

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESEARCH CENTER

The University of North Carolina at Asheville

Interview with Lucy Herring, August 2, 1977

Second Session, Tape I Asheville, North Carolina

Interviewed by Dr. Louis D. Silveri

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Interview with Lucy Herring Asheville, North Carolina August 2, 1977
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Side 1₁

Dr. Silveri: I'm not sure I got the names down. Do you go by your maiden name or your married name?

Lucy Herring: I go by my married name.

Dr. Silveri: Ok, then I forgot to get on the first tape the family name, I think.

Lucy Herring: Well, the family name is S-a-u-n-d-e-r-s. Saunders.

Dr. Silveri: Saunders.

Lucy Herring: Lucy Saunders Herring.

Dr. Silveri: S-a-u-n-d-e-r-s?

Lucy Herring: Right.

Silveri: Ok. Let's go back now to 1935. You spent ten years in Harnett County.

Herring: Yes.

Silveri: Since I talked to you last, I looked on the map where Harnett is.

Herring: Yes.

Silveri: The county seat is Erwin, was Erwin?

Herring: No, the county seat is Lillington.

Silveri: Lillington, right in the middle sort of.

Herring: Right.

Silveri: That was very rural.

Herring: Predominantly, well all rural practically. Tenant farmers.

Silveri: Tenant farmers?

Herring: Yes. Many tenant farmers. Very few of the black... farmers, owned their--

Silveri: All right.

Herring: Property. And that's the thing that made it difficult for the schools, you know, the attendance was affected by the work that the children had to do on the farms.

Silveri: Now you spent ten years there. In 1935 you decided to come back to Asheville, why?

Herring: Well, I--after ten years there, I wanted--I told--when I left Asheville, I left with the understanding that I'd come back and the doors would be open, if I wanted to come back. As you recall, I told you that I didn't want to go, but the superintendent gave the principal and the State Supervisor permission for me to leave on a trial basis, with the understanding that if I liked the work I would stay there and work. If I didn't, I could come back and get my same position. Well, I worked the remainder of a year, you see, it was midterm when I left; I worked the remainder of that school year in Harnett County, and the fact that they had forty schools, about ninety some

Lucy Herring: (continued) odd teachers, and only twelve of those teachers had college, you see what I fell into. I think I mentioned the fact, or if I didn't I'm mentioning it now: my first task was to get the teachers together. My most difficult task was that of working with the school committeemen.

As I explained to you they were all black. There were three committeemen in each school. They had been in charge; they recommended the teachers. They did not have a white supervisor. The superintendent had everything to do in the white schools, the supervision, and the general charge of all the schools. He had no time to devote to black schools, and he was really overworked trying to take care of the white schools. Many of the white citizens were also farmers, and many of them were very poor farmers. Harnett County was a very poor county, and at that time, we did not have a State salary schedule. The State was not paying the salaries. The counties paid the salaries of the teachers at that time. Because of that, black people suffered in many of the county school systems throughout the South. Of course, at that time, they had State certificates, then they had substandard certificates. There were temporary certificates; there were even second-grade certificates. In Fayetteville which is in Cumberland County, a much more prosperous county than Harnett, the superintendent there reportedly hired mostly black substandard teachers in order to avoid paying big salaries, but the white teachers were paid a different salary. And they would take white teachers with State certificates, but they took very few black teachers with State certificates because they didn't want to pay them that salary.

I have in my files a report from Dr. Newbold's office; he was director of the Division of Negro Education. He worked very closely with the supervisors, and I explained to you that we were "Jeanes Supervisors". In this report, I might as well say these reports because I have several, it was not uncommon to find one-teacher schools with enrollments of fifty or sixty, in some cases, one hundred, but you see they came--the attendance was poor. They were crowded; yet, they were not there full time. Very few of them attended full time, in fact during the planting season and the season when they were gathering crops, I think I mentioned to you before that the large children would drop out--I mean they would come into the schools after the cotton crops were harvested around the first of December. They dropped out to do the plowing to prepare for the spring crops around the first of April. So you see just sometime in December, January, and February; in fact, many of them dropped out in March.

Well, I stayed there, and we put on--the black teachers and I put on an intensive drive to lift the level of training of those teachers. I had a difficult time convincing some of the school committeemen that I was there

Lucy Herring: (continued) to help. I shall never forget the first county-wide meeting with the school committeemen. We had approximately a hundred of them there, and after (I might be repeating something I said before, but it's important) I had had the opening session, and we had the opening session, I'm sorry, I started talking to the school committeemen; that was on a Saturday morning. One of the first things that I was asked was this: a very hefty school committeeman got up in the room and said, "I understand that you are here to take our jobs! We have been hiring teachers, and I understand it is your job now to hire teachers!" Well, I knew that they weren't ever able to hire teachers; they would recommend them, and I knew I didn't have anything to do with hiring teachers. I could only recommend them. But I told him this; I said, "No, I'm not here to take anyone's job! I'm trying to help those who are doing jobs here, to do them better if I can and where I can!" Of course I satisfied them. I convinced them that I wanted to work with them. I said, "If you find a good teacher or if you need a teacher for your school, if you can't find one, then you and I together can get busy and we can find a teacher!" So that worked out all right. So we raised the standards there in the county.

Silveri: Ok, then before we come to talk about your coming back to Asheville, over a period of ten years then in Harnett County while you were there, did you see a great deal of improvement in education in the black schools?

Herring: That last eight months, we raised the standards, remember? There was a slogan--there was a saying in Raleigh at the Education Department when teachers would apply for work or go there and try to make contacts for work, they would say, "Go to Harnett County!" See Harnett County was not very far away, and at that time over the years they had taken anybody regardless of their training! The superintendent was a fine person, but he did not have the time to devote to black schools. He really had a tremendous task of trying to take care of the white schools. But as I mentioned before, I recall quite definitely on the other tape I said some of the teachers held substandard certificates. He said, "Replace them!"

Some of the counties like Cumberland County will not pay for state teachers, and therefore, the teachers are not encouraged to raise their certificates or to raise their educational standards. "But with every substandard teacher we have, if you can find somebody to replace her, ^{sic} who has a State certificate, I'll hire her or him!" I said, "I'm not concerned with trying to replace people so much as I am to lift people and to improve the teachers. Some of them, although they don't have degrees, they are doing a good job, and I know it." So the point is this, we got some teachers to go back to school, the young ones who had just finished the high school which was the ninth grade, and the standards were not very high. We got them to go back to school; some went to Fayetteville College, and they did work that was

Lucy Herring: (continued) really below the high school level. Many went back and went through in-service training. We had extension courses; Fayetteville Teachers College is not very far from Harnett County, and the State had extension work conducted at that time, and so instructors from the college would come. On Saturday mornings and sometimes during the week in the evenings, we would have these extension courses, and the teachers would get credit for that. That credit counted toward certificate renewal and to raise the certificates from one level to the other. In that way when we left Harnett County, not only had the teachers raised the point in their training and their background, but they had college training, ~~some~~ got their degrees, some got the equivalent of the degree through in-service work and summer school, and we also were successful in raising money to build quite a number of Rosenwald Schools.

Now coming back to Asheville, while I wasn't in Asheville, while I was in Harnett County, as I said before, I had no transportation. I had no car; very few people then had cars. I met a young man who was a farm demonstration agent, from a very fine family. He was traveling through the same areas of the county; he would hold meetings in the communities and talk to the people about improving the land, and about rotation crops instead of planting just all cotton crops and to produce other crops, and he worked with them. He would go out on the farm and work with them. Then he would have meetings at night; so we formed an agreement that I would go with him and have joint meetings. While he would talk some times about improving home conditions and improving the crops, then I would talk about improving education, and then we got excellent cooperation from the parents. It was just a wonderful experience; it was just the fact to see how hungry they were for help not only with their farms, but with the education of their children.

In 1935, I decided--I had married--let me go back; I must back up a minute. This same young man--I can tell you how it started. There wasn't this courtship type of thing; I had never been very much interested in boys all throughout my life, but people can grow on you, you know. And so one Sunday, I was attending a church service; very often I spoke to people in the churches on Sunday. That was the way I reached many of them, and after the service was over, this young man said to me, "I'll take you home!" I said, "Very well." So I had come out with one of the school committeemen, and so when I went around to the side of the church, he had a nice, shiny Chevrolet! I said, "Oh my, what a beautiful car!" He said, "Well, that's a surprise!" So we rode on; so that Sunday he took me back to my place where I was boarding, he said, "Do you like my car?" I said, "Yes!" He said, "I'll give it to you if you want it!" I said, "I know you're joking! You could never make me believe that!"

Lucy Herring: (continued) He said, "I've never been more sincere in my life! I will give it to you on one condition!" I said, "What is that condition?" He said, "I will give it to you, if you will take the car and the Owner!" So that was a proposal! I said, "Well, I don't think I could handle the Owner, but I think I could handle the car!" He said, "You think about it!"

Well, I did think about it, and at that point in life, I thought it was time I fell in love with somebody, and I did. Eventually he made a trip to Asheville to ask my mother and my father if they would give their consent, and they were quite pleased with him. We were married at Christmas time; I don't ask me the year. I don't recall it, but I recall the affair with very pleasant memories. We were married in the home of my sister and brother-in-law, Dr. Joseph and Mrs. Robinson in Hamlet, North Carolina. So I lived there in Harnett County, and later a son was born. By the way, my husband's name was A-s-a; that's a Biblical name, Asa. Ok, Asa Herring. We named our son Asa Herring, Jr.

I mentioned in the last interview with you that after seven years, my marital sky fell, but it wasn't the end of the world. It was quite an ordeal, but I decided that I wanted to bring--to take my young son back to Asheville where he could be under the influence of a good man. I didn't want to bring him up without a father image. Although the sky fell, we were friendly throughout to the end of his life, which I can tell you about later. But we came back to Asheville, and we stopped and stayed with my second oldest sister, Mrs. Nettie Candler; her husband was a shoemaker, and he had a barbershop. He was a very good man, a church man, a family man. I don't know that I could have found a better person. He had two girls; one was near the age of my son, and so we just fitted in as a family. He was a very unusual person. He had done hotel work here in the city before he went to the war, and before he finished his training in shoemaking. So having been a hotel man, he liked to prepare food. He prepared food every morning for the whole family. And my son stayed here, and he finished the high school as I told you.

The thing that I recall now, I was teaching the high school when I first came back, and the thing that happened I had to teach English classes to about two hundred students. The superintendent said--I think I mentioned this before, the high school teachers who had been trained specifically for high school work did not understand what to expect from students who were coming in from the public schools, public elementary schools, and therefore the transition was not very smooth, and they had so many failures in the white schools and in the black schools because of this transition that was a very difficult thing. And so he said, "I would like to have a good Negro teacher and a good white teacher to take the English classes in the high schools, and teach the freshman

Lucy Herring: (continued) students and help them to bridge the gap between the two levels, educational levels. And at that time I had my son in an English class, very amusing at times. He said to me one day after we had an examination, and we were reading the scores. He said to me after school one afternoon, "Mama?" I said, "Yes, what is it dear?" He said, "You know when the other children make mistakes in class, their mothers don't know it. But when I make mistakes, you are there, and you see and know the mistakes I'm making! Do you know how that makes me feel?" I said, "Well, there is an advantage in that, and there is a disadvantage because the other children don't tell their parents that they didn't do well, but there is this advantage: I see where you make your mistakes and I can help you!" He said, "Well, I guess that's right, but it's pretty rough!"

Silveri: When you came back in 1935, what did--did you secure a job right away?

Herring: I had the promise when I left Harnett County, I'm sorry, when I left Asheville, if I would take this job in Harnett County, if I didn't like it, the doors would always be open. I could come back and get my job. All right, when I decided that I wanted to stay, I accepted the challenge to work in this rural area. It was like missionary work. I wrote Professor John H. Michael, who was my principal at the time who released me to come there. Well, I wrote him and told him that I had decided I wanted to come back here, and I said, "You said that if anything special bogged me down or something like that--" So he wrote me and told me that he did not have a vacancy at that time, but he said, "I'm sure I can get the high school principal to take you temporarily until I have an opening." Mr. Newbold, who was Director of the Division of Negro Education, wrote a letter of recommendation to the high school principal, Mr. Albert Manley. Mr. Gentry, who was the superintendent in Harnett County, released me, and he wrote an excellent recommendation to the principal and the superintendent here. So the high school principal took me there in the high school on the high school staff.

Silveri: What was the name of the high school?

Herring: Stephens-Lee High School.

Silveri: Where is that located?

Herring: It's located on Catholic Avenue, just to the left when you go down Valley Street if you're going down from David Millard School on College Street. So that was the thing--I did quite a bit of experimenting while I was at-- I've always been a person who is willing to experiment. I guess the thing that comes to my mind, and when things come I have to say them. When I think of the things I have gone into, I think of this: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Well, I would just go in: "Why don't you take this adventure?" I will go into something; I will think about it seriously. I will plan carefully; I will pray carefully about it, and then if I'm determined I'm going to do that thing, I don't walk around the edges. I do a nose dive

Lucy Herring: (continued) into it. Then I don't have any choice, I have to fight like fury to get out of it. So that's what I'm doing with this thing, and I hope I'll survive. I have survived in the other ordeals. But coming back to this matter, I took the freshmen students as I said; I had over two hundred. They came from the public schools in the city; they came from the county schools. They came from the Catholic schools; I met them all there on common ground, and we did what the principal and the superintendent considered a good job.

Then the principal one day had a meeting; he said, "We're overcrowded, our classes are, and we need someone to do some classes in algebra." This meeting was with the--I didn't mention to you that on the third floor there were elementary classes. So he was meeting with the elementary people, but in this meeting, he said, "I'd like to get somebody to volunteer to teach two algebra classes." Well, no one volunteered; so that next morning, Mr. Manley called me from the office, and said, "Mrs. Herring, I've had a teacher to volunteer to do the classes in algebra, but I would like for you to take the classes in algebra." I said, "Well, Mr. Manley, I haven't ever taught algebra; I did well in Math when I was in school, but I would have to brush-up on my algebra. If you just can't get anyone to take the classes, take me as a last resort, but try to find someone else on the high school level who has been teaching Math." He said, "I've tried that, and I can't find anybody else, and I'm asking you if you'll take it." Well, I consented, and I took the two Math classes; then I took social studies for the sixth grade as a strange combination.

Then Mr. Manley was principal of the Mountain Street School; he was supervising principal. He was principal of Stephens-Lee High School, and he was supervising principal of the Mountain Street School which meant that they had a building principal there who had a full-time job of teaching third grade. So you know there wasn't very much supervision there, but they had to do testing; so he asked me since my field was elementary education if I would do the testing for him. Well, I did; I did the testing in the school. The State had a testing program then: every year, every spring they would do testing, and the results were sent to the State Department, and I did that.

At another time he said to me, "We are having so much trouble with some of our students, I'm wondering if I could let you have a half day off once a week to visit the homes of problem children." Well, I didn't have sense enough to say no; I said, "Well, yes, I'll do it!" Whenever a problem came up that necessitated a conference with the parents, I would go into the homes unless it was something very serious that the principal

Lucy Herring: (continued) had to call them in. I visited the homes and talked to the parents about the students; many a problem was solved in that way, and so I was listed at that time as a visiting teacher although I was doing some other work there at the school.

Silveri: Is Stephens-Lee High School the only black high school in Buncombe County?

Herring: The only black high school in Western North Carolina; it was for a number of years. We had buses; you see that's the thing that makes this matter of busing such a pathetic situation. All the "hue and cry" about children being transported certain distances. I remember when I was in Harnett County, and the black children had the one-teacher schools, and two- and three-teacher schools, and the white kids were being transported from one end of the county to the other. Some of them getting up at six o'clock in the morning, seven o'clock in the morning to catch buses to be transported to big consolidated schools. The Burnsville Case--did you say you had been to Burnsville? About how many miles do you think Burnsville is from Asheville?

Silveri: It's about--from downtown Asheville to Burnsville is probably close to forty miles!

Herring: Well, all right, here's a forty-mile trip! Those children at Burnsville had a one-teacher school that was a very delapidated school; it was condemned, and they asked permission to come to the white schools. No! That was against the law! So, they said, "We'll furnish buses for you." Now the thing that caused Burnsville to be one of the black schools to attract national attention was the fact that a member of the NAACP local snapped a picture of a six-year-old child; you know what time he had to get up to travel forty miles, had traveled, and it was in the winter forty miles in an unheated school bus, and the severe mountain weather here, and you know the curves you encounter going to Burnsville. I went there the first time, and I almost lost my breath going around some of those curves. Now in an unheated bus and all those hazardous curves in icy weather and snow; those little fellows with the older ones were transported here to Asheville High. My classroom was on the eastside, and I could see the buses coming in from Burnsville, from Weaverville, from all around. Now in some of the counties like Canton, and out in that area, they didn't transport them; they paid tuition for them. So some of them stayed here. The school system there paid tuition for them. Then another thing I recall how proudly the white kids would ride through the city going to the private schools on buses, Catholic schools and that type of thing. So riding a bus was a privilege then. Now it's a crime almost, but the point is this, let's leave that controversial thing, and come back down to Stephens-Lee.

Silveri: Well when you came back, it was in the middle of--well it was in the depression. Things were tough in Asheville, weren't they?

Herring: Yes, things were rather rugged, but we tightened our belts and kept going.

Silveri: When did you come to live with your sister and brother-in-law? Where were they living?

Herring: They lived on Congress Street; they lived on 29 Congress Street. That's on the southside.

Silveri: And you stayed here for how long with them?

Herring: Well, I stayed with them--they had--I'm answering your question now. I'm telling you about a situation. They had a very nice home for a sturdy home, and it had a story and a half, and the upstairs was an apartment and was very comfortable. My son and I had the apartment. I don't remember, I can't state specifically now; I'm not thinking--I can't think in any specific time. I stayed there quite a number of years, and I'll tell you what happened.

I finally bought a home because I wanted my son to have a home of his own. I didn't have the money to buy a home so I had a car; it was a Plymouth, and I sold my car. I got three hundred dollars for it. Mr. Haywood Parker, a white lawyer here, had a house at 91 Broad Street. He had sold it to three different people, and each of my race, and each one had lost it. Well, I take that back. Two had lost it, and the third person died. So he said, "If you pay for the home within a year, I'll let you have it for three thousand dollars on your own terms! But if you'll pay for it within a year, I'll give you a hundred dollars!" Well, I don't recall what I paid him by the month now, but before the year was over, I went to the Federal Savings and Loan Association and borrowed the money. I got them to take over and sign up for it; so before the year was over I had paid him, and Asheville Federal had taken over the situation. Which means that Mr. Parker had no bank transactions, he just wrote up the papers, you know, and I made payments to him. But when it was turned over to the bank, I said, "Well, now I paid for it!" He said, "I'll write you a check for your hundred dollars; so I paid for that [home] through Asheville Federal Savings and Loan.

Silveri: Was that before the second World War or after?

Herring: I don't think--right now, I don't even think--when was the second World War?

Silveri: It was 1941--1940 when we got into it.

Herring: When we got into it, 1940. Well, I don't recall that it was '40 when I bought that house. It had to be though; it had to be in the '40's. Yes, you see my thinking's a little foggy. As I talk, I'm talking through my emotions, and that makes the brain a little bit foggy. But it had to be, but this is the thing I want to follow on the situation, I got the house for three thousand dollars. But I spent ever so much money improving it, bit by bit, including puttingⁱⁿ central heating, having plastering knocked off and replaced, bath downstairs, a carport, adding a kitchen. I paid three thousand dollars for it, and I was eventually offered ten thousand dollars for it as the years passed. See, I'm thinking in spans not dates. But I refused it because at that time I didn't want to leave the home;

Lucy Herring: (continued) I had my aunt with me who was in her eighties, and my boy was in school then, in college then.

But eventually I decided that I wanted to sell it, of course I had been nursing my older sister there who was paralyzed, and incidentally, I took her while I was teaching, directing the summer school, reading clinic in North Carolina College. It might seem rather strange, but I took her to Durham to the summer school in an ambulance, and stayed in a guest house and got a practical nurse to take care of her until I could get out of class in the afternoon. I took a wheelchair, a hospital bed, and a hydraulic lift to lift her out of bed.

One summer there I directed the summer school for five weeks at North Carolina College and had my assistant to finish the last week, and I went to Duke University for the National Science Foundations Workshop. I received a stipend for the following six weeks. I came home each afternoon and evening and stayed with my sister, took care of my sister. That was the year I had a heart block, and didn't know what a heart block was [then]. I thought I was tired.

Well, let's come back now to Stephens-Lee again with that program. While I was at Stephens-Lee during that period, Mr. [A. E.] Manley was a very ambitious man. He would go to summer school every summer. When he went there as principal, Professor Lee died; he replaced Professor Lee. When he went there, some of the teachers had not been to summer school in seventeen years, and he started a program of teacher improvement. And from the special fund that they had, I don't recall whether they called it the Athletic Fund or whatever it was, but it came from that type of thing, activities. I think it was called the Activities Fund.

He said this, "If anybody wants to go to summer school, the school will give you fifty dollars!" And I recall that summer, three of the teachers decided to go to Boulder Dam to a summer school workshop. Two decided to go to teach college [at] Columbia University, and they got fifty dollars. So I said to him, "I have a sister and brother in Chicago, and I won't take anything, I'll let that go to somebody who will have to be paying board and that type of thing." I consented to go to the University of Chicago to enter a workshop they wanted to do something about a CORE-curriculum. So I entered the University of Chicago there, I think it was '41; yes, for nine weeks.

When I came back after having been in that workshop on the CORE-curriculum, I initiated a program there to develop innovation, something that the teachers looked upon with suspicion. The superintendent cooperated; he welcomed the experiment. He gave me new equipment, and it

Lucy Herring: (continued) was the kind of thing that you didn't use any basic textbook as such. We didn't give any grades A, B, and C. But there was a specific way of grading. If a student was not working up to his or her ability, and we knew the student could do better, that resulted in a conference with the parents. I had a meeting--the principal called a meeting of the parents of the children who would be involved in the program, and I explained it to them fully. I said, "Now will you trust me? I will guarantee that these children will get as much as they would get if they were in regular classrooms; in fact, they are going to get a much richer program!" They consented, and there was a fee they had to pay.

Well the program was very successful. That first year in the middle of the year in December, Professor Michael died; he was the person who gave my first job in the county and in the city, and he was the one who consented for me to go to Harnett County and do this experiment, I mean work down there. And he told the superintendent before he died, he went to visit him, and he knew he wasn't going to make it. He said, "I had hoped to have a man to take my place." He brought a man to Asheville, a young man; the young man turned out to be a disappointment. So he said, "I haven't been able to select a man, and I would like you to give Lucy Herring my place!" Well, the superintendent sent for me, and he asked-- He told me what had happened, and he said, "Now do you want the principalship of the Hill Street School? It's an opportunity you haven't had before." I said, "Mr. [Roland H.] Latham, you have spent--(that was the superintendent's name) money for the equipment, for materials; there is no one else who could do this experiment, no one else has the training or the background to do it. I wouldn't think of walking off in the middle of an experiment. I couldn't do a thing like that!" He said, "I was hoping that you wouldn't; I will remember you, and you will never regret it!" So I went on and finished the work.

So, I went on and finished the

It was around [1941]; I was at Chicago studying. I don't recall whether it was... [1941], but I came in from Chicago. I drove in, my son and I. I was still staying at my sister's house. If we keep on adding, you will get the number of years. My sister said, "Dr. [L. O.] Miller said that Mr. [R. H.] Latham, the superintendent, wants you to call him the first thing in the morning; he called, and I said you were getting in tonight." We got in just before night, and he said call him first thing in the morning; so I called Mr. Latham, and he asked me if I would come to his office right away. I told him yes; so I was there by nine-thirty.

When I reached the office, I found Mr. Manley, my principal of the high school, and Frank Toliver, who was principal of Morningside School in Statesville, North Carolina. The three men there together: the superintendent, Mr. Manley, and Mr. Toliver. The secretary said, "Go in,

Lucy Herring: (continued) Mrs. Herring, "and I walked in and saw the three men there; I didn't know what was going on, but as you see I wasn't bothered by venturing into a situation, I just went on in and sat down. So Mr. Latham said, "Mrs. Herring, do you know why I sent for you?" I said, "I don't have the slightest idea, Mr. Latham, why you sent for me!" He said, "You don't have the slightest idea?" I said, "No, not the slightest idea!" He said, "How would you like to be principal of Mountain Street School?" I said, "Well, I hadn't thought about it, but it would depend on two things."

Side II,

He said, "What are the things?" I said, "First, if the two schools Stephens-Lee and Mountain Street have been divorced, I would be interested in it." He said, "Well, why would that be important?" I said, "Well, if I'm going to be a principal, I want to be a principal and not a figurehead." Well Miss Mamie Martin had been the building principal; he said, "Do you mean to call Miss Mamie a figurehead?" I said, "I'm not calling Miss Mamie anything; I'm just saying that any person who's teaching a full class everyday, and is in a building, and cannot make decisions, and can not plan her own program without the approval of someone else, is just a figurehead!"

He said, "Well, be that as it may, what's your second proposition to me?" I said, "Well, I would be interested in it if Miss Mamie is not being replaced; I don't want to take anybody's job." He said, "Well, Miss Mamie is not able to teach; she has retired on the basis of physical disability, and she's permanently ill." I said, "Well, under those conditions, I will take it!" He said, "Well, let me ask you another question." And the two men were just sitting there smiling, didn't say a word, neither of them. They were just sitting there. He said, "Are you afraid of anyone at Mountain Street School?" I said, "No! I've been going in and out doing the testing; I didn't see anyone there I had any reason to fear." He said, "Well, there is one teacher there who is very difficult to work with; she has a long record of being difficult, and you don't have to take her. She hasn't been hired. We took her on condition because of something that came up; we don't have to keep her. Well, I guess I might as well be frank and say it was the former principal's sister. He took her here because the sister was not so well. Now, she doesn't have to stay; she isn't permanently hired. She's hoping to get on this year again, but you don't have to take her. She's very difficult!"

I said, "Mr. Latham, I don't want to be responsible for putting anyone out of work, and I will try her. I believe I can work with her; I know her."

Lucy Herring: (continued) What I didn't tell Mr. Latham, I took her prayerfully because I knew more about how difficult she was than Mr. Latham did. Because I lived three doors above her, and she would pass, and my house, my home where my parents lived was almost on the street. You could step off the porch on the sidewalk. She would pass there, and my mother and father and some of us would be sitting on the porch in the little swings they used to have, you know the little porch swings. And she would pass with her head in the air; she wouldn't even say, "Good evening, good afternoon, good morning." She never spoke. And I have been to the home where she lived with her sister because her niece and I were very close friends; we taught together. And I would walk up on the porch, and she would be sitting there. I would ring the bell, and she would be reading a book, and she wouldn't raise her eyes. But I knew that was the way-- well, I started to say the way God made her, but I don't think God made her that way; I think the world or something in her experience made her that way. But I didn't have any animosity towards her because that was the way she was.

Silveri: Well, you accepted that job.

Herring: Yes.

Silveri: Were you the first woman principal of any school in Asheville?

Herring: No, no not at all. No, not at all! There was a principal at Livingston Street School, a woman who was principal at Livingston Street School, the largest elementary school, and there was a woman who was principal of a three-teacher school in West Asheville. The other principals as I recall were men.

Silveri: Well, about how many students were in this school when you took it over as principal?

Herring: There were approximately three hundred fifty when I went there, and there were ten teachers.

Silveri: And those were students from just greater Asheville?

Herring: Only Asheville students, and the grades ran from one to six.

Silveri: I'm going to stop here for a minute and ask you if you can recall what percentage of population of Asheville was black in those years.

Herring: It was about a third.

Silveri: About a third. Was it constantly about a third?

Herring: It's been a constant kind of thing, yes. I took that school. The teachers--I didn't know it at the time, but because I had worked in the school with the testing and had worked with the teachers in that way as a visiting teacher with their problems. Those teachers had made a request to Mr. Manley the supervising principal that he recommend me to Mr. Latham for the job; so they asked for me, and that made it very nice. So we moved along beautifully.

There was one teacher who had been the formal^{ex} principal's bosom friend for years; she had been [a teacher] fifty two years! She was very

Lucy Herring: (continued) disappointed and very nervous about the fact that I was going to be principal because I was young. I shall never forget this experience; she was a lovely soul, and I knew she was uncomfortable. So she called me one afternoon on the yard, and she said, "May I come to your office this afternoon and talk with you?" By the way, they didn't have an office then; they had an office, an office was built for the school, but they had used it for storage because there was no principal to occupy it. But we had that cleared up; and with the faculty, we just made a most attractive office with drapes, and in-laid linoleum, and it was just equipped with Venetian blinds. It just was very beautiful. I told her, "Yes, I'll be glad to talk with you, Mrs. Swann." S

So she came in; she sat down. I can see her now. She said, "Well, Mrs. Herring?" I said, "Yes, Mrs. [Hattie] Swann." "Mr. Latham (that's the superintendent), and Mr. Manley seem to think you are smart; I'll tell you this, you can't move mountains!" Well, it shocked me somewhat. I said, "Well, Mrs. Swann, I disagree with you!" She said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I can move mountains, if you will help me, if you and the other teachers will help me! We can move mountains!" Well, her whole expression changed; she was afraid of me because I was young. She was afraid of me because of my training had been more recent and more advanced, and I put her at ease. I said, "Now listen; I am going to work with the teachers; I'm not here to work over you. I'm here to work with you!" And so she said, "I was hoping you were smart enough to realize that, that you could only succeed by working with us!"

And she said, "There's another thing I am concerned about; you've been doing all that fancy teaching over there at Stephens-Lee. That--what do you call that thing?" I said, "The CORE-curriculum." She said, "Yes. Well, you're not going to start that stuff over here are you?" I said, "Well, I hadn't thought about it; I'm thinking about reading, writing, and arithmetic, and I am concerned about improved methods of teaching. But I'm telling you this, I am not going to interfere with your method of teaching because good teachers use different type methods of teaching." And she said, "Well, yes, that's right!" I said, "I'm going to work with you, and I'm not going to put any pressure on you to change to go into any kind of experiment; I'm going to keep on letting you do the good teaching you have been doing because you are a good teacher." And she was. But we didn't try to force any teacher into any change.

There was a teacher there on the faculty who was a very progressive teacher, and she came to me one day. She said, "Mrs. Herring, will you allow me next year to teach my children (she was a first grade teacher) and not use a basic text?" And I said, "Well, plan your program, and let's go

Lucy Herring: (continued) over it." And she had a very sound program planned, individualized program individualized instruction; she got the program started. I checked with her at intervals, and she explained to me as she went along, step by step. And as I observed, I saw that she was doing what people make so much fuss about now, individualized instruction. Of course, the other teachers looked upon it with a little bit of suspicion just as the folks did at the other school on the CORE-curriculum. So I mentioned the fact that Mrs. Robinson, that was her name, was doing a wonderful job. She was Miss Knuckles then, I believe; yes, she married later. I said, "Miss Knuckles is doing a wonderful job, and I don't mean to say that the others are not doing a good job in the traditional programs."

One day, the teacher-librarian came to me, came to the office; she had been down to the classes, classrooms had the little glass windows and you could see what was going on in the classroom. The teacher-librarian came to the office, and she said, "Mrs. Herring?" I said, "Yes." She was a cunning thing; I just loved her! She said, "Mrs. Herring?" I said, "Yes." [She] says, "Do you know one thing?" I said, "What, darling?" She said, "Willie Knuckles is down there, and she is as mad as a March hare!" I said, "Is that right? You think she's mad?" She said, "Yes!" I said, "Well, if she's mad, I hope she'll bit everybody in this building starting with the principal!" Well, she didn't know what to think of that; she said, "Well, time will prove things!" The teacher did a wonderful job, and the class and the faculty accepted the fact that she had done a good job because the teacher [who] received her children next year said they were doing a much better job particularly in their reading than they did in the other classes that they had had. So--

Silveri: Ok, I would like to follow up this, were you still principal of that school when the Supreme Court handed down its decision in 1954?

Herring: No. Let me hop over now. In 1944 that was my last year at the University of Chicago, I received a letter from Mr. Byers. And he said, "The State Department has put on supervision, and if I can conceive of your leaving your beloved Mountain Street School--" By the way, we gave Asheville-- working with that team, we did move mountains! We gave Asheville the first accredited elementary school, Negro. We had never had an elementary school accredited; so that was the mountain we moved.

So in '44, I got this letter from Mr. [J. W.] Byers, the superintendent, saying Mr. [R. H.] Latham had died. Mr. Byers was the new superintendent who had come in. I am repeating--"If I can conceive of your leaving your beloved Mountain Street School, I would like to offer you the job of supervisor of the Asheville City Schools." Well, incidentally, I had been part-time supervisor with all of these other jobs, with teaching and with the principalship, I had been part-time supervisor in the county from 1935 on up. Just one day out of each month, I would go to the county schools, and then I

Lucy Herring: would have teachers' meetings with them on Saturday, and things of that type. So I told him I had to think about it; I replied, and so then I went to talk to him about it.

Now the secretary didn't think I was going to accept it because they didn't think I would leave Mountain Street School, but I did. I accepted that, and I did the full-time supervisory work, and I worked with the city; they said you don't have to take the county schools now because the State is making it possible for you salary to be paid. I said, "Well, I can't drop the county schools." And they said, "Well, we're just telling you that you don't have to have them." I said, "I would take them if I had to teach them by night! They are too much a part of us, and the county is paralyzed by numbers. There is very little attention that they could give those two little black schools. If I had to teach them at night, if I had to be with them at night, if I had to conduct the meetings at night, I just wouldn't give them up!"

So for the fifteen years, the two systems for black people were one very close group. Then when the Supreme Court Decision was handed down, Mr. Byers called a principal's meeting, and at that time we had developed in our relation--professional relationships that the white principals and the black principals were meeting together. There is something very interesting about it that I won't tell, but at any rate, Mr. Byers brought us together, and he said that morning, (he was very serious), "The Supreme Court Decision has been handed down! (It wasn't well known by many people, but it had come out in the papers). We, in Asheville, are going to abide by the law!" That was a bomb shell!

Silveri: Was he backed up by the Board of Education?

Herring: He wasn't backed up period! That was it; Mr. Byers became the president of Asheville Federal Savings and Loan Association. A wonderful, he was a wonderful businessman, and he did marvelous things for the Asheville Federal Savings and Loan Association. He's retired, but he still does some work there.

We were concerned because Mr. Byers left. There were maneuvers around; I went to the business manager. I said to him, (Mr. S. M. Connor), "Mr. Connor, I wish they would accept you as the superintendent." My office was --we were located on the eighth floor of the City Hall, and my office was next to the business manager's office, and he was a friend. Incidentally, he was from South Carolina, and I was from South Carolina; so we spoke a common language, and I said, "Mr. Connor, I wish you could take the job of superintendent." He said, "I can do your people more good handling the money than I can being superintendent." He was a character; I think the good Lord threw the pattern away when He made S. M. Connor! Mrs. Lee, one of our principals, said, "Mr. Connor can say damn with more dignity than anybody I've ever seen!" He would make you think he was going to tear you apart, and I was afraid of him when I first went up there; you know, I just didn't understand him too well.

Silveri: May I ask you--I think the chairman of the Board of Education was Mr. Charles Tenant. Do you remember him?

Herring: Very well!

Silveri: Did he issue a statement about that they would obey the law?

Herring: No, he was a fine man, but nobody made a statement like that, but Mr. Byers. How the others felt, what the others said, I do not know. I only know what happened. Mr. Earl Funderburk who was superintendent in the Elizabeth City schools became our superintendent. He took the place that was vacated by Mr. Byers; a very fine man, an educator, and it was very obvious where he stood. A white friend of mine who was a member of the American Association of Univeristy Women said to me, "Mrs. Herring, do you realize--do you know that Mr. Funderburk was brought here as a stop gap to intergation?" I said, "Well, I don't think I have to answer that question; I think it's obvious!"

Silveri: Well, what year did Asheville integrate?

Herring: It was about six--you know I can't say. I have the privilege of not giving dates because I'm going to follow up with chronological dates of things. It was about six years I'm sure when the Presbyterian minister, and a social worker at Oteen, and a few other parents went to the Board, and told them they thought it was time to make a move toward integration. It was six years, I know it was six years after the decision was made because I remember there was an article in the paper, and when Asheville made a--that's when I had hoped to get those clippings out--I remember this comment was made; it said...if Asheville is moving--the decision says that they are supposed to desegregate with all deliberate speed, and he said, it was stated there something like this...If moving toward integration by taking a few blacks in can be called deliberate speed, then that's it....

They were moving with deliberate speed, but it wasn't much speed! They took--after these people made the request, there was no pressure, no resentment from the Board. They just said this, "We were waiting until the black people said something!" In other words: 'Let sleeping dogs lie!' If nobody made any requests, why we would just let the thing go on until something did happen; and so they did proceed. They agreed to take grades one through three; there were some dissatisfaction on the part of the black group. They wanted them to take one through four. But it worked out that they took grades one through three, and there was no opposition. The thing moved along quietly. There were black children in Newton School, black children at Claxton. I followed very closely with the teachers. I looked at the children's report cards. In some instances I saw remarks like this. You had progress reports where you made remarks about the students.

One teacher from Claxton, a white teacher; of course, I don't have to say white because they were all white then, they didn't have any black teachers there then. Brenda is a good little citizen. Well I knew what was implied there. Brenda was a very slow student, but her personal

Lucy Herring: (continued) and social assets with her conduct and all meant she was a very nice child. She did her best; that was a tribute to her to say she was a nice little citizen, but her grades were C and C- and that type of thing because she was a slow child. Then I saw on that same school a report card of Bridget McNulty. The teacher had on there this remark: Bridget is a very bright child; she's very cooperative, and she is very alert. And Bridget had practically all A's.

And at the Newton School, I followed through with Miss Cunningham. There are many things that I'd like to tell you about how Miss Cunningham, (she's gone now. God bless her, she was a wonderful person) how she worked; they had three black students, just the race sum of one, and there were two others, and those three black children went to Newton School. Miss Cunningham said to me, "We have these three black students, and they were coming into the first grade, on the first grade level, and I'm going to see that they are well received." I said, "You know, Miss Cunningham, I would like to see you take all three of those kids because I'm afraid if they go into another class, they'll be hurt, the teacher is not sensitive to their needs, that she doesn't understand black children. I'm afraid--(I'm sorry, I didn't say black children. It wasn't polite to say black then--the Negro children; I love black, I'll talk to you about that later.) If she doesn't understand Negro children, she--the children might be hurt!" She said, "Well, I'll tell you, I might ask the principal to let me have all three of them!"

And when she talked to Mr. Clark, and he was a lovely principal; he's retired now. He was a nice person to know; when I say "lovely", he was a nice person to know: no evidence of bias or prejudice, just a down-to-earth person! She called me later, and she said, "Mrs. Herring, Mr. Clark has talked the situation over, and the primary teachers, two of them, have said they would like to work it like this, that they would like to take each of them, one of the black students, because they want the experience of teaching the black students." "Well," I said, "if they have asked for them, if they want it, that's good. That's better than putting them in there without them wanting them."

And I followed through with it, and one day I talked with Miss Cunningham, and we were talking over the phone. We would talk at the close of the day, after she had had her dinner, and after I had had mine. And she told me about this experience; she said, "The little black girl--(she had the Ray boy, and he was brilliant kid. We had, Mrs. Creasman and I, had done testing with him, psychological testing, and the other types of tests. He was a very superior kid.) She said the little black girl who was in the first grade came into the classroom crying. She sat down, and so she asked her why she was crying, and she wouldn't tell her. She asked the white kids why she was crying, and they didn't tell her. And so Mrs. Cunningham said,

Lucy Herring: (continued) "Well, I tell you, you send her up to me, and while she is out, sent them a note to me by her, and while she's out you talk to the class." And when she talked to the class-- of course, Mrs. Cunningham received the note, and said, "Just have a seat, I'll get an answer to this note back to you in a few minutes; just have a seat." See she was holding her out so that the teacher could talk to the class, but the thing that happened, you know, the ugliest thing. They had called her a nigger, you see. The kids, you know, under their breath: "nigger!" And so the teacher talked to the class, and with ^{this} kind of thing, "How would you like to be the only black person in the class of your group?", and this kind of thing.

Well, the time went on, and that teacher had no more trouble, the child was accepted. That same little girl would not--her mother would not let her accept lunch--the free lunch. And Mrs. Cunningham said, "Mrs. Herring, she needs it. And her little clothes, she's clean, but in the severe weather, she has a little thin sweater, and she's thinly clad. She won't accept lunch. They had a place there for the wealthy people from Biltmore Forest and the other people from other areas who are well-to-do people, a good [inaudible], who would bring out the clothing that the children--(I didn't cover that) had out grown. They had a special closet there, and they tried to get her to accept some of the sweaters, and she wouldn't do it!" So I said, "I tell you; I'll go to the home this evening."

And I found out where the child lived. I went out Wyoming Road out toward the Kenilworth area, and I had to go under--there was a pasture, and I was hoping that there were no cows in the pasture or horses, and there was a barbed-wire fence. I had to get down under the fence, and go up a steep mountain, and I finally came around a curve. I left my car at the foot of the hill, climbed up the side of the mountain, and I found the little home nestled in the mountains there, and when I went in, the grandmother answered the door, and I asked for the mother, and she said, "Well, she's working; she doesn't come home until about six-thirty." I said, "Well, I want to talk to you." I told her who I was. I said, "I want to talk to you about the little girl." She said, "Is she in any trouble?" I said, "No, indeed, she's in no trouble. She's a fine young lady!" And she was sitting there, and of course, she smiled. I said, "I want to explain something to you. Now you and your daughter don't want her to receive free lunches, and you don't want her to receive clothing." She said, "I don't want them to think we were out there begging, 'cause they said colored people beg all the time, and I didn't want my girl to go out there begging for anything. I'd rather for her to go half naked than to be begging!" I said, "It isn't a matter of begging; listen, there are people who are taking their children out there, white children out there, who are getting free lunches while they have both parents working. Now here you are a widow, your daughter is a widow; you have nobody to help you. You are here taking care of the children while your daughter works. She's having the major

Lucy Herring: (continued) responsibility here; she is eligible! It isn't charity!" So she said, "Mrs. Herring, if that's the way you feel about it!" I said, "There's no other way to feel about it, and so far as the clothing is concerned, you ought to let her take the nice warm sweaters and the underwear, and the shoes, if there are shoes to fit her. Do you understand that this is the thing that the white families will welcome? We can't afford to refuse this; this is false modesty. You should let her take the things!" She said, "Well, will you write a note, and tell the teacher that I will let her?" I said, "No, I'll call the teacher: we talk over the telephone." And she said to me, "You know, she's a mighty nice lady; I wish I could meet her with all the things my little girl tells me about her. She wasn't in her room."

Silveri: What--did your position change at all as a result of the Supreme Court Decision? How long did you continue in that position as supervisor?

Herring: Well, my position did not change, but I did give up my work, and I'll tell you how that happened. In 1964, I received a letter from the president of Livingstone College.

Silveri: Where is that?

Herring: In Salisbury, North Carolina. That was the third offer I had had to come to Livingstone College, and I had refused each one. The year that Mr. Byers [J. W. Byers] wrote me about taking supervision, I--you bring me back if I get lost in the woods, and he asked me to take the supervision of the schools if I could leave Mountain Street School. Mr. Moore who's superintendent of the Winston-Salem City Schools sent a letter in there that same year after the State had put on supervision, telling Mr. Byers that he was writing to get my address. Because he wanted to offer me the position of supervision in the Winston-Salem City Schools. And he said in that letter, "I feel that I should inform you that I'm trying to take her from you." And I got a letter [from] Mrs. [Ruth] Yard who was secretary to the superintendent saying, "A foreign superintendent wrote in here asking about you, and about taking you from us, but Mr. Byers is quite concerned, and I assured him that you wouldn't leave Asheville to go to Winston-Salem because you had had several attractive offers, and you didn't leave Asheville."

Well, that was true I had had an offer from North Carolina College two years prior to that, and they were offering me two thousand dollars more on the year than I was getting, but I didn't accept it because I wanted to finish the work that I was doing. I don't like to leave jobs unfinished, and I refused it. And I had an offer to go to Tuskegee, and I refused that. So on the basis of that Mrs. Yard felt certain that I wouldn't leave, but when I came home I told Mr. Byers, you know, that I wouldn't leave. But at this point in my program, after the Supreme Court Decision in 1964, I had seen these things completed because as I go into a situation I set a goal. And when I went to Mountain Street School, my goal was to give Asheville an accredited black school, Negro School. Not just for the sake of accreditation but because

Lucy Herring: (continued) with accreditation it meant additional equipment, additional instructional material, and that type of thing. They would feel obligated to give you those things because we were working toward accreditation. I achieved that goal, and since we had reached it, I consented to leave Mountain Street School and take the supervision job, supervising work.

Prior to '64, I had worked with the city and county systems, and it was a city-wide type of thing to get the black schools in the two counties accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. That was a thing that drew the black and white teachers and principals together. Well, it did more than anything else to bring about better relations and better understanding because we were working on a common goal. So it was quite an involved program, and we all worked, and before prior to '64, Asheville City and Buncombe County became accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on a system-wide basis. Well, here's the thing about it, we were all in the same boat; you couldn't qualify for accreditation if every school wasn't accredited. You see, otherwise, they could have accredited the white schools, and just taken a few of the blacks or taken none of the blacks. But the Association says-- Association of Colleges and Schools, if you wanted accreditation as a system, you'd have to take all schools, black and white. So we achieved that goal; it was quite a task, but everybody put his shoulder to the wheel, and it was a happy day when the Asheville City and Buncombe County Schools received accreditation on a system-wide basis. Well, we had achieved that goal! I said, "Well, now after thirty-five years in the city system, and I taught in the county system quite a number of years prior to that as a teacher in a one-teacher school, I think it is time to move." Maybe if you're justified in moving, and I'll tell you what, when I talked to Mr. Griffin who was superintendent then, Mr. Funderburk had gone under terrific pressure; I had talked to Mr. Griffin. I said, "Now there is an opportunity that I can't afford to miss!"

The president of Livingstone College was a very smart man, and I don't mean smart academically, just smart all around. If he wanted anything, people said Sam Duncan, that was his name, gets what he wants, but he has a technique; he has a way. I had worked for him in the summer schools; so he wrote this letter. He said: "Dear Mrs. Herring, I have just been notified that the college has been granted four thousand dollars--(I mean forty thousand dollars, pardon me)--the college has been granted forty thousand dollars for an experiment in reading. There isn't anybody else who can do the job the way I want it done! I don't see how you can refuse your church school the opportunity to have you do this program. And the salary will be very rewarding."

Well I thought about it; I had never worried about salary because automatically when you do a [good] job, they're going to give you the salary to

Lucy Herring: (continued) to keep you, and so I talked to Mr. Griffin about it. I said, "I would like to know--just as I went to the high school and found out what the elementary children brought in terms of academic achievement and that type of thing, what they brought to the high school teacher." I got a picture of that by working with them. Now I'd like to see what the children, the students from the high schools around the State and the students from areas of the North and the East; they came from Maine, Chicago, and areas all over because it was a church school, you see, with all denominations scattered around. The churches sent many students in, you see. I said, "Now there, I will get the opportunity to see, to meet these students from the high schools in all sections of the country; I don't know. What do you think about it?" He said, "What is the salary?" I said, "Oh, well." I told him what the salary was, and he laughed. He said, "Well, I don't see how you can afford to turn that down. But I'll tell you this, I don't think the Board is going to be happy, is going to want to release you on the basis of what you're getting as a salary, but if you tell them you want to do this experiment, and the money has been appropriated for it, to improve these children. I don't think you'll have any difficulty." Of course, I could have resigned, but I didn't want to do that, you see.

Silveri: Did you want a leave of absence?

Herring: I didn't want a leave of absence.

Silveri: No?

Herring: I was within two years--I was within three years--wait a minute. '64, '65, I was within a year of retirement anyway; this opportunity wouldn't come again. And so Mr. Griffin said go ahead and write the letter, and explain to the Board why you want to leave. So I did; they accepted it with the understanding that I was going to do a job for my people, and after thirty-five years, it was time to leave.

So they gave a nice going-away party for me, and the little clock that has the mellow tone that chimes for me every morning to wake me up when I want to be awakened, is still at my bedside. That is one of the things they gave me when I got ready to leave. So I went to Livingstone College, and it seems as if jobs have run--it seems to me that from the time I had gone to Swannanoa to the one-teacher school there for three months and to Orangeburg County seven months, giving me ten months, I've always had two or three jobs. Have you followed--have you noticed the pattern? In high school, part-time supervisor and principal, part-time supervisor, reading consultant on week-ends, traveling all night Friday night reaching my destination Saturday morning. Conducting a workshop all day Saturday, catching a bus Saturday night, riding all night, and getting back home Sunday morning. So I've had that kind of experience.

Well, when I got to Livingstone College for the conference and to talk things over, the president said, "I told Mr. Knox, the superintendent of

Lucy Herring: (continued) the Salisbury City Schools, that I was sure you would serve as consultant for the city schools there for the Head Start Program." I said, "Mr. President, (I always called him that even before I went there) you are always telling somebody that I will do something; why did you have to tell Mr. Knox I would take that? If I am coming to work here at the college, why would I have to work in the public schools?" He said, "You won't have to Mrs. Herring, but you don't have to teach class. You don't have classes every day; you have only Monday, Wednesday, and Friday." I said, "You know, it hadn't occurred to me that I wouldn't be teaching every day!" And it hadn't.

I remember the first time I went up town Tuesday, I stopped in the middle of my shopping and almost panicked. I said, "What am I doing out of school at this time of day?" I wasn't accustomed to being free, and so I said, "Since I have those free days, I will give them at least one day a week." Well, now the State was paying the people who were consultants. In fact, there was an instructor at the white college there, I don't know whether it was [inaudible]... or the other; there was a white instructor who gave one day a month. There were many people in the colleges, and some who were not in colleges who served one day a month, and they got the same salary. But I said, "I am not concerned about salary if I am going in to help. Since I have these days off during the week, I will give Mr. Knox one day out of each week!" He said, "For the same salary?" I said, "Sure for the same salary; that's what they're offering!"

So I served as consultant for the Head Start Program, and I accepted this program and initiated this reading program for college freshmen students. And then here comes this opportunity; the president says, "Now the Noyes Foundation has made available to us (that was the second year, I had been there just a year)--to college quite a handsome sum of money to conduct a summer school for high school students of college potential, and we want you to take that program for the summer."

Well, I dived in again; [this] was a nose dive, you see! And I took that, and if you could see some of the pictures. I have pictures of all of the activities from the North Carolina workshop for teachers to this program for college freshmen students, and to the program of high school students with college potential. The Noyes Foundation was quite pleased with the program. They wanted us to start out with the testing, and they suggested that we take the Stanford Junior High School Test to test the children. There were some other suggestions that they made; but you see contacting the principals, we had asked for just one thing, that they have a potential for [college] work which means they were taking the upper third, no average or below.

[This is the end of Tape I of Second Session]