

Barbara: No, Page.

Shelden: Rosie Page. Okay. Oh, right. Redman's your married name, sorry. All right.

Barbara: She was a Samuel. I'll tell you, now.

Shelden: So, she was Rosie Samuel –

Barbara: Rosie Samuel Page.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: Okay, because all of them – Liz's mama, Grandma Rosie, Ella Dobyn's mother – Ella Dobyn's father, rather.– were all sisters and brothers. Now, we have a cousin that's 99 years old.

Shelden: Did your cousin who's 99 years old go to Holley School? Are they still pretty sound?

Barbara: Sometimes.

Shelden: She is, yeah?

Barbara: Sometimes.

Shelden: Do you think she'd talk to me?

Barbara: If I was there, maybe.

Shelden: Maybe we could think about that, okay? I sure would like to get some of her story.

Barbara: Sometimes she's real good.

Shelden: Yeah. Sure. Well, maybe we could give it a shot. Where is she now?

Barbara: She lives right down the road, down Newman Neck.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: About five minutes down the road.

Shelden: Okay, good. Well, we'll talk about that later. Okay, good. What's her name?

Barbara: Elsie.

Shelden: Elsie. Elsie what?

Barbara: Redmond. She was Elsie Holden.

Shelden: She was your father's ...

Barbara: first cousin.

Shelden: First cousin, okay. Okay. All right, I think I've got that. All right. So, where were you living at the time that you and your brothers and sisters were taught at the Holley School?

Barbara: At Cowart's down Lewisetta Road.

Shelden: Okay –

Barbara: Go to the end – called Cowart's.

Shelden: I would have thought it was Lewisetta at the end of Lewisetta Road.

Barbara: [laughing]

Shelden: All right. You think I'm funny. All right.

Barbara: No – well, we might as well enjoy.

Shelden: That's right. That's true. Right. So, Cowart's – is it like a town name.

Barbara: It's like a branch off – you go Lewisetta, you go straight and you branch off and go to Cowart's.

Shelden: Oh, so it's a road. All right. And then, and so you had a place there, on Cowart's?

Barbara: Yeah, we lived there, but Daddy didn't own that one.

Shelden: Okay. So, so your dad purchased property later?

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: And how old were you then?

Barbara: I was grown.

Shelden: So it was after you were through school. And then, and where was your dad living when he attended Holley School?

Barbara: In Lottsburg. Up there in Walmsley.

Shelden: How do you spell that?

Barbara: [laughing] W-A-L – wait a minute. I'm not a good speller. I can tell you in a minute.

Shelden: That's all right. Not everybody is – my daughter is not a good speller either.

Barbara: Rich could spell it, but I can't. Let me see if I can find Walmsley here.

Shelden: Take your time.

Barbara: Spelling it – I'm trying to think who lives up there – let me see who's up there. [turns off recorder]

Shelden: Okay, good. That looks like it's supposed to ... all right, so your dad was living up on Walmsley, Lottsburg when he attended. And your grandparents?

Barbara: That's where they go.

Shelden: Also?

Barbara: Also.

Shelden: So, Walmsley – did your grandparents own that property?

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: All right. And can you describe or have you heard a family member describe – let's start with your own experience – the school curriculum, the subjects taught, the typical day at the school.

Barbara: A typical day at Holley School. First thing in the mornings, if it wasn't much wood in the classroom to go in the stove, we had to go – if it was wintertime – we had to go out and bring in wood enough to last all day. I forgot we had our usual morning prayer, and then we were told which lesson plan we were going to do for that day, and most of the time we started off with math. And then we'd have spelling, and then by that time, it was probably lunchtime. Lunchtime, we had like 45 minutes for lunch, and we'd eat our lunch, and after everybody finished eating lunch, the rest of the time, we could go outside and that was our recess. And we'd come back in from recess and that's when we did the rest of our subjects, like history and social studies. And at 3 o'clock, the bell would ring, and we only had one bus. And the driver there was Mr. Charlie Leland –

Shelden: Charlie ...

Barbara: Charlie Leland. L-E-L-A-N-D.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: And he would pick up the children that would run up in Walmsley, Kingston, and where else up there – that went up the road, because he lived on Lewisetta Road. So, he'd take them home first, and then he'd come back and pick us up that lived down on Lewisetta Road and Lottsburg area.

Shelden: How many children, how many students were there? Do you know?

Barbara: I don't know.

Shelden: About how many?

Barbara: Yeah, well, we had at least about 80?

Shelden: Okay. I was just wondering how many trips it might have taken. Can you describe the bus?

Barbara: The bus was just one of the regular, old, big school busses. And I know on the trip to – up in Walmsley way, they sat three a seat, and sometimes they didn't have enough seats. It was a lot of children up that way. Down our way, everybody had a seat going to Lewisetta. So, that was a typical, regular, routine day.

Shelden: Did you sometimes walk, rather than wait for the bus to come by?

Barbara: No.

Shelden: Always –

Barbara: Always rode the bus, unless – now we walked when the bus broke down because we didn't have another bus to ride. So, we had to walk home or whatever.

Shelden: So this was like your assigned bus. It wasn't like you shared with other students in the district.

Barbara: That was the onliest bus that Holley School had.

Shelden: Okay. And did your dad ever talk about his typical day at the school?

Barbara: They had to walk to school. There was no bus or nothing. My older sisters and brothers – they had to – we lived right on the water. They had to row across the creek and catch the bus on Lewisetta side.

Shelden: So, they rowed across the creek first.

Barbara: Mm hm. And caught the bus on the other side.

Shelden: Do you have any idea how long it might have taken them to row across the creek?

Barbara: Not long.

Shelden: Not long. Okay. So, they had a boat that they kept there for such crossings, I suppose.

Barbara: My dad's boat.

Shelden: Yeah, did you ever hear your grandparents talk about school?

Barbara: I never knew 'em.

Shelden: You never knew your grandfolks. Yeah. That's a sad thing. Um, okay, so – can you describe methods used at the school, like the way that classes were taught?

Barbara: Well, we had one – we had no aides back in those days. We had one teacher per class, and some classes had 35 children in it. Some had less, you know. But as far as teaching, we really had to know what we were doing, mostly, because back then, people didn't have all this convenience we have today. So, you had to learn what you were doing. You could not get a calculator out and do math. You have to learn it from scratch, so we were taught everything by the teacher.

Shelden: Do you remember being taught math at all? Do you remember what it was like?

Barbara: Yeah, and we used the blackboard a lot in my day. The teacher would put the problems on the blackboard and call for you to go up and do that problem. Now, spelling, we had to make sentences out of our words instead of just writing the word down, we had to make sentences out of our words.

Shelden: I think they're coming back to that method a little more now. My daughter had to make sentences, too.

Barbara: Mm hm. And so, that – so, a typical day. And geography or whatever you want to call it – social studies – we had the big old maps on the wall, and they'd go from one place to the other, and you had to go and pick out where it was. What else?

Shelden: Good. This is good.

Barbara: What else did we do? Now, 12 o'clock was lunchtime. The little kids, the young ones, the first graders ate lunch first. We had one cook. And she cooked for all of those kids, and it was not fast food. It was from scratch.

Shelden: Yeah. I think, I remember from the last time that you said that was pretty good food.

Barbara: Honey, Miss Cindy Parker could cook. She'd bring it to you. My children remember her, because she was there a long time, even down at Newton School.

Shelden: She did pretty well then; the probably were pretty fond of her.

Barbara: Yes. She cooked for many years. Miss Cindy would make rolls from scratch, everything. My children will tell me now, "Ma, why don't you look Miss Cindy up?" But that was how it went. The lunchtime was prepared by one person. Sometimes, Peter's mother would come over and help. And like they have the pre-cooked turkeys and stuff now – mm mm.

Shelden: None of that.

Barbara: Mm mm. Everything was –

Shelden: What was a good lunch day?

Barbara: Every day.

Shelden: Tell me what you might have had for lunch that was so delicious. Do you remember a particular thing she used to make?

Barbara: Not really 'cause all of it was good. Now sometimes she had hot dogs, pork and beans, potato salad – on that day, you could always count on the pork and beans, the potato salad and the hot dog, and a brownie and applesauce. That was the meal for that day. You always had that. Macaroni and cheese – she'd have a ham slice, macaroni and cheese and greens.

Shelden: That sounds like a pretty good lunch.

Barbara: And always had cake or something – dessert. Always had dessert. Every meal was just right.

Shelden: Do you think that was true for you dad when he went to school, too? Did he have a cook at the school.

Barbara: No.

Shelden: Uh huh.

Barbara: They carried their lunch.

Shelden: Yeah, did he tell you how good you had it when you –

Barbara: Yes. When you complain to my dad about school, "You don't have to walk. You go to school, and you get a ride to school. You ain't got nothing to do but go to school and get your work done." That was him. You had no excuse with him. The first day of school, you would go to school, and back then you had to buy your books. And

when you went that first day, you got a slip with all the names of the books on it. The School Board office was down here, right by the new library up there. And he would come home that evening in time to get everybody's book slip, come to Heathsville and buy all those books. If you did not get your book the next day, it wasn't because he didn't have it when he came back. So, you had no excuse for not doing your work. That's the way he was. He was – you had to do that work. Education was what he was all about.

Shelden: I've heard stories about some of the older ones used to carry a potato in their pocket and put it on the stove when they got to school, and that was lunch. Have you heard that story?

Barbara: No. Never heard of that one.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: Had to be a sweet potato.

Shelden: Because ... Just 'cause that's what's around here?

Barbara: I mean, white potatoes would take too long on the top of the stove.

Shelden: Oh, okay.

Barbara: Must have been sweet potatoes.

Shelden: Hm. Can you describe a particular lesson? Can you remember a particular lesson that you enjoyed or especially hated being taught? What were the lessons like?

Barbara: Well, to me, they were pretty easy. You know. I guess because my mom and daddy always had us at home doing them and the older ones always – I was the last, so – everybody else was before me, so if I didn't do it, you know, they taught me how. So, really – my lessons were pretty easy. Let me see, one that – I enjoyed them all. Math, I was very good at. Geography, you could have kept that. I didn't particularly hate it. But I didn't particularly like it either. Those were the two that I would say.

Shelden: Did they teach you geography of the United States or of the world or –

Barbara: United States. I think I've got a book around here.

Shelden: And – do you remember getting a sense of where Virginia was in the United States?

Barbara: Yes, we had to know where Virginia was on the map and Maryland, because in Virginia, the onliest thing they do in Virginia is farm and fish. So – you had to know.

Shelden: Yeah, what the principle economies were, okay. Do you remember any of your textbooks or other materials that were used at the school?

Barbara: Yes. I think I've still got the readers from first grade.

Shelden: I would love to see those, actually.

Barbara: They're over to the house, and they're packed up right now, because we've gotta re-do the house. But they had the little – we had a red one, a yellow one, I think it was green.

Shelden: Mm hm. And they were your readers?

Barbara: Yes. And the red one was the one that we started off with first. That was "Can you see Dick and Jane run?" All little things like that in there. And that was our first ones we started off with. I think, I think, I think they're over at the house.

Shelden: Do you remember thinking about – I'm thinking back to Dick and Jane. It's been a while for me, too. But, it's not something that I would have noticed when I was little, but I'm thinking that they were all white. They had pictures, right? Was it something that struck you when you went?

Barbara: On there, whatever they were doing, there would be a picture like, if they were falling down, one would be tumbling down the hill, all that like. Yeah.

Shelden: And do you remember thinking these were all white people? Was that something –

Barbara: I really didn't pay that any mind.

Shelden: Okay. I'm just curious about how that would have felt to a youngster.

Barbara: Back in my day, where we lived, we were the onliest black kids on that side, and I played with white kids all my life.

Shelden: Mm hm.

Barbara: So, it didn't bother me.

Shelden: Did it bother anybody else?

Barbara: I have no idea 'cause those was the onliest ones I played when I was home, so – and school was separated, you know, so – it was no difference to me.

Shelden: Um, so you have some of the textbooks.

Barbara: I'm sure they're there somewhere, but right now –

Shelden: I realize it can be hard to get at these things. But I would be really interested in seeing them.

Barbara: I'll see if I can find them. We've got to go over there end of the month and put the house back together.

Shelden: Oh. The house back – not this house.

Barbara: My mother and father's place.

Shelden: Okay. How would you describe the importance of the school – I'm going to take this in sections, but – first of all, the importance of the school to the African-American community.

Barbara: Well, it was very important, because if the school wasn't there and the kids couldn't go out there and get what they could from the teachers, they weren't gonna put up a thing in Lottsburg, 'cause a lot of them didn't go but a year, two years – then they had to go to work. So, it was really important that the school was there. And then some of them – I was told, now I wasn't there – that they would go for a year. Then, they'd stop and go back the next year, because they had to work in between. So, you know, it was very important. At least they knew that it was there for them.

Shelden: Yeah. And they were getting some basics.

Barbara: Basics.

Shelden: And beyond that, the importance. What did it mean to you and your family, do you think, this school being there.

Barbara: Well, to me, it was great, because that's where we got all our basic learning is from Holley School. And if I hadn't gotten mine from there, my children might not have gotten what they have today. So, I figure it's very important.

Shelden: And how are your children doing today?

Barbara: Would you like for me to start from the oldest to the youngest?

Shelden: Sure. Sure.

Barbara: My oldest one, Sharon, is a detective in New York, in Suffolk County. My next one, Oswald, Jr., he has his own trucking company in Maryland. Sheila, she works for the government in passport services. Duane, he's a contractor. He does government housing. Who's next? Sonia – they all have nick-names, so I have to stop and think for the names – Sonya is at VCU and she does the tuition program for graduate students.

Shelden: I'd like to know her.

Barbara: Next one, Anthony, he's an electrical engineer, which he works with his brother Duane in the housing business. And my youngest one, she works for the government, too. So, that's the end of them.

Shelden: Okay. Good thanks. So, clearly, you attribute their success in school and professions in part to your own education at the Holley School.

Barbara: I do.

Shelden: And your father's. How would you describe the importance of the school to the larger community in Lottsburg or in Northumberland County.

Barbara: Pause it.

Shelden: Do you want me to pause? [recording paused]

Barbara: Mm hm. Ask me the question again.

Shelden: So how would you describe the importance of the school to the larger community in Lottsburg or Northumberland County? And I guess you could talk about white folks and maybe the importance you see and perhaps the importance – whether other people also see that importance.

Barbara: Well, we had quite a few participants in the community. The blacks did not participate as much as the whites did, when we first started trying to re- renovate Holley School.

Shelden: So, you're talking about the Friends of the Holley School, like Porter Kier.

Barbara: Friend of the Holley – right. And here lately, when I've had programs, it was more participants from the whites than it was from the blacks, which is good and we appreciate it, but as a community that went there, we had very little participation from them.

Shelden: Why do you think that is? Do you have any idea?

Barbara: I have no idea.

Shelden: Do you think that, do you think that maybe there isn't an appreciation for how important the school was?

Barbara: They don't appreciate where they came from. That school meant nothing to them, the way they're participating. But that's where all of them started from.

Shelden: And clearly, the school's been pretty important to you and your family.

Barbara: Yes. Very important.

Shelden: I also see the school as part of a larger history of black education and of education in America. Do you see what I'm talking about? Do you get a sense of that?

Barbara: I think I understand where you're talking – okay, if it hadn't been for Holley and them – Miss Holley and Putnam coming down here in a rural community like Lottsburg, the education would have been very poor. So, really Holley Graded School started something in Virginia that probably would have been years to come.

Shelden: Good, thanks. How would you describe relationships between the school and its white neighbors back when you were attending, these days.

Barbara: We had Mr. Willy Harrison –

Shelden: I'm sorry – his name –

Barbara: Willy Harrison.

Shelden: Okay.

Barbara: – living next door to us. Ruth Blackwell – now this is in my time – lived on the other side. And Mr. Harrison, we used to play ball, and when our ball went over the fence, he would not throw the ball back. He'd leave them over there. We'd get another ball. Sometimes we had at least five or six balls over there before he'd – before he'd come out there and throw them back. But other than that, fine, you know. And sometimes, he'd be out there when the ball went over, and he'd throw the ball right on back. Sometimes he'd walk away. [laughing] So, but otherwise, we had no problem that I know of.

Shelden: So, you don't think there was much notice taken of the school by whites, or do you think it was just not particularly a problem or particularly interesting or –

Barbara: As far as I knew, it wasn't much of a problem. No.

Shelden: Did you attend or teach school prior to school integration – well, you attended Holley School prior to school integration in Lottsburg, yes?

Barbara: Yeah.

Shelden: Um, did you attend school – you graduated in '57? Is that what you said?

Barbara: I graduated in '63.

Shelden: From high school. Yeah, so you left Holley School in '57, right? Okay, so the school that you attended after Holley School, was it integrated at that point?

Barbara: No.

Shelden: Okay. So you went to Central High School?

Barbara: Right.

Shelden: Okay. What do you remember about school life in Central?

Barbara: Okay, school life in Central was altogether different from going to Lottsburg, because there were different kids from all over the county that you had to meet and go to class with. And it was just different. You had to get really, get used to being in a place where you had to change classes and all of the different things you had to do. Of course, you had to go to a different math class, English class – it was very different. It took a little while to get used to that.

Shelden: And Central High School is now the School Board building – is that right? Have I got that right? No. So, is it –

Barbara: Central was down here on 360, where they built the new high school, but they tore Central down.

Shelden: Oh, okay. Maybe there was more than one. I was thinking that Harold had talked about Central High School – I think he went there in '59, so you're about the same age. Is that right?

Barbara: Almost. Almost.

Shelden: I thought he was saying that it had become a middle school.

Barbara: It had. It had until they built the brand new school, which is – the middle school was on one side and the high school was on the other.

Shelden: Okay, All right.

Barbara: So, after they got that opened, they tore that one down.

Shelden: Okay, so they tore the old one down.

Barbara: Mm hm. There's a little plaque out there saying that that's where it was.

Shelden: Why do you think they tore it down, rather than remodel?

Barbara: Good question. Well, some wanted to keep it up. But they said it wasn't enough support to keep it, so, they tore it down.

Shelden: That was all around the time that they were trying to do separate but equal, right?

Barbara: Mm hm.

Shelden: Round here, that was the –

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: That was the idea.

Barbara: Mm hm.

Shelden: And um –

Barbara: But that never happened here until Sharon went to school.

Shelden: I'm sorry, what?

Barbara: My oldest, my oldest daughter was – first started school was the year that they integrated here.

Shelden: Okay, and do you remember what year that was?

Barbara: '68.

Shelden: '68, okay. I'm trying to remember what it was like where I was. I had a friend who started school in second grade, a black friend who started school in second grade in Illinois in Libertyville, where I grew up. So, that would have been, let's see – I would have been in first grade in '70, so that would have been '71 would have been the first year. I think he integrated the schools. Interesting.

Barbara: Here it was '68.

Shelden: Yeah, there wasn't any legalized Jim Crow in Illinois where I'm from, but there was still segregation. So, '68, your daughter went to school in an integrated school. That was the first year. You were at Central High School and they were calling that a separate but equal school. Did you ever see the inside of the white school at all?

Barbara: No.

Shelden: So, you wouldn't have known whether things were equal or not.

Barbara: No.

Shelden: Okay, and what did you think about the fact that there was a black school and a white school in those days. Did you think about it?

Barbara: Didn't think about it.

Shelden: Uh huh.

Barbara: Just the everyday thing.

Shelden: Didn't even really notice.

Barbara: No.

Shelden: Yeah, I have trouble imagining what that would have been like – like, I suppose a lot of my peers, there might be social injustices that many of them wouldn't notice but some of them would. You know what I'm saying?

Barbara: Nowadays – I have a problem when things are not like I think they should be. I notice about that now.

Shelden: But it was just how things were.

Barbara: That's it. It was just everyday life.

Shelden: Do you remember – this is not on my list, but I'm going to ask you anyway. Do you remember a moment when you realized that that is how things were.

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: That things were separate? Do you remember learning that?

Barbara: Learning it? I lived it.

Shelden: Sure yes. Yes. But that is the distinction that I'm trying to get at – the difference between living it, just having it be how it was, and actually figuring it out, like becoming conscious of it.

Barbara: I have – there's a man there, trying to think of the man's name – McDaniel – that had the drugstore down at Callao. And my mother used to houseclean for him. And we could go in his store, but we could not sit. We had to stand.

Shelden: You could shop, but you couldn't sit down.

Barbara: Mm hm. It was a drugstore, and we could go in there.

Shelden: Like other people might sit and have a soda, but you couldn't –

Barbara: Right, but we couldn't.

Shelden: And do you remember – you're telling me this like maybe that was a moment when you actually realized that it.

Barbara: And I wanted to know why can't I sit there? Yeah. And then as, you know, time went by, you realized why, you know, so – that was one of the things I can remember very clearly. But other than that, I played with white kids all my life.

Shelden: Mm hm. Did you attend school following – I've asked you this question already. What do you remember about school life following integration when your kids were in school?

Barbara: It was very – well, we had a problem with some teachers, because they'd never taught black students. And a lot of them had this idea that the blacks did not know anything. And – other than that, I've gone to school a couple of times. One time, this teacher – I think she was prejudiced – and my child, Sharon, the oldest one, did all her work and she was pretty good in school, did all homework and got it right, and she gets a C on her paper. And every problem was right, so I had to go to school for that. So poor lady had a heart attack and died.

Shelden: [laughing] Yeah. So –

Barbara: But I was, you know, there was a few teachers that had problems, but – if you face them right then and there, you could put a stop to it.

Shelden: Did you in that case?

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: She gave your daughter the grade –

Barbara: The grade that she deserved. Yes.

Shelden: That's good.

Barbara: And what else was it? We had another one at Callao. There was two different schools that the kids went to. They went to – first to third at Lottsburg where the School Board office is now, and from the fourth to the seventh over at Callao.

Shelden: So where the School Board office is now was the new elementary school –

Barbara: Right. The other one was over Callao like you're going out Lodge Road. And they had a teacher over there – trying to think of the woman's name – Mrs. Hale, the sheriff's wife, and she had a habit of going around and taking the kids' heads if they moved – you know how you tell them to lay your head down on the desk, and if you picked your head up, she would take and slam your their head back down. So, she made a mistake and did Oswald, Jr., like that. And children – well, he didn't tell me, 'cause they tell them, you better not tell it, you know, when they did something. Well, Junior didn't tell me. But his cousin next door came over and told me, said, "you know she took his head and banged it down on that desk." I said – so I made him tell me what happened. He told me, he said, "I was only moving one arm to put the other arm under, 'cause that one was getting tired." I said, "Okay." My brother's cleaning up my trash. So, she slammed his head down on the desk. I went to school the next day. I called over there, 'cause it was getting late. And I told the principal. I said, "Have her in the office when I get there in the morning." And I took care of that, too. She retired at the end of the year.

Shelden: [laughing]

Barbara: That's enough about the kids.

Shelden: I know, okay. What do you know about the school that you would most like others to know? What do you know about Holley School that you would most like others to know.

Barbara: That it's one of the places, that's it's one of the first that we had – that was the first in the county that we had for blacks to go. And if you really knew the history of it, I think more people would participate in trying to preserve it. But we don't have that participation.

Shelden: I would really like to help build that awareness around here. Not just for blacks –

Barbara: For everybody.

Shelden: – for everybody. I think it's actually an important piece of history for all of us.

Barbara: Where most of the blacks worked in Lottsburg up until today was at Keyser's Seafood and at Cowart's Seafood – and that's where they worked all of their lives, mostly. And their parents and grandparents worked there. And they got their education, what they had right there at Holley Graded School. So, in my book, if you could go work for that man that you had to pass Holley School to go to, you would appreciate that building being there, because you stopped off there and went to school before you came back. So, I would think Holley School would be very important.

Shelden: I think, I think you're getting at the importance for the folks who lived, who stayed here, but I think there also might be some folks who left who went to Holley School, and it might be important in a different way.

Barbara: The ones that left also worked at those two places before they left here. They went to Holley School, too. They started at Holley School.

Shelden: And had they their first work at – you said Keyser's Seafood? Is that K-E-Y-S-E?

Barbara: S-E-R. Keyser.

Shelden: Oh, Keyser's. Okay. And then Cowart's Seafood. And they were catching or canning or –

Barbara: Cowart's was the cannery. Keyser's is where they pick crabs.

Shelden: Okay. I don't know what picking crabs is like. Do you?

Barbara: Um –

Shelden: I don't know what that means.

Barbara: Picking crabs from the shell. Packing them.

Shelden: Okay. All right. Okay, so that was pretty hard work.

Barbara: To me, it would be. To me, it is. I've picked crabs. My daughter used to pick, and I'd go down with her sometimes, but it took me too long. I ain't got time to pick crabs out the shell.

Shelden: She was faster at it?

Barbara: Oh yeah. And – Cowart's, I had peeled tomatoes. And I shucked oysters with my daddy, but I never did it down at the plant. But I peeled tomatoes there.

Shelden: So, your dad didn't work at the factory?

Barbara: No.

Shelden: What did he do?

Barbara: He was a carpenter. He worked for himself. He did carpentry and farming.

Shelden: Foreman of the business?

Barbara: No, he had different ones he did the work for.

Shelden: Oh, okay.

Barbara: But his carpentry he did on his own.

Shelden: So he had his own carpentr business and then he was a foreman for –

Barbara: one man up in – right up the road from us, was named Will Sandy, he farmed for him.

Shelden: Oh, you're saying "farming." I'm sorry. I was thinking foreman, like –

Barbara: No, no. Farming.

Shelden: Okay, got it. I'm still getting used to how you all talk down here.

Barbara: I don't have my teeth in either.

Shelden: You're doing fine. So, okay, so he worked other folks' farms. So that was about what you know about the school that you would most like others to know. Anything else that you want to say about that?

Barbara: It was the basis of their education. That's number one.

Shelden: Yeah. What would you most like to know about the school that you don't know?

Barbara: Well, really, I'd like to go back to Putnam and see how she related to being here working with the kids and the community. What was her idea? How did she – she really think that by her being here was really going to help the community, you know. I don't know, it's just – by not being back in that era, you know, curiosity is one of my biggest problems. I'm very curious how other people projected things. So, I would – yeah. I'd like to see how she perceived how she thought it would come – how it would actually help everybody come to the point they're at now.

Shelden: Yeah. Yeah, I really do think that's what she thought. She and Sallie Holley – they were on the abolitionist speakers' circuit. They were at Oberlin together, went to Oberlin College, which was co-educational and integrated college when they attended – they were in the first generation of Oberlin grads and then after that, they heard an abolitionist speaker on the college campus and after that went on the speakers' circuit themselves. Sallie would talk, and Caroline would make appointments for her and get their hotel and – she kind of managed the show. And they did that for all the years and through the war and corresponded with the abolitionist papers about their speaking engagements. And then when all of that was over, they had to figure out, you know –

Barbara: What else to do.

Shelden: After the war. Emily Howland came down first. Emily was stationed at the freedman's village in Arlington, and she knew Caroline Putnam and Sallie Holley from Philadelphia. There was kind of a group of women in Philadelphia who were women's right advocates and educators. Is there anything else that you'd like to know about the school that you don't know?

Barbara: Not really. I just want us to be able to maintain it in some fashion, which we're working –

Shelden: Well, and having some success, from what I can tell.

Barbara: Well, we're moving along. Slow, but moving.

Shelden: Anything else you want to say before I turn off – you haven't really told me about your dad building the school. What do you know about that?

Barbara: I don't know much about it. All I know is he was one of the ones that helped build it.

Shelden: Yeah.

Barbara: I can't tell you.

Shelden: So, he was a carpenter, and probably a group of carpenters worked on building the school.

Barbara: Most likely. I think they had quite a few that worked on it, and he was one of them.

Shelden: And he told you that he helped build the school.

Barbara: Yeah.

Shelden: That was something that he took pride in?

Barbara: Yes.

Shelden: But he didn't really tell you a story about it?

Barbara: No. He might have told the older ones, but I'm the last, so I, you know, no.

Shelden: All right. Well, thank you very much for your time. [recording stopped]

Shelden: Okay, Barbara, tell me about Field Days.

Barbara: Okay. Field Day was a big event and we didn't – not only the school kids were there, it was the whole community would come out, everybody. And the kids did a sack race in the mornings. They had – what do you call it when you trade off, one would run and pass it to the – relay. Then, you'd have your snacks and stuff you could have, buy. They were only like, five cents, two cents, three cents, whatever. Then middle of the afternoon, you would have your maypole wrap. And your last event for the day would be a baseball game. That was the end, and when you got to that baseball game, the busses had to wait – the bus had to wait for the kids, because if that game wasn't over, they had to wait until that game was finished. So, that's the big event of the Field Day for us at Holley School.

Shelden: Do you remember – tell me a story about you at Field Days. Was it Fields Day or Field Days?

Barbara: Field Day.

Shelden: Okay, Field Day, All right.

Barbara: My typical day would be get off the bus, you go to your classroom and you always had your prayer and everything, every morning, regardless of what you were going to have that day. After that, for Fields Day, you would wait until the teacher would take you outside. Everybody's class had to be in a certain spot on the playground, and each class had something they had planned to do until the events – the sack race, all those little races started. And that would begin around 9:30, 10 o'clock. And my typical day was, I always liked the sack race. That was mine. And I always liked the wrap the Maypole. And then as I got up into the grades, it was baseball, loved to play baseball, so the girls would have a game first, and the boys would be the last ones to play. So, I would always – and I liked to pitch, and I was a pretty good hitter, too. So, I always got on a team where I knew we could win. So, that's how our day went for Fields Day. And

everybody in the community participated in it – the parents, grandparents, whoever could get there was there for that particular day. Yeah. So, that was a typical Fields Day.

Shelden: Good, thanks.

[END RECORDING]

Redmond Index

Callao, VA.....	4, 18, 19
Cowart, VA.....	6
Cowart Seafood.....	20-21
Heathsville, VA.....	1, 2
Holley, Sallie; Holley School.....	1, 4-8, 13-15, 20, 22-23
Keyser Crab House.....	20
Lewisetta, VA.....	2
Lottsburg, VA.....	2
Newman Neck.....	5
Newton School.....	10
Putnam, Caroline.....	15, 22
Tellis Run School.....	1
Walmsley, VA.....	7