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Iron Hill School Oral History Project

Interview with Lena Satchell Todd Dyer and Alice A. Prestbury

Date of Interview: April 24, 2003
Interviewer: Roberta Perkins
Transcriber: Marcia Adams

Also present: Laura Mackie Lee, Museum Director, Iron Hill Museum of Natural History

Roberta: This is Roberta Perkins. Today's date is Thursday, April 24, 2003 and I am here interviewing Mrs. Lena Satchell Dyer in her home in Newark, Delaware and I am interviewing her as part of the Iron Hill School Oral History Project. At this time I would like to thank Mrs. Satchell for taking time out to help us with this project. Thank you.

Lena: I am enjoying this. I am reliving it.

Roberta: I would like to start out with a brief sketch, biographical sketch of your life in Iron Hill and the community there. Could you tell me first your name and your date of birth?

Lena: My name is Lena Satchell Dyer and date of birth is 7-31-38.

Roberta: And where were you born?

Lena: I was born in Elkton, Maryland.

Roberta: Could you give me the names of your parents and your mother's maiden name?

Lena: Yes, my mother's maiden name was Alice Satchell and my father was Howard Williams, they were both from Elkton, Maryland.

Roberta: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Lena: I have 5 half-sisters and 4 half-brothers on my father's side. I am the only child that my mother had. She had me and that was it. She said, "that's enough."

Roberta: Did you always live in Iron Hill? You were born in Elkton?

Lena: Elkton.

Roberta: When did you move?

Lena: I moved to Iron Hill when I was approximately I'd say 9 years old and in between then we was basically in the Maryland area and then came to Iron Hill.

Roberta: What do you remember about your childhood in Iron Hill?

Lena: My childhood in Iron Hill was, to me, was varied as far as in a small community where I was we learned to adapt to different types of personalities. And because it was a small black community there was relatives here and relatives there but it taught me how to look at people as individuals because we had the alcoholics, we had the abusers, the fun people but they were all treated with respect because the one thing as a child we had to be respectful. I remember my aunt and uncle fighting and the kids were sent somewhere else but then the next day, but what was that all about and they would be – they would make up which helped me as an adult working with that population you would understand the dynamics of what was going on but still there was a difference because we still respected. That was adults, being a child in a small community like that molded me to be the type of person that I am now. To accept what I see, fix what I can fix – what I can't fix, accept it.

Roberta: Other children in the community, where did you play, were there enough children to play with?

Lena: Yes. We played baseball. Baseball to me was a can and a stick off the tree. That type of thing. There is a word they used today "innovative" which again helped me in my adult life. There was so many of us. Oh my God, Iron Hill was well known to have lots and lots and lots of kids and we all played with different, well

it wasn't like I see today – the teenagers are here and another group is here, we all played together. I guess I'm trying to say all the ages kinda played together except like the real little ones they kinda like was off from I would say the 8 year olds on would play with the teenagers now so we all played things together. Hide and seek, kick the can, blindman's bluff. All those things, ring around the rosie, baseball and now they call it tag football where we try to catch the person and the girls – there was no such thing as a girls game and a boys game, volleyball. This was all we had here to play with so we all played together and we would walk. We would walk from where I lived on Otts Chapel Road over to my other cousins which was on Old Baltimore Pike but we would travel in groups and then sometimes they would walk over to our place. We would play in the summertime. Oh my gosh, forever!

Roberta: About playing and about how all the ages played together and there was no girls –

Lena: No there was no girls or boys games we all played together, we all wrestled together and kicked the can.

Roberta: How did the older children treat the younger children? Were they protective or teachers?

Lena: We were very protective if the Newark guys would come because sometimes the Newark group, because the people of Newark were relatives to the people in Iron Hill so when Aunt Mary would come and bring some of the cousins from that side. The older ones were very protective of the outsiders. I guess I could put it like that. But they could pick on the little guys and when I say 'they' I guess I could include myself, we'd pick on 'em. We kept them in check but don't nobody else touch them. That type of thing. So we were kind of territorial I guess is the word now.

Alice: The word is gangs now.

Lena: We weren't gangs.

Roberta: The voice in the background you just heard is Mrs. Dyer's mother, Alice Prestbury. She'll be joining us later. In the community as you were growing up how did the people in the community communicate? News? Activities? What was going on? Gatherings?

Lena: Basically they used the school as a form of a community center what we would know it now to be a community center. Everything went directly to the school or the church which was, oh my how far was the church from me? If you took the old back way into Grandmom Mary's I'd say a good, less than a quarter of a mile or so between the church and the school is how they did the area communications. Other than just walking and telling each other what was going on. A good example of how news travels: I remember my cousins and I decided to (the word they use now "bag school").

Laura: Is this the first Mom's hearing about it?

Lena: No. We were smart kids. We left the school and we already planned what time we were going to go back home so we broke into the church and there was – and everyone knew that there was a certain way you'd pop that lock on the window in the church and you saw it was locked and it would come unlocked. So we bagged school and was in the church playing boogey-woogey. So we timed you know when it was time 'cause we had this one, Pearl, she is deceased now she would say, "ok now we got to get ready and go home so we can be home by the time we usually get home and we did. And we were stupid because the key was Mom asked me, because we was all kinda like hung up to my house, because that's where the grandmother was and the first thing my Mom said, "how was school today?" My Mom never asked us how school was. "Oh fine," and in our stupid minds we were saying oh we got it made. "Oh fine." "What did you learn today?" And still we were stupid. "Oh well you know we had to learn how to do math and whatever, whatever." And then my Grandmother said, "you little lying hussies you." By that time my Mom is pulling my hair and my other cousins were getting the same treatment. Oh my God.

Laura: Do you know how they found out?

Lena: The neighbor across from the church.

Laura: Which house?

Lena: Who was Caucasian. At that time you know we were talking about it takes a village to raise a child. My grandmother was one of the ones who had a telephone. There were 3 telephones in the area. She called, the neighbor from the church, called my aunt who had a phone cause she didn't know my grandmother's number and my aunt called my grandmother and that's how they found out. But that shows you how stupid we kids could be, we knew we got it.

Laura: Was that St. Daniel's Church?

Lena: Yes. Sitting here now I can hear that music, we were boogeying in there.

Roberta: How did the neighbors get along? How did the black and the white folks in the community get along?

Lena: Fine. Because everyone knew the boundaries. We knew what we could do and couldn't do. The children, because we were I guess the generation where we had just a little enough of freedom that we would become a little militant and that goes back to that story, we had to walk and Momma will go into that more why we had to do all the walking but on the corner there on Old Baltimore Pike, I think it's a kennel now, but that was an old school. I think it was one of the original schools. It was a white school and the kids used to taunt us because they had public transportation as we know it now to get back and forth to school. We didn't. It would be raining or snowing and they would holler out the window really nasty things and being kids we would pop 'em. We would go throw bottles, glass. So we did that fighting there. But the parents somehow, it was us kids. There was one kid, no there were quite a few that and Terry McCoy was one of them 'cause remember they lived on the corner. He was the sweetest kid.

He just wanted to play with us and he would come out and we would beat him up. It was like we took all of our frustration out on him.

Laura: He was a white kid?

Lena: Yes. I mean he suffered and the more he suffered the more he wanted to be with us. It was terrible. I think about it now, in fact he's a millionaire and he is one of the ones who has all the houses in Brookmont Farms. We laugh about it, so he grew up with us and he laughs about how we used to beat him up. We had to take it out on someone so he was the one.

Roberta: Do you think he is somebody that we should interview?

Lena: Terry McCoy.

Laura: Do you know where he lives nowadays?

Lena: Terry lives, I can get the address for you. He lives in Elkton.

Roberta: We are trying to get as many people as possible that experience life there.

Lena: It's a shame he was so nice.

Laura: He lived on the corner?

Lena: They lived in the trailer there on Old Baltimore Pike and Otts Chapel and there's a trailer there. They had that trailer.

Roberta: It sounds like a lot of folks lived on Otts Chapel.

Lena: But for some reason I think he liked to be abused by us.

Roberta: He just knew there was something good there. He knew they were basically good people. Now did your family rent or buy?

Lena: No, they owned. Again Mom can tell you more of that because evidently Grandmom Webster, Grandmom Millie Smith and all of them somehow or

another and I don't know how, I never did figure out how they acquired all that property. Mom how did Grandma Webster and them get all that property?

Alice: I really don't know. I know it came through her grandmother or her grandfather. Somebody worked for a white family, they worked for them, and they gave them this ground is the way I understand it. Being an in-law I'm not sure that that's true

Lena: But it was acres. How many acres was there?

Alice: I'm sure that's the way they came by it.

Lena: There's acres and acres of ground and like I said we were like one of the core, we were like at the core, that was Grandma. And there was on the other side which would be off of Old Baltimore Pike and up that – what is the name of that?

Laura: Whitaker?

Lena: Whitaker. That property from where that little house is across from the church, from where you go in that lane all the way back up back almost to the school belongs to my cousins because that was Grandmom Smith's, Millie Smith who was the mother to Grandmom Daisy. So Grandmom Smith had a big portion of I know it has to be 6 acres and then Grandmom Webster had property which was like on Otts Chapel Road. Then Uncle Maynard had his little property and then the Bullocks had their property so we're talking a good 20 between the 5 families I'd say 20 to 30 acres or more. Where's that property where Uncle Maynard's property is now what is that big development out there?

Alice: I have no idea.

Lena: As you're on Old Baltimore Pike right down near...

Laura: On your right on your way to the school? There's 2 neighborhoods now one is called The Preserve at Lafayette Hills and that's right by what Don Lewis called the Pit Road. He said the Websters lived up there.

- Lena:** Yes that's Uncle Maynard's and the Webster's and all that property.
- Laura: There is another neighborhood closer to 896 and I forget what that ones called.
- Lena:** Not that one but the one right there. So there were like 3 core properties or homes that everyone kind of generated to. And we're not going to deal with the other end. The other end belonged to the Congos. They owned all that.
- Laura: So it was basically the Websters, the Smiths, the Bullocks, the Maynards.
- Lena:** The Earls. And then Smith Road is it cause that was the name, Smith Road, all that property on the left side
- Laura: Smith Way
- Lena:** Smith Way. Smith's Way.
- Alice:** All that was Webster's is gone.
- Lena:** The offspring, the brothers, the siblings.
- Roberta: What did people do for fun?
- Lena:** We knew them as barbecues and family reunion type things and then the summer was so nice because then we would have the family which was the Morgans from New York or Philadelphia would come. Then we would have the family from Washington would be around. Especially the religious holidays they would be down. Basically it was family oriented type of activities. The biggest thing for us was Hershey Park. As for children we would go for that. Those would be our little outings. It was basically family oriented types of activities. The holidays.
- Roberta: Were there any holidays or activities that were special that stood out more than others?
- Lena:** I would say Christmas. What do you think?

Alice: Christmas and then Thanksgiving. Christmas was bigger than Thanksgiving even tho' it comes first.

Lena: Christmas, Thanksgiving and the summer. Oh my we looked forward to summer because then we saw all of our cousins all over. We would have big dinners, again the innovation because we had no money, the big dinners where everyone would meet within a radius of from Elkton, Wilmington, Newark they would come and support each others churches and we would have big dinners and that meant us kids could be there and just have a ball.

Roberta: How late in the day were you all allowed to stay out?

Lena: In the wintertime we were allowed to stay out until I would say just before it starts to get dusk. In the summer, because it was so hot, and everyone, we would call it camping out, and burning the cattails, so we pretty much had free will. But we had to be in an area, we couldn't be all over, it was in the area. And I think again that's why summer is so special because the older persons, the family it was party time for them as we know it now. Socializing. We benefited from it because we was able to stay up. It was just so hot.

Roberta: Do you know or you remember August Quarterly? Did you ever participate?

Lena: No, that was more up in Wilmington.

Roberta: What about church in your community? I think you already stated ...

Lena: It was one of importance for communication, for problem solving.

Roberta: What other activities, for lack of a better word, that were associated with the church? What important part did the church play in the community in your life?

Lena: It probably would be if someone had a fire that would be the hub where people met and got stuff and find out what it is you need and you would bring it right to the church and they would take it and deliver it to the person. Remember when Aunt Lillian had their fire a few years they all met after church service. They

announced it in church and after church service and I think we all met on a Monday night and that part of it we kids had a part as listening but we didn't actually have a part in except delivering the stuff. But that's where Mom and them come in. They were...

Laura: Did most of the people in the community attend St. Daniel's? Did some go to St. Thomas' also?

Lena: Most that I can remember all went to St. Daniel's.

Alice: There were some in the mix, there were some.

Lena: Oh, Miss Addie.

Alice: Miss Addie, Congos which is involved in this. They went to St. Thomas.

Laura: Where was St. Thomas?

Alice: Frenchtown Road.

Laura: Is it still there?

Alice: Yes, it's beautiful.

Roberta: Let me ask you about jobs for folks in the community. What kind of jobs were there and what did they pay and how were people treated?

Lena: I could probably answer that one. The children, we would work around the house and it was expected. Monetary, the only monetary we got was in the summer when we would grow our vegetables and a certain portion we were allowed to take into Newark, one time didn't we used to go to Wilmington?

Alice: One time and then it didn't worked out, that was just a little bit too much.

Lena: And sell some veggies on the side of the road. Now we were allowed to keep that money. But we were expected – it wasn't like today where the kids got monetary money for doing ...

Alice: For doing nothing.

Lena: We were expected to work for our parents. They worked for other people. I'm thinking of Emmy Duke Bell worked for the DuPonts.

Alice: I worked for a lot of people. The main one in the later times, I always did housework and then later on I went to Hugh F. Gallaghers Real Estate in Newark and worked for them. That was the biggest builder in Newark. I'm sure you know about on 896, those houses I think they are called Silverbrook Farms.

Laura: Yes, I know where that is.

Alice: Well I cleaned all those houses and then I worked for Mrs. Gallagher, Alice Gallagher and before that I just cleaned different peoples homes. I worked in the restaurants. I don't remember names anymore but I did housework but it did involve Gallaghers.

Lena: As far as the children, up until we were I'd say 17 there was no employment that was available. Now when you turned 17 we would take work again doing housework. I worked farm work. I went to the restaurant and worked in Elkton. I had to make extra money.

Roberta: What did you do there?

Lena: I was a busy person. The opportunities for employment for the kids in my day – you didn't have them. First of all you didn't have the time. You had too much to do at home because the parents were out doing the work and the work had to be done.

Roberta: What experiences, if any, did you have with discrimination as you were growing up?

Lena: Lots of them to the point where I knew my place. I knew my place. It really didn't become a problem until I became more educated but as a younger child the discrimination part that stands in my mind was that the kids, as I talked about in

school, and as kids we addressed it the wrong way but we addressed it. But it really didn't affect me until I went to Louis L. Redding and got educated and saw what the other world and the other side, that's when the militant part of me started coming out.

Roberta: Do you have any experiences or a experience that you care to share with us or if not we can move on.

Lena: No, I'll share a couple. Newark had a movie theater and they were not going to allow Blacks in there so I was one of the ones that joined in with a group that said yes, we are and we paid our money and I went in there and before that again we go back to what they term now "strategic planning." We met and we rehearsed and rehearsed what we were going to do if this happened, what we were going to do if that happened, how were we supposed to sit there and take it. And it worked because I have been spit on. When they did allow us to kind of go in we was allowed to sit in one little tiny area they might have filled that little space in there. That was for Blacks. So we went in and we sat down in different places, not together downstairs in the theater and I could feel something wet and to this day I can feel this and when I looked, someone had spit and I went through that. Then the Newark, it's called the Five and Dime, the other experience was at the Five and Dime. They refused to hire Blacks. We could go in there and we could buy. The National Five and Ten. In fact it's still there but they wouldn't hire us and I was the first Black that got hired because they had to. The Affirmative Action was in place then. So what they did, they put me all the way in the back to the shoe department that was not very popular and again this is training that helped me get through Brookmont Farms, because I turned it into – as my grandmother used to say, if they give you a lemon, you make lemonade.

Roberta: Do you remember the year?

Lena: Wayne was born so it had to be '60. In the early '60's. So I worked on it, re-designed it, cleaned it up, scrubbed it down, cleaned it up and again, being innovative, how to set things up looking at pictures in magazines on how they

were set up and when I left there my department was one of the one producing the most.

Roberta: With those experiences that you had and then the things that you created as an adult, what was it about those experiences that made it important to you or important for you to create some of the projects that you did as an adult? Am I making myself clear?

Lena: Yes. The lesson I learned was that never say “I can’t” until you try it. And if you try it and it doesn’t work, talk with someone else because that was one of the things that stands in my mind of going back and looking at the parents from – they always would get together and talk. When one would come up with an idea, another would. Well that doesn’t work, so if there is something that you think you can’t do, try it anyway.

End of Tape 1, side A.
Begin Tape 1, side B.

Lena: On Main Street.

Roberta: It’s gone

Lena: They tore it down. They refused.

Roberta: You’re right the National Five and Dime is still there. Politics, voting, registering. Did you have any problems with that or any stories to go along with that?

Lena: I can tell you stories about that as a kid. This is only from a kids perspective.

Roberta: That’s fine.

Lena: It was the most crookedest mess I have ever seen. Why do I say that? As a child you must remember when adults were talking we were to be seen and not heard. I guarantee what we were hearing was like, as I got older they were discussing on who was going to pay them the most. They got a chance to ride in nice pretty cars and get paid besides. Whoever had the bucks is where they got the vote. Now Mama I'll let you interrupt.

Alice Well it's true. If you had more money that's who got the vote and they knew that and they always came to the school the ones that had the money they always came to the school and they would tell the time that they were going to be there and have everybody come out and that's what they did. It's very true. You rode in the big cars that you never rode in again.

Lena: You sold yourselves for a dollar. That's why I say kids hear and as they get older they start putting things together. They was a bunch of crooks.

Roberta: How long did that go on? Do you remember when it stopped and what caused it to stop?

Alice: Well it really stopped when the school closed down and I don't remember when that was. When you all went to Middletown.

Laura: I think it was 1964.

Alice: Because they didn't have a place then to meet and gather.

Laura: Don Lewis said he remembered they always had ice cream.

Lena: So I wasn't the onliest one that was overhearing it and finally put it together.

Alice: This doesn't concern what we were talking about but that's what bothers me about today. I mean children knew their place. Today children will jump in and they got more mouth than I have. I don't like it at all.

Laura: I agree.

Lena: Cause they don't know their manners. I didn't know at that time my brain was absorbing information but to process what was actually going on and the importance, I wasn't doing that. I wasn't. It wasn't until I became an adult or a person who could think to actually go past and see what the dynamics was. I was able to see from my parents perspective and also the politicians. They were taking advantage of some thing - of 'who was sufferin' who', when you think about it. Uncle Maynard and Mama and them already knew what they were planning on doing after they got the money. I already said it because we already – again they would always meet at my house, or Uncle Maynard's house or Mr. Congo's house. They had already planned on what they was going to do. The politicians, in their minds they were saying, oh we got these dummies here we give them some money and a ride in a car - but who was playing who? Who was playing who?

Roberta: Did people always vote the way...

Alice: No. They never.

Lena: They? What about 'we'?

Alice: No, never because we had sense enough to know who we knew was right and who wasn't. We knew that they were trying to pull it off.

Lena: Right – we gotta good ride.

Alice: No ride again until the next time.

Laura: And you played them.

Lena: That's what I was talking about. Who played who? And now big businesses – it's strategic planning or whatever the term they use now - for negotiating.

Laura: Yes, big businesses pay big money to candidates.

Lena: Yes

Roberta: Lobbying.

Lena: Lobbying.

Laura: Just a bigger word on a bigger scale.

Lena: That's what I say, I learned all my adult things that I had to do to survive in the community I learned back there, listening and knowing they were going to get in that little place where they had those like little curtains or something

Alice: They couldn't go in there.

Lena: On no, that was illegal. Right. They may not do what they wanted to but they gonna get that money and they are going to ride in that car.

Alice: And the man that drank – whatever you not only got the money, the ride in the car, but you also got food and you got any drink that you wanted to drink.

Lena: Ice cream for kids and little trinkets, we had it going on.

Roberta: So it was a little festival?

Alice: That was a big day for everybody. Nobody worked that day.

Lena: Didn't have to. So who played who?

Roberta: This is a poorer picture than what we got before.

Alice: Oh really?

Roberta: It was the same information but not as ...

Alice: Well maybe they didn't know as much. I can keep things pretty well now. Names maybe not, but I can go back and tell you from the time I was 9 years old working, where I worked and all that.

Roberta: Another Robert Grinnage. This is great.

Alice: This has something to do with it too. Talking about working when I was 9 years old I worked on a farm for 50 cents a week. There was chicken houses to be cleaned, eggs. You name it I did everything on that farm for 50 cents a week but I would not milk a cow. I would do anything else but I wouldn't milk a cow. It trained me to go out into the world when I got older and be able to make a little bit of extra. I had my sister, she was the baby, so when I was home I would work and this was 7 days a week that I worked and when I came home on Sunday, I had to go to work on Sunday morning be back home by 8:30 because I went to church. We had to be at church by 9:00 and we had to walk so I would come home with my 50 cents and I would give my little sister the 25 and I would have 25 and that was our church money so it taught me ...

Lena: Banking. We were talking about childhood and some of the things on learning. Out there we had chickens and ducks. Ducks are the nastiest things. The yard - it wasn't cement, it was plain dirt and I tell you, you let Mom or Grandmom or any of them come in and track in some chicken dirt or duck dirt, oh the war was on! So when you came into our yard it was clean.

Alice: Clean as this road.

Lena: That's right. So to go into Brookmont Farms and see trash, to me I refer back to you - take a rake and you clean. You could not go to any of my aunts and uncles and go in their yard and it was dirty. It was dirt like they talk about Africa having dirt – it was dirt.

Roberta: You swept the dirt.

Lena: We swept the dirt. Good training. Kids today – let me tell you about my grandkids. You say, “the trash needs to go out.” Now I haven't bagged it up or anything, “ok Mommum.” You look again, the trash is still here. “But Mommum you didn't bag it up.” “Take the trash bag out, tie it up.”

Roberta: It's a different world.

Alice: We are laughing about it but it's a sad thing because when we are gone off of this earth they are going to be in bad shape. Just like Wilmington right now, the killings and the robberies. It's bad.

Lena: But I guess I had my own generation and I guess we all have to take responsibility for that because I am thinking about my daughter.

Alice: You didn't train them.

Lena: Didn't train them. Once something happened to the hot water. They lived in an apartment. She called home. "Mom, I don't have any hot water I don't know what I am going to do." Well, "is the cold water running?" "Yes." "Do you have a big pot? Put the water in the pot and heat it on the stove."

Alice: She wasn't trained because we had to heat our water.

Lena: Take a bath. There was 8 of us in this house. Now we are talking about 8 kids. The bath water was changed twice. How did that water be clean enough for 8 kids to take a bath and we're talking, just imagine kids, in the country. How did we have that clean water to not get some kind of skin disease? Well Mom and them used that old yellow soap and a capful of bleach. They washed the dishes in the bleach. We had good clean, healthy skin. No one told us how to – you have this term now anti-bacterial soap. It all came from the training. The same way with going back to the school. We had to wash our hands. Every day Miss Ryder would look at your fingernails and scrub them and you had to wash your hands in that oxygen soap and you had to take that bleach and wipe off, there was an old door Uncle Maynard gave us and we had to scrub down that door every day in bleach and that oxygen soap.

Laura: Which door was this?

Lena: There was an old door they used for a table to cut the potatoes and different things on. It had to be bleached every day. I used to hate it. Guess what they do now? You have cutting boards, you have one for the greens and one for the meat.

Roberta: And the latest thing is you can buy this sheet that you put on the cutting board and when you are finished you throw it away.

Lena: No one told us back then this is the reason, this is what you have to do. They figured it out way back before then that if you don't do this you are going to get sick. If you don't scrub your hands – we never knew, on weekends we wore nail polish, what little bit we could wear, not during school days because we had to cook that food and Miss Ryder better not have you with nail polish on your hands and dirty fingernails.

Roberta: We're getting a real picture of her. Let me ask you was there any military involvement in your life and by that, family members or that kind of thing?

Lena: My step-father was in the navy.

Alice: The army. Francis Webster.

Lena: They were in the war. My uncle was in the navy so they were involved.

Roberta: I think you have already kind of stated this but based on your experiences and what you went through, what would you like to say to young people today?

Lena: Never say "I can't." Never say, "I can't do this." Never say, "I can't make a difference." Do not put that in your vocabulary. You can.

Alice: They need to listen sometimes. They don't want to listen.

Lena: You can learn a lot by listening.

Alice: They learned and we were training them and they didn't realize that by telling them you are to be seen and not heard. We kept them in talking distance and we were talking and we were learning them for when they grew up but they didn't realize that.

Lena: One of the keys for effective communication is listening and believe you me we were listening. We had our ears listening to a lot of things.

- Roberta: Mrs. Dyer could you tell me when you attended Iron Hill School?
- Lena:** I want to say '46, I'll say '48, right around that time. It was in the late '40's.
- Roberta: That's when you started?
- Lena:** Yes.
- Roberta: Until?
- Lena:** '50 – '52. Early '50's.
- Roberta: Ok. That's good.
- Lena:** I think I went there like in the 4th grade, 4, 5, 6.
- Roberta: What time did you have to be to school? What were the school hours?
- Lena:** We had to be to school by 8 o'clock. Now we are talking walking from Otts Chapel Road all the way over to Old Baltimore Pike.
- Roberta: How far a walk was that?
- Lena:** It's a good 8 miles. Rain, snow, - sleet we got a break.
- Roberta: You didn't have to come if it was sleeting?
- Lena:** Didn't have to come if it was sleeting but if it snowed, a mild snow and rain we were geared to go.
- Alice:** When it sleeted Miss Ryder would not drive.
- Roberta: Ok, that makes sense. That was going to be my next one, how did you get to school? Miss Ryder was your teacher? What was she like as a teacher?
- Lena:** Let me think from a child's point of view. At that time I thought she was the most bossy, tattletaleingest woman there was in the world and no, there is another word I want to put there. She wanted things her way. Why do I say that?

“Sit up straight.” “Let me see your fingernails.” Oh and one thing and I get my grandchildren on this, every morning and I understand now why as soon as we hit the door and put our coats away we sang this song. “Good morning to you, good morning dear students, Good morning Miss Ryder, good morning to you.” For years why did she do that?

Roberta: I was going to ask you why do you think she did it?

Lena: She did that because she wanted everyone to start, first of all when you are singing you are breathing in and you are letting all that negative stuff that’s out get you into a frame of mind to learn. So she was using psychology on us. When you sing, that’s why I say I learned so much and that was before you did anything. You stood up, you took a deep breath and you sang that song and everybody had to sing it. It was a form of breathing, of singing, blocking out all the negative stuff that has happened and getting your minds set for learning. So it was a form of mental – and the Japanese do it now – form of mental exercise. She was a brilliant lady. We just didn’t appreciate it.

Roberta: So from that point your day was started with the singing so what was your school day like?

Lena: Once we sang she had from 1st grade to 6th grade so she would start with the 6th graders telling us what we had to do. We had to do our lessons and we had a certain time to do that, we had to make sure that we did the dusting and the cleaning and then we started prepping for the lunch. For lunch every family was responsible for bringing something. It could be potatoes, it could be a potato, it could be onions, it could be whatever. The seasoning, but that was our responsibilities. We did our work then we had to do the little cleaning, we were responsible, the 6th grade girls, was responsible for making sure that lunch was prepped, cooked and ready by 12 o’clock ‘cause everybody wanted to eat. The boys were responsible for cleaning up the yard and again that same concept with that yard, that yard, you’d better not come out there and see papers all over the

place. They had to keep that yard all the way from the road all the way to the back to the edge of the woods and that was their job.

Alice: And the wood.

Lena: Oh, I forgot that, they had to make sure the wood was cut to keep – then when we went from the wood to the coal stove so they were responsible for making sure the ashes were out of the coal stove and disposing of them properly and making sure that the coal was in so the girls could keep the coals in there. That was the onliest time that I can remember when there was girls work and guys work. It was only at school.

Roberta: Who collected the wood? How was the wood stockpiled? And the coal, where did the coal come from?

Lena: The coal was donated by my Mom and them because they, Uncle Maynard would go plow a field, Mr. Congo would sell a couple pigs or someone would sell chickens to purchase all these things. Then they would buy them and bring them and put them in a certain area. It used to be behind the school and they would put a piece of I guess you would call it tarp they would call it now, over so that it wouldn't get wet. The boys sometimes would go out and just cut down the trees. The property belonged to Grandmom Smith so they cut the trees down and chopped them up.

Roberta: Once the girls prepared the lunch and the food, how was it served? Was it the responsibility of one or two people to give everybody...

Lena: They stood in line. Visualize the old soup lines out there that you see now. We stood in line and again the girls. They had bowls and again that was another thing, you all bought bowls.

Alice: Everybody brought so many, like you have extra bowls at home and everybody brought bowls. Same size bowls

Roberta: Did the bowls stay there or did they go home?

Lena: They stayed there and everyone got in line.

Roberta: Did they line up by grade or it didn't matter, you just...

Lena: By grade. 1st grade got first and on down. They always got first preference but they knew what the big guys would do.

Roberta: There wouldn't be any food left.

Lena: Then we served them and they would go to their seat and then we would eat. Then it was the 5th grade whose responsibility it was to make sure the dishes were all washed and that the floor was wiped up. So each group, each grade, had a responsibility except the 4th grade. I'm trying to think what the 4th graders responsibility. Bathrooms I think, they each had a bathroom to do. Oh they had some minor thing it was like 3rd, 2nd and 1st they got away with murder.

Laura: Now you said you ate at your desk?

Lena: Yes.

Laura: And the stove was in the back of the school on the right?

Lena: Think of you're coming in the door right? The stove was off to your right.

Laura: And you served back there?

Lena: No. It was kind of like over in the front because there wasn't a barrier to keep someone from being burnt.

Laura: Right.

Lena: Again, safety. Look at the safety feature. The food was being served away from the stove so that being kids you are going to push and shove so it was far enough away that you wouldn't get burnt.

Laura: So you weren't sort of like near the teachers desk or anything?

- Lena:** No. Miss Ryder's desk (I'm visualizing) was way over kind of like in a little corner.
- Roberta: In the left hand corner if you back is to the door?
- Lena:** Yes.
- Roberta: Discipline and rewards. How did that take place if a kid got out of line you know what was the discipline?
- Lena:** Corporal punishment.
- Alice:** Jail time next.
- Lena:** Corporal punishment. Again the message would get home before you could get home. Corporal punishment again. I can only talk about the stories that I used to get in trouble for. I guess we girls were just a bunch of – just my group which was Evelyn Smoot, me, Evelyn Earl, she was a softie and Elsie was a softie, Topsy which was younger, Irene which was Evelyn's cousin. Seven of us. We were some pretty rough girls. No, we weren't rough, we were opinionated.
- Roberta: You were already liberated women.
- Laura: Irene you said was Evelyn's cousin? Do you remember Irene's last name?
- Lena:** Grey.
- Laura: She was a Grey? How about Topsy?
- Lena:** Earl. Virginia Earl. She's deceased, Irene is deceased, oh my. But anyway, getting back to the story of corporal punishment. The boys were supposed to – and we had this one smart-mouthed boy. Earl Bullock. He's a sweetheart now. He used to give us a hard time, so, and he was big, I mean he was a big guy. So we said all right you want to be smart, and we know your clothes were hard to come by so we decided we were going to fix him. We're going to make him get a beatin' when he got home. We took his coat, Evelyn Smoot stole the coat. She

was a big girl and put it up underneath her blouse and she got it and we all met after fixing lunch, in the girls bathroom and there was this little recess time so we lied and told Miss Ryder cause it was right around Valentine's Day. I said we didn't finish our little...we used to take roll things and make little wreaths, we didn't finish this so we went - could we please stay in and she had to go out there cause she always went out on the grounds and it was winter but you were able to go out but we stayed in there and we took that coat and went in to the boys bathroom. There was this little thing where I guess the men cleaned it out and threw it down the toilet, the sewer. He couldn't find his coat and poor Ev, bless her heart (she laughs about this now) she was with us but you could intimidate her and she started crying and when she started crying, again Miss Ryder, she was a neat person. She knew, she could really detect if somebody's crying just because she's was never saying what is going to happen or what's going to happen to this child, if you started crying, that was the key and she clued in on Ev and Ev spilt the bean on us. Miss Ryder let the class out early that day. She tore me up. She said, "I know you're the ring leader Lena." When I got home Mom knew it. I guess that's why I keep my hair short now, Mom would grab that plait. I got another beating. He was always doing something that irritated us cause he was a bully at the time and he is the sweetest person now I mean he is so weak and humble now. But he was a bully. So corporal punishment – you didn't even ask.

Alice: You didn't back off of it because you got it anyway.

Laura: Now is Carl still around here?

Lena: Yes. He lives off Old Baltimore Pike, in fact Elsie married Carl. Carl and Elsie Bullock.

Laura: Now is Elsie the one that spilled the beans?

Lena: No, her cousin. We call her Ev her name is Evelyn. Evelyn Wally. She was Evelyn Earl back then. We thought...

Roberta: How do you spell her last name?

Lena: W-a-l-l-y.

Laura: They live right on Old Baltimore Pike?

Lena: Yes, they live right there.

Alice: By the church there.

Lena: What is the name of that church? Its odd. Its not 7th Day Adventist.

Laura: It's on the other side of the road, not the school side? But it's not up to the intersection?

Alice: No. It's where Maynard Earl's property was. Well he sold that little piece to the church before he died and their property is right next to it.

End Tape 1, side B.

Begin Tape 2, Side A.

Roberta: So Miss Ryder would reward you as well as punishment? What were some of the rewards?

Lena: Some of the rewards were just getting recognition from the class. Telling the parents about what was going on and then when we would have our little school dances there was always some type of little gift that she and the parents would get together and give that little special gift to that person. Affirmation. Affirmation is what we got.

Laura: You had school dances? Were they square dances?

Lena: They were all kind of dances. Some square dances, some couldn't dance at all. They were dances. It was whatever.

Laura: Were they on Saturdays or Fridays?

Lena: Mostly Friday nights. Again that would be to help raise money for whatever expenses occurred.

Laura: Do you remember how much they charged to get in.

Lena: A quarter.

Laura: Really.

Lena: A quarter, and again they would have different activities there at the dances. The best dancer, the first to arrive and again that taught me that every child needs, what's the word now – affirmation. You get little gifts and I was able to carry that again like I say when I was developing that community in positive ways.

Roberta: Did they push the tables off to the side? The desks?

Lena: The desks were off to the side. We would have an area for the dancing and again in that same general little area, because they had to have heat there, they would have a table that would have pot luck I guess you would call it because everyone would bring something.

Alice: The older folks were at the area where the stove was at because they were serving.

Lena: Let's bring up the word "chaperones." The men, the adult men, were the ones who stayed outside and made sure no one got outside but there was always someone sneaking out and the men were always partying just as hard cause there was always some kid who would sneak out to see what was going on. The men were mostly outside making sure nobody was out there.

Alice: And nobody came on ...

Lena: And nobody came on the property. Mostly the female parents were inside doing the activities and all. Mostly Uncle Maynard and them, they were outside but they were partying back too. Cause this one was gone and they would come back (whispering) such-and-such they would drink this and

Roberta: Just having fun.

Lena: Just having fun.

Laura: Now I hate to skip back to the corporal punishment but I have to ask and you know what's coming – do you recall an incident when you went in the attic?

Lena: Oh!

Laura: Don Lewis seemed to remember you and the gang being in the attic one day. Could you tell us about that?

Lena: Oh my God! Again it was the same group only this time we had been able to bring others in. Oh my God!

Roberta: She was a born leader.

Lena: Oh my God! First of all I am not going to go into the details of how I encouraged others to go up there.

Laura: I don't know how you got up there. It's hard to get up there.

Lena: Yes, but we got up there. Some of us got stuck up in there. Oh God I had forgotten all about that one.

Laura: Don didn't. Don saw your legs coming down. So you don't even remember why you went up there?

Lena: I can't – to explore. Who knows why we – I can't even remember now. Oh my God I remember Minnie tore me up. My legs had welts on them, all of us got a beatin'. It was unbelievable, not just my crew, I think it was about 10 or 11 of us I had encouraged. Why did we go up there? Why did I want to go up there?

Roberta: What grade were you in? How old were you, do you remember?

Lena: Oh man! I must have been maybe in the 5th, it was before my last year so I'll say 5th grade. By the time I was 6th grade I had...

Alice: You was sneakin'.

Lena: Done more things, I had learned to be more discreet. I'll put it that way.

Roberta: This is wild.

Lena: I think Miss Ryder was so angry because there were so many of us up there and the danger, so she really lost it.

Alice: She lost it that day.

Lena: Mom please tell me, and I'm 65 years old, how did Miss Ryder get the message to you all so fast?

Alice: Well there was always ways. One person could call one person. One parent

Lena: Well there was only 3 phones in the whole community!

Alice: Well whichever one it was that got the message, told the next one then the next one and the next one would tell somebody else. We would walk to tell.

Lena: The telephone, what is it they have now, the telephone connecting where like the seniors do?

Roberta: Network? Phone tree?

Lena: The phone tree. You all started the phone tree. You know what, Ev Smoot never worked a day in her life. For some reason, whenever we got a beatin' Ev got a beatin' so Ev was the one, huh? All these years...

Laura: There wasn't a phone at school right?

Lena: No.

Laura: She had to tell somebody.

Lena: There were a lot of other houses in the community that were Caucasian that had a phone. They had all the conveniences. She might have gone to a neighbor. She had to have. Mom knows there is no way you can send smoke messages.

Alice: Who ever got that phone call would get a hold of the next one and the next one and then we would walk. Some way or another we would let the other person know and then they would let the next person. It was like smoke signals I guess you would call it.

Lena: She would have had to go to a neighbor and like I said there were always houses.

Roberta: And they weren't that far from the school.

Laura: That's amazing because now a days somebody gets in trouble in school and its a week before it gets home.

Lena: When I walked in that door ...

Laura: You got your second beating.

Alice: There was no ifs – ands – you got that 2nd beatin, when that teacher beat you, you were getting another one at home so you just might as well be prepared.

Lena: I don't know what it was about the 5th grade. 5th grade was the worst year in my whole entire life because I was always in punishment or beat.

Laura: I think it's a hormone thing because I used to substitute teach and when the kids would hit 5th grade their good sense was gone. It was like something happens.

Lena: I remember that year, 5th grade. It was awful. I was always under punishment.

Laura: When she would beat people was it a belt, or a switch, do you remember?

Lena: I would say a combination of both.

Laura: Whatever was closest?

Lena: Closest. She could grab.

Alice: It was mostly a belt and a ruler.

Lena: She never used a ruler. It was a switch.

Laura: Don remembered a yardstick.

Lena: She used that mostly on the boys, on the guys. Belts and switches for me. Oh my goodness!

Roberta: Mrs. Prestbury what role did the parents play in the school? Where there individual parents involved themselves individually? Were there committees? Were there boards or trustees?

Alice: There were no trustees or boards, we just come together as a family because see Miss Ryder was family. So we all came together as a family. The Congos and all. Everybody was related so when something that needed to be done we just come together like a committee. We would talk it over and whichever was the best idea then that's the one we would go with. The parents really never went to school to check on the children because they didn't have to because they knew they were going to get the message.

Lena: Speaking of coming together I think for me the one really significant thing that stands out in my mind was that I was always in amazement. Think of the background of my Mom and my uncles and my aunts and how they basically fought the state to be able to get us transportation from Iron Hill to Middletown.

Alice: And that was a battle.

Lena: I mean they literally told Mom and them, and I'll let her go into what really happened in that meeting, that because we didn't have a good track record of going to school we would maybe go one year but then the girls got pregnant and the boys quit. Which was true but when you go back and see what obstacles they went through to get to school, they weren't looking at that. They told them they

weren't investing money and I'm using words now that I am sure they were using other words. They were not going to invest money to get us a public school bus. Then again Mom and them got together and these are the parts from a child's perspective listening to people talk after the meeting when they came home, frustrated and how Mr. Rudy volunteered and he was the man who lived on Pleasant Valley Road if we could get him gas and a vehicle then he would see that we get to Middletown. I remember Mr. Congo selling 3 cows, Uncle Maynard worked extra at the railroad plus he sold some vegetables. Grandmom Webster and them went and sold chickens and ducks and you worked an extra day. They did this over and over to buy a little minivan was what we called 'em. It was a little mini bus that nobody else wanted.

Alice: It was one that nobody else wanted. I was so happy to give Rudy, Mr. Valentine, credit because he knew how to work on cars and things so we were in good shape there and he didn't charge us for parts if they broke down. That was his contribution.

Lena: So it was a community thing. So we did this the first year and all of us except - who dropped out first? It was Carl. Carl dropped out first, he stopped because he had to go help, his dad got sick.

Roberta: This is Carl Bullock?

Lena: But then again the bus was full. It was full of kids so the first year and the girl Elsie, she dropped out because she did get pregnant, she got pregnant and Carl dropped out. The second year we still had a big bus load. Melvin stopped, Howard stopped, Howard Earl. I'm going to start over, Melvin Earl, Howard Earl dropped out of school and Evelyn Smoot dropped out. She just got tired of the hassle.

Laura: It was a long commute.

Lena: Yes, so she dropped out. By the third year they couldn't, the state, I'll put it like this, the state couldn't come up with that whole idea because there was still 16 of

us that was on that bus going back and forth to school so then they gave Mom and them money to get a bigger bus and in the middle of that year I remember Uncle Maynard, in fact Uncle Maynard and Mr. Congo were so happy and Grandma Webster were crying where they actually said that they were going to pay, the state was going to take over and pay to have Mr. Rudy drive us. After I graduated the school was there for 2 years so that would include the 5th graders and the 4th graders so the bus was basically full. It was a big bus and it was basically full.

Roberta: Was that the 16 students or was it more than 16?

Lena: It was more than 16, cause they went back and said, we still got the 16 originals because there was like 4 of us that didn't make it and then we had that plus the other two grades that graduated cause they closed the school down. That's what it was and they didn't know what to do with them.

Laura: Closed Iron Hill?

Lena: Yes. Middletown was going to take them if they could get down there. So the state decided they were going to buy a bigger bus and 6 months later they agreed to pay for the bus and everything.

Roberta: Can you elaborate on that meeting Mrs. Prestbury? Was this the meeting with the state board when you were trying to get the bus and pay for the bus because your daughter said that you...

Alice: It was our representative, I guess they call them now for the state that came to us and his words was, and I'll never forget them, I won't repeat the words that was said but the words, in other words – Iron Hill had a bad reputation of girls getting pregnant and boys dropping out and girls and they weren't going to spend their good earned money for that trash. That was the meaning of it. They didn't say it but that's what it was and we said that night, oh well, that night we – when it was over with we were too upset to do anything everybody went to their own home. The next day or a couple days later we got back together and we said we are not going to let them do that. This is not what we are going to let them do so that's

when we came up with a plan whoever had what was going to do it and share that money and get the bus.

Roberta: Now this meeting was held at the school?

Alice: Yes.

Laura: That's just amazing.

Roberta: It's courageous.

Laura: That you guys didn't give up and how pompous they were.

Alice: But we really couldn't give up. It was to the place where – and I was, I'm not saying that I was head of it or anything, but I've always been a person like I said I worked for 50 cents a week so you know I had to be a fighter to get down to trying to make hundreds of dollars. I would never, and I think that's where my daughter gets it from, never say never because I am going to do it and don't tell me I can't do it because I will kill myself trying. The only thing they did to me was turn me off. I was very bitter but I went home and even though I wasn't in the church all the time really like I am now, I was always a believer that if you took it to God he'd answer your prayer sooner or later. So when we got over our little sadness we got together and we were determined we were going to get those children to school.

Lena: Like I say I remember Uncle Maynard, I still can't remember Don's uncle, he lived in, remember he lived by himself, Don's dad, what is his uncle's who lived in that little house by himself, but him and oh my goodness there was just a lot of them.

Alice: Well there was Jim Lewis, there was Ernest was it Don's dad? I can not even think of what their names are.

Lena: Well Don's dad ...

Alice: You said you talked to Don right?

Roberta: Don Lewis.

Lena: It's his father. His father was one of the ones. There was uncle, Jim and his other uncle, elderly uncle who lived down, Mom what was all that property? I can't remember him. Mr. Money! Mr. Money, he was one of them. Mr. Howard Congo.

Roberta: What was his first name?

Lena: Howard. Howard Congo.

Laura: Do you remember Mr. Money's first name?

Lena: James.

Laura: Now did they live down on Pleasant Valley Road next to Route 40?

Lena: And they had a son named Jimmy.

Alice: Now the house is I think ...

Lena: The nursing home took it over when they had to go in.

Alice: No, it's the historical...what is that group that comes around?

Roberta: National Register of Historical Places.

Alice: I think they are the ones that have that place now, or they did have.

Laura: Is that house still there?

Alice: Yes.

Laura: Is it on Pleasant Valley Road?

Alice: Yes. It's a wooden –

Laura: Is it on the right?

Alice: On the right.

Laura: Wow, because we are trying to save that house right now.

Alice: Well that's it!

Laura: Actually they took off the outside and it's a log cabin. It's old.

Alice: Is it a log cabin?

Laura: The woman that owns it is trying to get it torn down because she wants to sell the property but nobody can build on the property because it is too small so somebody in our group is trying to get his inheritance and buy that house.

Alice: Well I hope you do

Laura: So that was owned by the Moneys?

Lena: Yes. James Money.

Roberta: So did they build that house?

Lena: Again I don't know how that goes.

Laura: The story I heard was that Irish immigrants built it originally. We don't know it that's true.

Alice: I know Money didn't build it. James Money, I know he didn't.

Lena: I don't know how he acquired it.

Laura: He was one of the ones that was pushing to get the bus? Now Mr. Rudy, did he live on that road too?

Alice: He lives, you know where their house is, on back this way, well you know where. Where did you see the Lewis boy at?

Laura: He came to the Museum.

Alice: Well then you don't know where he lived at.

Laura: No. I have his address but I haven't gone out and seen it.

Lena: Well if you go, let's see I'm trying to think if I give you some approximate landmarks.

Roberta: He was saying that it was near that new place that was his grandfathers property, Rainbow something-or-other.

Lena: Oh, Rainbow, dog houses. See there are 2 dog kennels there.

Alice: That's it. That's where they lived.

Laura: Wow! That's amazing.

Alice: It was like a straight line from there straight up to Iron Hill.

Lena: Oh you know what? Mr. Tom Congo was in on that deal. Because I remember he took Grandmom, Dave and Grandpop Webster and he lived in Maryland but because he was Mr. Howard's brother he was very supportive.

Alice: And he was into politics too.

Lena: He was the politician advisor. Mr. Howard Congo and Tom Congo got the political savvy from the DuPonts cause they worked there as a butler so they were able again, listening, listening, copying what you are hearing, so they came back with all the information they were learning and fed into the group. Everyone had something to bring back

Laura: Wow, so they worked for the DuPonts.

Lena: Yes.

Laura: You don't know which DuPont?

Lena: You'd have to ask Sammy Congo. Sammy Bell rather.

Laura: He's the Funeral Director?

Lena: He can really fill you in on, really fill you in on the dynamics of that area.

Laura: Wow, this is going to take us a year.

Roberta: I might as well pitch my tent, bring my sleeping bag and stay at the school. This is great!

Alice: Reverend Congo, what's his name?

Lena: Oh! Herman was one of the ones.

Alice: That's one of the trouble makers.

Lena: Now it's coming back.

Alice: I knew I was thinking of somebody else.

Lena: Herman and Mary Louise. Herman did something to his sister and we were going to bomb him good. That's why we went up in the attic! There was this little place where you could stand – you could throw stones and stuff.

Laura: Down from the attic?

Lena: Yes. And everybody wanted to see it but they had to go see us when we do it. Oh my God!

Alice: He was good. They were the trouble makers. You need to go talk to him.

Lena: He was one of the ones that took the cows and the pigs to wherever they went to sell them which I think was down around Middletown, Dover area but they can- you definitely need to talk to Herman Congo because he was one of the original ones that stuck there with us.

Laura: He was a parent? No he was a kid.

Lena: No he was a kid.

Laura: He's still around?

Lena: Yes. Mom have you got his number?

Roberta: Is he in Wilmington?

Alice: Yes, he lives in Wilmington.

Roberta: He might be in the phone book?

Alice: Oh yes. Its is. Reverend Herman.

Lena: Oh my God, Mary Louise, yes. She's deceased.

Laura: Mary Louise was his sister?

Lena: Yes. She was one of my buddies. She was my lieutenant as we say it is. When I would come up with the idea and she would back me up.

Alice: St. Thomas' Church is where he is pastor.

Laura: St. Thomas down in Newark?

Alice: Yes on Frenchtown Road.

Lena: He can really give you the dynamics of what his dad was doing selling to provide for the school and for the community. He was one of the older generation of my group because the other ones were gone. The real older ones had left, somewhere out West, they had left home completely. But he was one of the ones there to help sell the pigs. He can give you all the parts from where his dad, because he was involved.

Laura: Congos were around forever.

- Lena:** So he could give you more parts of it.
- Alice:** He could give you more than the funeral director. I hope we have helped you.
- Roberta:** Just what you all have told us about the trouble that, you know, this core of students. I mean that's a skit right there. That is a skit in itself. It really is. We have a bunch more questions. We're going to play this by ear? How are you for time?
- Laura:** How long will you put up with us?
- Roberta:** I've got until 2 o'clock.
- Lena:** I'm a diabetic so I am going to have to stop soon and eat so could we reschedule?
- Roberta:** Let me ask you one more question. Superintendent, inspector, do you remember an inspector coming to the school? A superintendent?
- Alice:** I don't.
- Lena:** I can think of one incident. Came when we beat the snot out of these kids. It was such a ruckus. It was just Spring. We kind of raided them because we could just bash them with snowballs in the wintertime but in the Spring they were outside and they really taunted us.
- Laura:** The kids?
- Lena:** The kids. We were just mad enough to go over into the school yard which would involve trespassing.
- Laura:** This was the kids up at the white school?
- Lena:** Yes. So we went and we bashed 'em. We beat the tar off of 'em so of course the state sent their people down but that's the only time I can remember someone from the state coming.
- Laura:** Did they just come and give you a lecture?

Lena: They were trying to find out what was – not a lecture, who was. It was stupid we were not going to tell on each other.

Laura: Nobody asked what they were doing to you?

Alice: No.

Lena: So you know we told them but I'm sure they didn't write it down but they were trying to find out who the culprit was. It was stupid.

Roberta: That was as far as it went? Nobody was punished or anything?

Lena: No, because there was a code of honor. Code of silence. And to this day I don't take it.

Roberta: Ladies this has been wonderful.

Lena: I have enjoyed reliving this.

Roberta: You have no idea. We'll be back.

Roberta: Thank you very much.

Lena: Oh listen, it was my pleasure.

Alice: I'm glad because I am very interested.