

## Lucille Holmes and Doris Brewer

### Side 1:

Lucille is Doris' aunt. She was brought up in Asheville, moved North at 20 when married and, following the death of her husband, moved next door to Doris (150 Wyoming) three years ago. The house we met in was built by Booker T. Sherrill whom I interviewed yesterday. There is a periodic squeak in the background caused by a fire detector signaling low energy.

[5] Lucille was born in Greenville, South Carolina and brought to Asheville at 7 months. She lived at 45 Frederick Street, in a house built by her father. The land is now owned by a doctor.

[18] She walked to Livingston Street School through the woods with a family of children. When she was 8 years old she went to Allen School. In her last year she had to go into the dormitory and board, being able to go home on weekends only. There was a monthly tuition and the school was not overcrowded. She walked all the way to Allen School but occasionally was given 5 cents for a bus ride which took her to Charlotte Street.

[60] She mentions changes in the city - the stores on Patton Avenue, Kress, the YMI which she attended every weekend, and the segregated movies. She has lived in Mass. since age 20.

[90] She does a lot of studying in the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's Science and Health. She believes there is no training for children today, who "bring themselves up," and people are "not close enough to the truth."

[123] She was the oldest of 7 children and was head of the house if her mother was ill. Her people were simple, got along with black and white neighbors and sang hymns every night after dinner. She didn't like the organ and got a piano.

[153] She took piano lessons from a teacher in the Livingston Street School and later in the Allen School. She played in her church and sang in the choir.

[163] Her father worked in the railroad round house as a mechanic. He was a good worker and the family was secure during the depression.

[177] Her grandmother, a single mother with one child, was employed by whites who were good to her. Her mother married at 17 and, as an only child, had a hard time taking care of her mother when she needed help.

[191] Her father's father was a farmer.

[205] Her father was trained for railroad work and learned how to make tin torches in a shop on Pack Square. [Mr. Drexler]

[215] Doris remembers "Stumptown". Many partners lived there. Ruth was the first black florist in Asheville and lives next door to Lettie. Thomas, on Congress street, a partner. [Erline McQueen, Ruth Morrison, Lettie Polite, Luther Thomas]

[238] Lucille left Asheville when Miss Dole, the principal of Allen, arranged for 4 girls to go to New York and work for families. She was treated like a sister of one of the employer's daughters and learned a lot. [Miss Alsie B. Dole, superintendent of Allen Industrial Home School, Asheville City Directory, 1915]

[277] Doris said than her grandmother told her the three most important things in a house were a piano, sewing machine and cook stove. She knew how to use all of them but her interests went off in other directions. [Hattie Frances Hill]

[294] Lucille married in 1921. Her husband went to Mass. to finish his education. The family moved several times. She had a daughter and she built up a nice business sewing. Her husband became a chef on the Boston and Albany railroad. [Luwaugh S. Holmes, Harriet L. Holmes]

[353] Her father used to take her to see the train on Sunday. They usually went to the Depot station but sometimes went to Biltmore. [Henry E. Hill]

[375] She loved Mass. but came back because she was alone and Doris, her sister's child, was her closest relative.

[410] She has been a member of the Mother Church in Boston (Christian Science) since 1931, although she was baptized a Baptist. She subscribes to the 'Sentinel', has taught Sunday School - the only black teacher- and discusses her faith and healing experiences.

[566] She has had lovely experiences in life. She has no money but is happy.

## **Side 2:**

Doris said she was happy having her aunt here, and as a Baptist, cherishes the diverse religious experiences. She has been a life-long member of Mt. Zion Baptist church - 47 Eagle Street.

[2/16] She was born here and walked to Livingston Street School with two teachers and their children. Even the teachers had no cars. There were 4 black principals in the city. Mrs. Battle was very strict but a loving, caring person. She looked forward to going to the Asheland Avenue School where Mrs. Rita H. Lee (widow of W. S. Lee, former principal of Catholic Hill, Stephens-Lee and Mountain St. Schools) was principal. [Mrs. Rachael Battle, Mrs. Rita H. Lee]

[2/38] Her family sent her to the Allen Home School (name later changed to Allen High School). It was run by the Methodist's society to provide an education for young black women. At one time young men attended. Before desegregation blacks had to be bussed long distances from surrounding communities, and a boarding school was needed. Day students were also accepted. (see enclosure) [Dr. John Holt, Cecil Holt]

[2/64] In the beginning there was only one yellow wooden structure. This was destroyed and brick buildings were erected. They are currently used as office buildings (enclosure)

[2/73] After the 70's the schools were integrated and attendance fell off. By this time, however the school was accredited as a 4-year high school. There always was religious education. During WWII the school was a haven for young girls whose parents worked in defense plants. Students came from all states.

[2/88] The closest school for blacks in this area was the N.C. College for Negroes in Durham (now N.C. Central University) Her father couldn't afford this and her choice was between a beauty school on Bartlett Street and the South Eastern Commercial College on Valley St. (now South Charlotte) . She went to Asheville Biltmore College and then in Concord, South Carolina (now 4-years and co-ed). There is a famous story of a girl whose father, being unable to pay tuition, kept the school provided with vegetables. [Mrs. Cadelia Stewart, Mary McLeod Bethune]

[2/125] As a child she considered books her friends and swapped children's magazines and books with her friends. There was no library in her school but she went to the YMI library (see enclosure) and was devoted to the librarian. She describes the room. She and her friends went to the library and movies and saw "National Velvet." Her first hard-backed book was Little Women. [Mrs. Irene Hendrick, Elizabeth Taylor]

[2/188] When she received a little printing press for Christmas, she and her friends printed a little paper. She draws ads for her husband's Skyland Janitorial Service (see enclosure). She uses quotes from a book of daily affirmations Black Pearls, written by an Afro-American woman.

[2/227] She worked in the Herring School library and in the summer worked in the Bible School or Head Start (originally administered by the School Board and now under the Opportunity Corporation)

[2/238] She was having marital problems and wanted a full-time job, so answered an ad in the Citizen-Times for the Pack Library. The Market/Eagle Street library closed in 1966. Mrs. Hendrix retired and when she was hired she was the only black on the staff. She and her supervisor catalogued every book in the system-now the system is automated. She was excited with the new innovations. A third member was added to the staff, a Warren Wilson graduate. [Mrs. Irene Hendrick, Elizabeth Wood, Betty Israel]

[2/313] In the old building on Pack Square her desk was near circulation and she helped there also. She enjoyed working with the public and having all material in the system go through her hands. She later catalogued the children's collection and the video cassettes.

[2/341] Moving to the new building was well-organized and shelves seemed spacious. Now they are bulging and withdrawals, because of space, are made more frequently. The book sales, under the Friends of the Library, now take place every year rather than every other year. [Mary Parker]

[2/399] She has worked in all of the branches and helped open the South branch in Oakley. She also went back and did inventory with Alice Powell [Alice Powell]

[2/420] She did programs in the West Asheville branch for two years with Lettie Polite on Afro-American history [Robert Neufeld, Lettie Polite]

[2/432] Since so many blacks are now going to college they are using the library more than they did following the move to Haywood St.

[2/443] She has found that, with the younger children, if parents didn't encourage their children to go to the library they didn't go (see Polite tape). She discusses the Delta Sorority house, the library and tutoring program (see Polite and Whitesides tapes). [ Lettie Polite, Shirley Whitesides]

[2/448] She had hopes that the West branch would get a new building but there were not enough funds.

[2/484] "No community is any better than the knowledge of its citizens and its citizens need to go to the library to get the knowledge they need." She had worked in the library for 26 years and can't pass a book store without going in.

[2/518] She noted that the religious book stores (Carpenter's Shop, Sparrow's Nest, Baptist Book Store) are busy and hopes that a revolution is going on. People need inspirational books.

[2/561] She retired earlier than planned because she needed to care for her aunt. She anticipates working with books and older people during her retirement.

[2/609] Her son, who is mentally ill, is living in a board and care home. She is a charter member of the Asheville group of the Western Carolina Alliance for the Mentally Ill - a state and national organization. [Franklin Morris Jackson]