

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A
HACKNEY, BURNIS

FEBRUARY 5, 2001

This is February 5th in the year 2001 and this is Bob Gilgor interviewing Burnis Hackney at the Chapel Hill Library.

BOB GILGOR: Good morning, Burnis.

BURNIS HACKNEY: Good morning, Bob.

BG: I appreciate your taking the time to let me interview you, and I'll get started with a broad opening question and that is what was it like for you growing up in this area and where did you grow up?

BH: I grew up a couple of miles outside of Chapel Hill, [NC]. It was outside the city limits. It was the Chapel Hill Township but you actually go through Carrboro, [NC] and it's about two miles west of downtown Carrboro. It's not very far from town but it is a very environmentally sensitive area actually right next to the reservoir so that it's not really developed even today as some of the other areas of Chapel Hill. It's a very beautiful area.

I grew up with my grandparents. My grandfather was a third generation farmer. We had a 100-acre farm and were pretty much self-sufficient that was in the means of livelihood as well as the means of subsistence. I went Northside Elementary School. I started at Northside Elementary School, I think, in 1955.

Most of my trips to town were school related although we did have family members that lived in town. My grandmother had a sister, Jessie Farrow, she lived right

at the end of the playground of Northside. We had other family members that lived in the community. My grandmother would come in to town once a week every Saturday actually to do her grocery shopping. We'd visit friends and family members in the community. Most of my growing up was outside of the city limits of Chapel Hill.

BG: What were your grandparents like?

BH: They were beautiful people, very principled, very religious. My grandfather had left the area. They both were originally from this area, Chatham County by way of Warrenton, [NC]. My family actually traced back as far as our known history to the 1780s, but I guess around 1830 migrated by force to Chatham County and then from Chatham County they moved up to Orange County where I reside today.

My grandfather he had gone from the area to Pittsburgh, [PA], but when his father got ill he returned to the family farm back in 1935. They both were very beautiful people.

BG: Who was the head of your family, your grandmother or your grandfather?

BH: Well, I guess it's sort of like mine, my grandfather was the head of the family, there's no doubt about that, but he was a very quiet and soft spoken individual and as women do have their ways of accomplishing their objectives and so I guess you could say the bottom line is that it did evolve around my grandmother. She was a very aggressive woman and very outspoken, but in the quiet times he was the head of the home.

BG: So he was a farmer and did your grandmother work also?

BH: Well, basically for a time she did domestic work and actually she did that up till her retirement. She would go in for a family which was -- as white families were -- connected with the University. Her employee was Paul Guthrie who was involved with the business school at UNC. He's retired.

BG: Did she talk much about her work for the Guthries?

BH: Oh, yes, the Guthries were like I guess quite a few of the white families in Chapel Hill, somewhat enlightened. I think he was an Episcopalian. He was strongly religious himself. They took an interest in the development of myself and my brothers. We were in their home often with my grandmother during the summer. She spoke quite frequently and highly of the Guthries.

BG: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

BH: Well, most of them were younger. I'm the oldest. I actually have four brothers and one sister. There were six of us.

BG: Where were your parents when you were being raised?

BH: I was born one year after my mother graduated from Lincoln, and for a time she was there in the home but she later moved, I guess, when I was about four years old. By that time I had bonded with my grandparents and they had bonded with me. The result was that I and my brother next to me remained there and we grew up with my grandparents.

BG: What kind of house did you live in out in the country?

BH: Well, it's funny; I live in the same house today. My great-grandfather he was somewhat of a Renaissance man. He was a Baptist preacher as his father was, John R. Hackney. Around 1910 [he bought the farm]. Thomas Lloyd was actually the architect; the original architect of Carrboro, [NC], he sold out to Julian Carr who Carrboro later became named for, but Thomas Lloyd built the original mill there. My great-grandfather had acquired over a hundred acres from him and did hard work as a farmer. A few years later he was able to build a very nice two-story farmhouse. I reside there today. It's been renovated and maintained over the years.

BG: So I take it you didn't grow up poor.

BH: Well, financially as far as currency, yes, we were poor. There is a saying that you are land rich and dirt poor. We lived off the land basically, but I never really saw a lot of money. I always had enough money for requirements for the things that I needed and some that I didn't, but I can't really say that I was very poor.

BG: I guess you did subsistence farming; you raised your own food.

BH: They raised food for the home and then also some for sale. Didn't really get to meet my great-grandfather. My grandfather, I went around with him many times to the grocery stores, the University cafeterias, and what have you. He would sell corn, peas, and butterbeans, mainly vegetables.

BG: Did you have chickens or pigs?

BH: Very little. We did have cows at times and occasionally we did have pork. Most of the other members in the community what one didn't have the other had. We didn't have a lot of chickens and we didn't have a lot of pork but we always had what we needed. We didn't have horses but we did have cows.

BG: What was your grandparents feeling about your education?

BH: Education was paramount to them [grandparents]. They both were very avid Bible students and so early on we would have weekly Bible studies. We'd go to Bible studies and what have you, so I guess you could say that it probably began there. They were very, very big advocates of reading and acquiring an education.

BG: They had books in the house?

BH: There were a tremendous amount of books. I guess as I say, my great-grandfather and my great-great-grandfather were both Baptist ministers. My great-great-grandfather was one of the founders of the New Hope Baptist Association that still exists here today. In growing up in the home, the home was somewhat of a museum itself as you can imagine because actually three generations had gone before me that were in the home. The men had been very, very involved in religion and education and so all their books as well as books that had been acquired by subsequent generations were in the home and we were encouraged to read those as well as other current material.

BG: Did you have a dictionary in the house?

BH: Of course we had dictionaries, and we had encyclopedias, yes. Let me say this, you know, it's interesting your objective here and your involvement with the reunion and the documentation of Lincoln. My great-grandfather actually, John Hackney, he contributed the property for the Harriston Grove School. It was a one-room school. This predated the public school system. The teachers, one of which I knew, Miss Rosa Holloway, they resided there in the home. As a matter of fact, my bedroom currently is the bedroom that the teachers roomed in as they were teaching. There was a very strong connection with education.

BG: I knew of the Hackney School. Is that what you said the Hackney School?

BH: No. Well, there's a connection with the Hackney School also, but this actually predated the Hackney School.

BG: The Harriston School?

BH: Yes, Harriston Grove.

BG: Did that become the Hackney School? Did your grandparents contribute to the Hackney School?

BH: No, it's very interesting. We have done some pretty extensive research on the Hackneys. There are actually about three different Hackney families that pretty much came out of the same community, the same plantation or whatever that were unrelated, but they were involved religiously and educational and so the Hackney School itself actually was [founded by] another branch of the Hackney plantation. [Laughter].

BG: Did you feel that you had a happy childhood?

BH: I was the oldest and so I've always felt a lot pressure there and for a time I was alone. I have a brother that is two years younger than me. It was very happy and it was certainly an idyllic setting. My grandparents had a tremendous amount of love. My grandmother was loved by hundreds if not thousands of people. She grew to become a

matriarch of hundreds within the community. There was a lot of love around and we were very happy to be a part of it.

BG: Who were your playmates?

BH: It's a little funny that--. You had a sense of community but basically it differs from the municipality in that you were looking, within our situation, you were looking at communities that you might have a hundred or two hundred acre farm. The farm would be populated by the extended family. You had adjacent community members of the same situation. There were always relatives, family members around. You may have to go a half a mile or maybe a mile but people were constantly interacting.

BG: Your playmates were mainly black playmates.

BH: Right, exclusively. My grandfather had white contacts for a time. I don't think it was his intention to continue to farm. He actually left and went north to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he returned, and then for a time he worked for the guy who did the arboretum at UNC, Mr. Bill Hunt, and so through his associations from time to time children that would be related to employers or customers or what have you. We had one or two contacts but for the most part they were black.

BG: I could spend more time here but I know your time is limited and so I'd like to move on to Lincoln although I feel I'm leaving a big void, I mean, there's such rich history here that I would like to get into but we are wanting to focus on Lincoln.

BH: Right.

BG: You went to Lincoln what years and what grades?

BH: I think I went to Lincoln in '63. I graduated from Northside, which was originally Orange County Training School. I went directly to Lincoln. It's funny; Ms. [Lucile] McDougle was my teacher from the 3rd grad thru the 6th grade at Northside. I graduated and went to Lincoln where Mr. McDougle was principal at Lincoln. I guess I should tell you one other thing, RD Smith, another renowned educator, his wife, Euzelle Smith was my 1st thru 3rd grade teacher. I had some super, super teachers all the way through. I went to Lincoln in '63.

BG: What was Lincoln like when you went there?

BH: It was a bit overwhelming, I guess, as the freshmen transition usually is. You're going to a situation where you are new; you're the youngest class there. We looked at the upperclassmen as being giants or mythical figures. Even the upperclassmen started teaching you from the time that you came in. The guys would teach you things about manhood and about standing on principles. A little bit of a transition in that you're going

from one teacher all day to going around to different teachers. I was fortunate there at Lincoln also to have some good teachers. Of course Mr. [C.A.] McDougale was a legendary figure.

BG: What made Mr. McDougale legendary?

BH: I guess the tragedy of it all is that we all were working with what we had to work with and Mr. McDougale had little other than human material basically to work with and so he focused on personal development more so than anything else. I can rarely recall an encounter with Mr. McDougale that was strictly academic. Usually it was some type of philosophical higher principle that you always felt that he was trying to get across to you. He was such an authoritative figure and uncompromising.

BG: How did you know he was authoritative? What did he do that made him an authoritarian person?

BH: He just carried himself with the dignity that he is in control, that things will be done his way or you would go your way. [Laughter] He never really compromised principles and he was usually right.

BG: What sort of things did he want done his way, can you remember any of those specifically?

BH: Well, of course, conduct. You had to maintain good conduct. You had to maintain good appearance. You had to keep a focused mind. You had to be focused on accomplishing something and that was our personal development at the way that I interpreted it.

BG: Did he meet the students at the door in the morning?

BH: He was at the door in the morning or whenever you entered the building it seemed that particularly if the individual was late or somewhere he didn't need to be, Mr. McDougle was always present. His office was about midway down the hall, and I guess he could just step out of his office and see both ends of the building as well as to the gymnasium that was straight across from him which was another entry point. He seemed to be always ever present.

BG: Did the students fear him?

BH: I never really detected a sense of fear. People would imitate him. I see some of this today that when youngsters respect an older individual even though the individual might be in an authoritative individual. A lot of times they would in play imitate that individual; repeat the things that he said or did, and it was somewhat of a comedy, but I never did really detected a sense of fear.

BG: How about respect? Was that a better word?

BH: Respect, I think respect would be the word, the descriptive phrase there.

BG: Did he ever teach?

BH: Not to my knowledge, I never knew Mr. McDougle to teach.

BG: Did he ever come into the classroom?

BH: I never really knew him to come into the classroom. He mainly, as far as I knew, he stayed in the hallways or you went to his office and he did what he had to do there.

BG: What can you tell me about his walk, his look, and his voice? Was there anything distinctive about those things?

BH: My memory is that he walked very upright and tilted somewhat to the back. He was a balding gentleman, but he wore glasses and was light skinned. His voice, I can't really recall if it was a deep voice but I know it was a very strong voice. I wouldn't say that it was a bass, but he spoke very distinctly and very strongly.

BG: Did you remember or maybe as a student you wouldn't remember this, but did you perceive him having influence over teachers and what they taught and the way they taught?

BH: Maybe I wasn't developed to the point to where I could observe this. I never really detected his influence. The main perception that I had of Mr. McDougale was that he was interacting directly with the students. I never really got a sense of his interaction with the teachers. I don't know if he had staff meetings, I'm sure that he did, but I just wasn't aware of his interaction with his teachers. He had very strong teachers. He had a core of teachers, I guess a minority was from the community that had grown up in Chapel Hill or were connected in Chapel Hill. They had a strong influence within the school. Then you had others that were coming from different areas of North Carolina to teach.

BG: Did those that came from outside the area live in Chapel Hill or Carrboro?

BH: Most lived in Chapel Hill or Carrboro or Durham, [NC]. There were a few I think that lived in Durham. I think some may even probably have been from Durham and Raleigh, [NC].

BG: Did teachers or Mr. McDougale ever visit your farm?

BH: The teachers, a few. There were connections with the family. Mr. Peerman, William Peerman, when I took driver's ed he would come to pick me up and then once we were done he would take us home. For the most part, we didn't have a lot of interaction in the home with the teachers. Being outside of town, I guess, maybe--.

BG: You had mentioned RD Smith as a teacher, a strong teacher. Can you explain more about RD Smith and what made you say that he was a strong teacher?

BH: RD in a sense probably would rank behind Mr. McDougle in terms of a legendary figure within the history of the school community. Don't know that he was vice-principal at that point but he later did become at Chapel Hill. There was a name that people had for him behind his back. I never heard anyone call it to his face, although I had the opportunity working for RD as I grew up. I had the opportunity of working with him very closely and it's been a blessing to do that. He was called the master.

BG: Master?

BH: Yes. It's something that preceded me but what I gathered from this he was an industrial education instructor. A big portion of his educational contribution, I guess at least early on was teaching different crafts, teaching people to be a craftsman. Whenever you had a project or something to do it had to be done to perfection. He knew how to do everything, he knew when what you did wasn't just quite right, and so that's how I took that characterization of him, his nickname of the master.

BG: Did he teach values also?

BH: Yes, he did. He taught values and he like a lot of the others, not all, were operating on an intensely personal level. I mean, if you have a problem they approached you as a

person with that and tried to stress the importance to your personal development that you get things together and operate in a certain manner. He was one that did this. He drove the bus for the football team and so we got to travel--.

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BG: Anymore about RD?

BH: The athletic program was among the elite programs. I think the latest article that I saw on W.D. Peerman said that he--of course had been inducted into the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame, but he was known as the black Vince Lombardi. At a certain point, RD or someone acquired a Trailways bus that was painted orange and had a big tiger on the side of it. We were extremely grateful. We knew that RD had played a big role in acquiring it and getting it painted. He was also our driver. He drove us all over North Carolina really; Raeford, Lumberton, Burlington and so I got to see him outside of the academic confines of the school.

We were always, it seemed, getting into situations even among ourselves or with the other communities that we were traveling in were opportunities for counseling and as far as personal development, ways to conduct yourself as men and so this is the thing that I really appreciated most about RD.

BG: Where there particular kinds of personal problems that people would talk to RD or other teachers about?

BH: I'm sure that there were. Personally, I wasn't that involved as far as my personal problems. I pretty much was able to keep things together to a great extent. My parents, I

relied on them for that, but there would be situations that I would hear of that he would intervene or observe where he and other teachers would intervene.

BG: Can you tell me about your other teachers? Were there others who stood out in your mind?

BH: You would have to--. Betty King is a current teacher. If she has retired, it's just been recently. She was many, many years at Culbreth at the later stages of her career. She was a local person. Betty King, Ross Farrington and most of the ones that really stand out are local people. Of course, Ms. McDougle, Ms. [Charlene M.] Smith, Ms. Pope, Mr. Fryer, Mrs. Harry, Mrs. Cecilia Barns, there were a lot of excellent teachers there.

BG: Did you get the feeling that there was a turnover of teachers?

BH: I didn't detect a turnover for the most part. I had three years at Lincoln. You would have one or two new teachers each year, but for the most part there wasn't a great turnover. As I said, my first three years was with Ms. Smith and then three thru six Ms. McDougle. That's six years there with the same people.

BG: What about at Lincoln?

BH: At Lincoln, as I say, you may have a couple of new teachers come in each year, but the ones that were there they seemed to stay for a long time.

BG: Did you see the teachers at church?

BH: No, maybe Ms. King, she would be the only one that I can recall having seen.

BG: Are there other things about the school that you remember like assembly? How often did you have assembly?

BH: Assembly would be pretty frequently but my memory is not real clear on that, but I know that it was a very big event. It was frequent that we did have them, and the programs were very strong.

BG: What sortsof programs were presented at assembly?

BH: It could be something that was related to the situation where we ended up having to merger, an information session, and discussion. It could be a dramatic program or some presentation from the administration.

BG: Singing programs or drama.

BH: Yes, right.

BG: Band?

BH: Oh, yes.

BG: So were these frequent these performances?

BH: Yes, I would say so. I can't really recall the frequency but maybe once every couple of weeks or so I think we would definitely have an assembly of some type.

BG: You said that the administration would present something, was this a performance by the administration or was this just news of what's going on?

BH: No, it could be some development that was taking place. My years, the 60s, it seemed like there was always something happening. A lot of it was related to Civil Rights, and a lot of it was related to integration.

BG: So these were issues openly discussed?

BH: Right. Well I wouldn't say that they were that openly discussed, it's just that maybe it was presented the options that were available. The situation was described and pretty much the options that you had everyone was made aware of it.

BG: What about change of class? What was it like when you would go from one class to another? Would you have noisy hallways, quiet hallways, disorganized, organized?

BH: It always seemed to be pretty orderly to me inside the building. Outside, of course, it was very noisy. The playground was like a city. It was always activity going on there but within the school everything seemed to be pretty orderly.

BG: Did you see any smoking?

BH: No.

BG: Or drinking?

BH: No. There was absolutely--. Conduct was of the highest. Everyone respected the rules and regulations in terms of conduct or they would be subject to some type of discipline. As far as smoking, you wouldn't have that.

BG: Were you a member of the band or chorus?

BH: No, I was not a member of either. Actually, football was my only extracurricular activity at Lincoln.

BG: Was it a deemed to be a football player ()?

BH: Well, of course, they had a winning tradition. It was one of the most successful sports organizations of all times. The record was--. I don't know what it was but it had to be eighty-five to ninety percent winning. It was just a sense of pride. Your uniform, your shoes, your shoelaces, and your socks, everything had to be of the utmost in terms of presentation. So it was an extreme sense of pride to be associated with the team. It was an elite group. You had to go through a lot in order to become a member.

BG: What sort of things did you have to go through to become a member of the football team?

BH: Basically, you'd just have to push yourself to the limits and it was mainly conditioning that separated the men from the boys so to speak. That was a catch phrase. I think that conditioning was the main thing.

BG: What kind of conditioning exercises or training did you go through and who directed it?

BH: Well, Coach Peerman was the orchestrator, but the captains, Bob Davis, Fred Baldwin, Larry Edwards, Thurman Couch. The guys that were the captains, they pretty much led the drills, but they were taught to us by Coach Peerman. Also, some of the guys would come back from some of the college programs and they would bring different things with them. But conditioning mainly was running. You started practice by running and you had to run maybe a mile or two miles before. Then calisthenics, you had

different forms of calisthenics, and then within the practice I know Coach Peerman had a device that was called Big Mike. It was a big blocking sled and there were different ways that you could operate that either as an individual or with others. Sometimes we would go to a nearby hill and it was actually called The Hill that was adjacent to the practice field and you'd do wind sprints up the hill. It seemed like it was almost a ninety degree angle to go up but it probably was more like sixty or seventy degrees.

BG: When did you start your training for football season?

BH: You would start in July or either maybe mid July, but I guess that guys that really wanted to make the team, I know that I did, you'd need to start on your own pretty much around spring and just work up until then.

BG: Did you have help when you started on your own in the spring?

BH: No, just pretty much ran. We didn't have any resources or anything. It was just mainly running.

BG: So you did this with others who wanted to make the team.

BH: Well, either myself or not necessarily people that wanted to make the team but some of my relatives, the guys that were in the community when they came by they would often find me running around the field and they would come up and run along with me.

BG: Did you lift weights?

BH: No. Weights was--. I knew a couple of my class members that wanted to and had gotten weights as a gift or through some means, but it was not something that I had access to.

BG: You would go to an away game in this big orange bus with a tiger on the side and you'd get off the bus and what would you do when you entered the stadium?

BH: Basically you went to the high school, usually went directly to the high school and you had your personal bag and you went into the building. Basically, it was a sense that I guess people looked up to you when you were coming in and you had this sense that you had to represent Lincoln, you had to represent the tigers. It was a very professional type of feeling that you had going in.

BG: When you would dress for the game and go out on the field, were there any rituals that you went through?

BH: Well, usually you would go right into the school and then once you dressed you'd probably go to the stadium. A lot of times we had to drive across town to get to the stadium, you would go through the community and so you got a feel for the layout of different places. There were pretty much the same drills that you see pregame in the NFL

or within the NCAA. The backs work together, the linemen work together and you all come together and you do calisthenics and maybe run through plays and what have you.

BG: I was thinking more specially someone had told me the team would run around the field and then go to the center of the field and do some singing and some special exercises. Do you remember anything like that?

BH: I don't have any recollection of that, but I do know that we were always singing. As I say, a lot of times we would have to leave the high school to go to the other side of the town to the stadium, but wherever we went on the bus we sang. We sang the fight songs.

BG: Did you have a fight song, a Lincoln High fight song?

BH: There were just numerous songs. There seemed like there were hundreds of songs that you sang. It was somewhat like the military songs.

BG: Did you sing when you were practicing on the field before the game?

BH: No, not to my knowledge.

BG: I also had heard something about white shoelaces and shinned shoes. Was there anything special about that?

BH: Well, your shoes, of course, you had to have the military shine on your shoes. I never really heard a regulation or what have you, but I knew that as a group you usually had four or five guys that maybe from the time you got out of school on that particular day of the game that you would be with until maybe five or six o'clock in the evening when you would go to the school, but you were always going to get new shoestrings. It seemed to be a thing of personal pride. I never really heard that it was a regulation, but when you're in Rome you do as the Romans do so everyone had new socks and they had new shoelaces.

BG: What was your record when you were there in your last year in '65?

BH: Lincoln?

BG: Yes.

BH: '65, I think, was the last year that I was at Lincoln, and I think we lost to Merritt Moore, I believe, in the state playoffs that year. I think we may have lost another game throughout the year so we were probably something like nine and two.

BG: Did you play schools that had the same number of students, or did you play up a division?

BH: It varied. Usually we were up a division and according to the population, we should have been playing at a lower level.

BG: What was Lincoln High listed as a AA school?

BH: To my knowledge we were a AAA school, but we probably should have been AA. It varied, and I think at one point we were AA actually and then we moved up to AAA.

BG: Were there particular schools that you played that stood out in your mind as schools like Lincoln in the kind of teaching? Did you hear stories about some of these other schools?

BH: There were schools I think that we looked up to. In this area you had Lincoln in Raleigh, and Hillside in Durham. They were AAAA schools. They were actually a legitimate level ahead of us. We didn't even play them. We also had Merritt Moore that was in Durham. It was more of a school of our size in rural Durham County. Then of course the schools out of Greensboro, [NC], and I don't recall their name, Greensboro and Winston-Salem, [NC], usually had some strong teams. If we were fortunate enough to go far enough in the playoffs, we usually would play them.

BG: Did you hear stories from the opposing players as to what their schools were like?

BH: No. I didn't really have very much interaction with any of the team members from the other schools. My recollection is that we went in, we played the game, and we pretty much had a few minutes to interact after the games but that was it.

BG: Did you get fed after the games?

BH: Yes, we did. Well, we got fed, we did, after each game, we did get fed and usually it was in the school's cafeteria.

BG: And you did the same for opposing teams when they came to Lincoln?

BH: Right.

BG: Did you start in 1963 or '64 or '65?

BH: I never started the entire time I was at Lincoln. I was second team in '65, but I never made the starting unit. At Chapel Hill, I played special teams, but I was also second team at Chapel Hill High.

BG: You had mentioned before we started the interview that 1964 was a special team.

BH: All the teams were special but I guess in terms of the statistics it would be hard to really match that team. We had such a tremendous offense as well as defense. I think we

averaged something like sixty-four points. We weren't scored on until I think about the sixth game of that year.

BG: Did they win the state championship?

BH: We didn't win the state championship that year. We did not win the state championship.

BG: How far did you go?

BH: I think we lost in the semifinals of the state championship.

BG: Were there any other things about the football team that you remember that you want to share?

BH: Mainly Coach Peerman the team--. Actually Coach Bradshaw was there and went on to great success. He's also a member of the Hall of Fame. He was there before I got there and before Coach Peerman, but the biggest thing that I remember about the football team was the winning success and Coach Peerman and how strong of an individual he was. He took a personal interest in me, and the principles that he espoused was the biggest thing that I remember about the football team.

BG: What are some of those principals that you remember he espoused?

BH: Well, he had so many, so many principles and sayings and what have you. I think he once quoted that if you want to kill a gnat that you use a sledgehammer. He just really wanted each individual to get every ounce of their potential that they had within them. Even though I wasn't a starter, I was a little on the lightweight side. He always seemed to take a personal interest in me because I was always determined and no matter what the challenge, I would attempt to meet the challenge, at least meet it. That was the thing that I got from him is that you give it all you've got and you don't worry about things after that.

BG: Now, did they have two coaches when you were there or did they have more than two? I've heard from others that Coach Peerman was the only coach for a while.

BH: Right. You mean at Lincoln?

BG: At Lincoln.

BH: Yes. Coach Peerman was the only coach that I knew. He had student assistants from time to time, but he was the coach.

BG: Where did Coach Bradshaw coach?

BH: Coach Bradshaw was there prior to Coach Peerman. I guess it was like in the late 50s up to the early 60s, and then he went on to Hillside.

BG: Can you remember other things about the school that you'd like share?

BH: I guess I have the sense that maybe we might be somewhat romantic when we look back at the situation, but we worked with what we had. We really didn't have a lot to really work with there. The facilities were not what they should have been, and basically the whole thing with integration I think pretty much came about because the political establishment, nor their constituents were willing to invest the resources in Lincoln and nor were they willing to send their children to Lincoln, and so therefore Lincoln had to be shut down. We ended merging into a better facility. I guess the lesson is that the facility is not everything. There's a quotation and I don't know if I can recall it but the sum is not always the total of the parts, and so it's not really all about facility but you should have resources and resources are needed to do a job.

BG: What was the library like at Lincoln? Would you compare the library at Lincoln to the library at Chapel Hill High School? You went to Chapel Hill High your senior year I think.

BH: Chapel Hill's library my recollection is pretty much like this library here without the computers of course. It's a fine library here. At Lincoln you did have the books and encyclopedias. I was an avid reader personally and so I never was at a loss in terms of

reading materials, but in terms of specific research I would imagine that you would have a problem in terms of finding all the resources that you would need for a particular research project. There were quite a few books and there were a number of encyclopedias.

BG: But not as big as Chapel Hill.

BH: By no means, you didn't have the periodicals, and you just didn't have the archives as you do at Chapel Hill.

BG: Were there other differences that you saw in the two schools that stand out in the way of facilities?

BH: The facilities were smaller but I feel that they were better maintained at Lincoln in terms of cleanliness and the maintenance and what have you. Beyond that, the space, you had a lot less space. The heating plant-- Now we didn't have air-conditioning but we did have air-conditioning at Chapel Hill. Those were the main differences that I saw.

BG: How much time before you started at Chapel Hill High did you know that you were going to be in school there?

BH: It seemed that it was over the summer, but I guess we knew at the end of that year sometime between the end of that year. I remember we started discussing it. My

recollection is that there was a vote of some type as to what people actually preferred and the results that we were given is that the majority of the people preferred to go ahead and go for the better resources that were available at Chapel Hill.

BG: That's interesting. So there was a vote and the vote was not to stay at Lincoln but to go the new Chapel Hill High.

BH: That's the understanding that I got. I don't know how it was tabulated or what the actual count was, but I distinctly remember that the students were polled in terms of would you want to remain here at Lincoln or would you want to go ahead and move to Chapel Hill. It's funny because I can't imagine anyone voting to really go to Chapel Hill even though it was presented to us very clearly that we're not getting the resources here at Lincoln and we will never get those resources. Of course the court ruling is that you can't have separate but equal anyway so that was the net result is that we were integrated.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A
HACKNEY, BURNIS

FEBRUARY 5, 2001

BG: You had mentioned that you learned either late in the school term or during the summer that you were going to go to Chapel Hill High and you had some feelings about that that were just expressed to me while we were changing the tapes.

BH: Right. My personal preference of course being a senior would have been to remain at Lincoln and given all the experiences that I've had at Lincoln I had identified and bonded with Lincoln. I feel that many of the other students felt the same way, but however the net result is that we were told that the majority--at least this is my recollection--that the majority of students preferred to go ahead and go with the merger because of the fact that the resources were not going to be devoted to Lincoln that would be adequate or equal to what were available at Chapel Hill High. As I said, I'm relying on my recollection, which the event was so stressful that I can't really say with one hundred percent confidence that my recollection of this is accurate. It was very, very stressful. It was a point in my life, in our lives, that would change things for the rest of our lives. You're talking about not only integration but you're talking about losing an institution that had been a vitally important integral to the community for so many years. You did that with the hope that you would gain better resources and that the future generations would be better served in terms of education, but you knew that you were losing at that time. So as I said, it was a very stressful situation. My recollection is that we were told the majority of students did opt for the merger.

BG: Was there some discussion as to whether the merger would be delayed for a year and that Chapel Hill High School would be populated the first year just by white students?

BH: I can't recall specifically, but there was great consideration given to our concerns as seniors that we would not be allowed to finish our final year at Lincoln. I don't know if enough weight was given to that to consider delaying the process. That's very doubtful. I can't imagine that would have weighed that heavily in the process.

BG: What were your feelings when you went to Chapel Hill High School for your senior year?

BH: Well, I've never been one to really cry over spilled milk but you have your regrets. As I say, we knew what we were losing, but we didn't know what we would gain so you try to keep hope alive. We went in and even with athletics we were relatively successful. Chapel Hill was more successful than they had been in the past. With the team, I think the team was probably seventy-five to eighty-five percent black that first year. In that situation, I guess they lost a lot that year in terms of participation, that is, the prior members of the previous Chapel Hill team. You go in and once the decision has been made our teachers started trying to prepare us to make the best of the situation. We also were seniors and so we knew that there would be differences. There was a sense that the academics were accelerated and you had a very short period of time to make the adjustment. As a senior, you still wanted to graduate but there was a sense that certain of

the classes would be on a higher level than they had been previously. Frankly, I found this to be the case with certain ones, and it's the same today. Chapel Hill is more of a first year college level in terms of their presentation. There was a lot of apprehension but you also had hope. You could see that. I guess the caveat is that not only was Chapel Hill being integrated but also the entire society was being integrated and so this was just the beginning of what was it, the Great Society. There were changes being made everywhere and there was more access and you had more opportunities and certainly college and so your future education was a concern.

BG: What was your feeling about not having your senior year at Lincoln? Were you angry at that or you just accepted is my take on it from what you just said?

BH: Well, you can sometimes read the handwriting on the wall and when you have the opportunity of doing that then your best option in my opinion is to make the best of the situation. I wouldn't say anger although anger was a part of the process that we went through, the emotional pain was there, but my main concern was to get through that senior year and to graduate and to go ahead and proceed with what the future had for me.

BG: Were there differences in how you saw the teachers from Lincoln to Chapel Hill High?

BH: Well, obviously you couldn't have a more different transition, you going from an all black situation basically to an all white situation, which is a little ironic in that when I

went to college I went back to an predominately black college. That's life, you go through different situations and you have to be prepared to experience different environments, but certainly in a sense you didn't identify with whites and you had very little--. My contacts with whites to that point had been very limited. It was a big difference with the students as well as the teachers; you just didn't identify overnight with another race group. After going to a black college, I then had the opportunity to return back to UNC at Chapel Hill so I had to make the transition again. That's just the way life is, you have to go through different situations and you have to deal with different people.

BG: Did you develop friendships with whites when you were at the high school?

BH: Not real strong close friendships. Some of the guys I see today, it's more like a thing of respect that we went through something together. Maybe we detected a certain spirit within each other at the time that we can identify with a few of the guys, Mike Earey, Rodney McFarland, but not really a lot of close friendships I would say. A year's time under those circumstances I think is asking a bit much. We had been prepared that there would be a lot expected of us. That was a tremendous challenge that we were given. I feel that the juniors and the sophomores and the freshmen had more time to really adjust. We only had one year to do what we had to do, and we could only do so much adjusting, and we could only make so much in roles socially, and I don't think we made very many.

BG: You came from a school where there was a strict discipline, where life seemed to be fairly well regulated, there was some kind of a dress code, I take, from what others have told me, and a certain kind of behavior expected. Did this change when you got to Chapel Hill High School?

BH: The focus definitely shifted, and I see the same thing today. I have a daughter that teaches within the system, and I've got a daughter that's a sophomore at Chapel Hill High. The focus shifted and it's more about academic accomplishment than it is about personal development. It's basically that you have to achieve academically and it's laissez faire, you get what you get. There's nobody there really trying to cram it down your throat, there's nobody trying to really make sure that you get it although I think maybe some of the latest developments and more emphasis has been placed on achievement. How do you have achievement if you're not promoting a person and you're not taking a personal interest in the individual? I see this as the way it's going. Hopefully this new direction that the school system is taking with the addition of the-- I don't know what the person's title is but he's there to promote achievement among minority students.

BG: There's also been something in the paper recently about teaching values again in the school system. Have you read any of that or what are your feelings about that?

BH: Well, it seems as though the battle had been fought on that but that's always been a controversy is the school a place for values? Traditionally yes, but today no, but now you

say that the discussion has been reopened and been revisited. Ours are with the problem that have been had with the system and with the lag in achievement of a large segment of the school population and you would never attend to revisit some things. Personally, you're asking--. You can teach values but you have to be very careful about it. You can't be too successful with it, I don't think.

BG: I want to go back to the transition from Lincoln to Chapel Hill High. Was there any preparation given to Lincoln High School students about the transition? Were there classes on it? Was there anything done during summer?

BH: There were numerous discussions. From what I recall, there were small discussion groups talking about the transition and about the--. Mrs. Vivian Evans [Edmonds] was a guidance counselor at both Lincoln and Chapel Hill. She was there at that time and I found her to be very helpful as I always have during this period. I found her to be very helpful in terms of discussing different challenges that would be faced during the transition, and many of the other teachers also spoke about it. The whole time and even before the merger became an issue, at various times we would have discussions in terms of the importance of abstract thinking, standardized testing, and what have you. So periodically throughout the education process and even prior to the merging issue its like we were being prepared for the alternative.

BG: So you didn't go in cold turkey.

BH: I don't feel--. In a sense, we did go in cold turkey. The bottom line is basically there's nothing that could have been done to warm that turkey up adequately to serve. I can't say that we didn't go in cold turkey because, I mean, it had been done elsewhere. The Civil Rights Act was in 1964 and so here we are two or three years later getting ready to make our move, but it's a new thing. You can't warm it up.

BG: I want to go back and revisit Lincoln for a second. Do you recall how many students started when you went to Lincoln in the seventh grade and how many were still in your class when you left Lincoln? What was the dropout rate is what I'm getting at?

BH: It just seems to me it was very minuscule. Seems like it may have been a half a dozen, it may have less or it may have been up to a dozen, but I would be very surprised if it was more than a dozen that were lost during that time. I just can never remember people either relocating or just dropping out of the system that much. Usually maybe a pregnancy or something would occur and that was very rare. I think the dropout rate was very low. At Chapel Hill, I think that there were about four or five people that didn't graduate in '67.

BG: Out of a class of?

BH: I'm going to take a wild guess here and say that coming from Lincoln that senior class was sixty-seven--you will have corroborate this--I want to say that class may have

been about sixty and then the entire class I'm going to say it probably may have been two hundred of that graduating class of sixty-seven.

BG: Did you feel that you were treated the same as a student as the white teachers as the whites were treated when you went Chapel Hill High in '66?

BH: I don't have a recollection of being treated differently it's just maybe a sense of identifying with their teacher or the teacher identifying with me. Basically, I went to a class and I tried to grasp what was being disseminated and tried to score as well as I could on the tests and that was it. There was no attachment beyond that as far as myself. I can't imagine and I could even be a minority among the blacks, I can't imagine the whites taking a sullen approach, it had to be more of an identification there. They probably knew the teachers prior to that particular time but I didn't really identify with them and I don't feel that they identified with me. I don't have a bad memory of a particular teacher of just this person being a racist. Racism still was something that wasn't really dealt with on a personal level that much. It was more like a societal type thing that certain things had to change within society and not this particular individual has got to change. I didn't really have a racial problem with any of the teachers that I was aware of at that time.

BG: How about with the white students, was there verbal taunting or physical abuse that you saw or felt?

BH: There was some but I gathered in '66 and '67 it was mainly everybody just kept their distance. We were here but you go your way and I'll go mine. It was more mutual respect or mutual disrespect. There were a few individuals, a few confrontations, very few that occurred of a racial nature. But then later on tensions did develop up to a higher lever in subsequent years.

BG: When you went to Chapel Hill High, your Coach Peerman was now the assistant head coach and your principal was the assistant principal and the core curriculum teachers were almost all white, was this something that was noticed or discusses among the black students?

BH: Of course, even had it not been discussed that's like an object lesson, you see that this is how it's going to be. You bring me in but I want to be second fiddle and so that was not a lesson that anybody wanted to learn but it was very obvious that this is the way that things are played out. I think that it may have even been more noticeable with Coach Peerman in that he had been so successful that it didn't seem to be a question that qualification could possibly have been the criteria. In some of the other cases, maybe who knows? Some of those other teachers may have been from better programs, some of the white teachers maybe their high academic credentials may have been better, not to say that they were more skilled teachers, but I certainly will find it hard to believe that anybody could be a better principal than Mr. McDougle so I guess we could see it there also. So that was a good quick lesson that we did learn in terms of reality that hey, you still have got to work harder at whatever you do. You still might come in second.

BG: What about the discipline at the high school, going between classes, out on the school yard, you mentioned that you didn't see any smoking or drinking at Lincoln. Can you compare those things about behavior in the schoolyard, behavior in the school, and how the schools treated it?

BH: Well, there's an obvious difference. We had already detected that many, many years even when we were at Northside. It's ironic; Northside was really only a few blocks--. Northside was closer to Chapel Hill High than it was to Lincoln and so in passing you would see the white students on the other side of Franklin Street smoking the cigarettes at Ross Norwood's service station in clear view of the schoolyard. Nobody was trying to hide from either their parents, the community, or the school officials. This is something we had learned from elementary school that as far as personal freedoms, discipline, conduct and there would be a big, big difference there. There was a different standard and we didn't learn anything different when we went to Chapel Hill High. The personal conduct was secondary. The smoking, the dress, and your actions as long as you achieved academically, and as long as you were white everything was still okay. The black side of that, the dark side of that to use a bad metaphor would be that no matter what the rules are as a black person you still have a double standard. You can't just adopt any kind of conduct or subscribe to a lifestyle where there is no discipline involved even though the rules have been removed, and maybe that's the dilemma that occurred subsequently is that you drop the rules but still once you get into certain situations you're going to be treated differently depending on whether you are black or

whether you are not. You may be doing the same conduct but the penalty could still be there.

BG: Are you saying, Burnis, that if you had the same liberal kind of behavior that the whites had that you might be penalized for it?

BH: The penalty will be more severe if in the other case there may not even be a penalty. You are absolutely right; if you are white then maybe the penalty would not be, but it definitely would be more severe for a black person.

BG: Are there other things that you recall from Chapel Hill High that you want to share?

BH: No, I regret the loss of the institution but in life there are certain choices that have to be made and there are always losses and repercussions. There is a cause and effect when you do certain things and certain things are going to happen. But the Chapel Hill system in the terms of the resources and in terms of the facilities are still ranked among the elite of educational secondary education so in one sense I feel good and I feel that I did benefit from it. I know going to college, my first year of college, it was like I've been there and done this, and so there is a degree of ambivalence, you really regret what you lost but you recognize that it is a good system educationally.

BG: So you feel that that year is a fair interpretation of what you just said that your year at Chapel Hill High prepared you better for college than had you stayed at Lincoln, academically prepared you better?

BH: Right. In terms of certain classes and particularly English class and your writing abilities and what have you, you were better prepared, and I'm being quite honest.

BG: Is there anything else that you would like to share or anything that I haven't asked you that you'd like to bring up?

BH: I guess I will just have to reiterate in my opinion the problem arose because of an unwillingness to put the resources in the black community, and it's unfortunate but over thirty years later we still have the same problem here. We're sitting here in this facility that was just built probably in the last seven years that could have been located in the black community, but it's way out here on Estes [Drive]. The only infrastructure that I have witnessed that I'm aware of that has been put in the black community and there are only three public institutions to date and that would be Northside, Lincoln, and Hargraves. This is 2001 and any time discussion comes up as far as a new school, a public library, a police station or any type of public facility that's paid out of tax revenue which all citizens are taxed at the same rate, black and white, no infrastructure, no resources are going into the black community. This is something that you can say is by omission or as by commission but this is something that is happening and in this new millennium we really, really need to stop being hypocritical about what's going on around here.

BG: Maybe that's a good place to stop, Burnis, unless you want to add anymore.

BH: I think we will stop. I hate to stop on a negative note, but as I say, this is 2001, and we really do need to move on.

END OF INTERVIEW