**Oral History Interview**

**with**

**Diane Willis Hubbard**

Interview Conducted by

Tanya Finchum

August 9, 2014

Spotlighting Oklahoma

Oral History Project

**Oklahoma Oral History Research Program**

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**Interview History**

Interviewer: Tanya Finchum

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The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Project Detail**

The purpose of the *Spotlighting Oklahoma Oral History Project* is to document the development of the state by recording its cultural and intellectual history.

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on April 15, 2009.

**Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Diane Hubbard is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on August 9, 2014.

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**About Diane Willis Hubbard…**

Diane Willis Hubbard was born in Vinita, Oklahoma, 1947. Her parents were Dwain and Jerry Willis. Diane attended Attucks School from 1951-56, and the school integrated after she finished the sixth grade. She would go on to graduate from Vinita High School in 1964. After high school, Diane attended Draughon’s Business College in Tulsa, Oklahoma and for a time worked for her aunt who was in the real estate business in Tulsa. She soon returned to Vinita and worked for different companies before starting a twenty-eight year career at Eastern State Hospital. In 1996 Diane married a fellow Attucks School attendee and in 2000 she retired from Eastern State Hospital. Diane is the granddaughter of Dr. Louis Ryan, an early day physician in Vinita. Prior to an early death, he had built a hospital but passed away before it was opened.

The Attucks School District was established in 1900, and Attucks School, a two-story brick school was built in 1916-17. It housed grades one through twelve and served the educational needs of African Americans in Vinita, Oklahoma. In 1939 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) built a gymnasium for the school. Following the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, the school was desegregated. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

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| **Diane Hubbard**  Oral History Interview  Interviewed by Tanya Finchum  August 9, 2014  Vinita, Oklahoma |  |

**Finchum** *Today is August 9, 2014. My name is Tanya Finchum, and I’m with Oklahoma State University. Today we are in Vinita, Oklahoma to talk to graduates or attendees of Attucks School here in Vinita. Today I am with Diane Willis Hubbard. Thank you for having us.*

**Hubbard** You’re welcome.

**Finchum** *Thank you for coming. Let’s start with learning a little bit about you. When and where were you born?*

**Hubbard** I was born in Vinita, Oklahoma, 1947, February 16.

**Finchum** *What did your parents do for a living?*

**Hubbard** My dad, he worked as a cleaner and presser of clothes. My mom, she was a LPN.

**Finchum** *Did you have brothers and sisters?*

**Hubbard** Yes, I have two brothers and one sister. Dwain Willis, Jr., everybody knows him as Buzz. My sister is Jennifer Willis. My other brother is Dale Willis.

**Finchum** *Where do you fall in the order?*

**Hubbard** I’m the oldest.

**Finchum** *You’re the oldest.*

**Hubbard** I’m the oldest.

**Finchum** *Were you the bossy one?*

**Hubbard** Yes. (Laughter)

**Finchum** *Did you live in town or out in the country?*

**Hubbard** We lived in town.

**Finchum** *In town.*

**Hubbard** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Describe your house you grew up in?*

**Hubbard** My house I grew up in was a three-story, I think seventeen rooms. It was on South Second Street. Everybody came there to play and go on. It was my grandmother and grandfather’s house, which he built for a hospital. He was a doctor. He got sick and passed away. I think it was in 1931 or ’33, I can’t quite remember. So my grandmother turned it into a room and board, and the whole family lived there. The whole family has been living there for I don’t know how long, but anyway, we are all on our own now. My brother still lives there.

**Finchum** *Seventeen rooms? So you just divided them up between the families, different families?*

**Hubbard** Mostly my mother and father and the kids stayed there, but we always had other relatives come in and spend the summer. Every holiday we’d all get together and just have a good time.

**Finchum** *Where had he learned to be a doctor?*

**Hubbard** Him?

**Finchum** *Yes, your grandparent.*

**Hubbard** He went to Meharry College in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Finchum** *Was he from Tennessee?*

**Hubbard** He was from Mississippi.

**Finchum** *Mississippi. Okay.*

**Hubbard** I can’t think of that little town’s name. I look it up all the time. It was a small town in Mississippi.

**Finchum** *How did he end up in Vinita?*

**Hubbard** You know, I never did really know, but well in a way yes I do know. Somebody contacted them and told them that they needed a Negro doctor in Vinita and so he came. He checked it out and decided to stay here.

**Finchum** *He built the hospital. Was it in operation for any length of time?*

**Hubbard** Well, as a doctor’s office at first. Then he, you know, built on to make more rooms to make more room for the hospital. That’s when he got pneumonia and he passed away.

**Finchum** *How many children had he had?*

**Hubbard** It was nine of them.

**Finchum** *Seventeen rooms came in handy then.*

**Hubbard** Yeah. (Laughs) The oldest was Louis Ryan. He was a teacher in Vinita. He was a science teacher and a coach. He’s in the Coach’s Hall of Fame and now they are trying to get him into the Educator’s Hall of Fame. Let’s see, who is next? Aunt Marilyn, who is the only one that is still living. She lives in Rockville, Maryland. She’s ninety-two years old. She worked at the Library of Congress until she retired. Then Uncle Davis. He’s a research chemist. He lived in Alabama at that time, then moved to Maryland. Uncle Cecil, he was a pilot. He taught flying. He taught the—where are the black fliers?

**Finchum** *The Tuskegee airmen.*

**Hubbard** Yes, the Tuskegee group, he taught them. He lived in Nashville, Tennessee. Then there is Uncle Herbert, he was doctor. He died probably about ten years ago. He lived in Atlanta, Georgia. My Aunt Juanita, she was a home ec teacher here in Vinita. Aunt Laura, she passed away in 1947. I don’t know what, I don’t think Aunt Laura did anything. She was pretty young when she passed away. Then, there was my Aunt Bee. She was a banker. Then there was my mother, LPN. I think that’s all of them.

**Finchum** *All very educated and…*

**Hubbard** All of them were.

**Finchum** …*and ventured away from Vinita then.*

**Hubbard** All except my mother and Uncle Louis.

**Finchum** *Had some of them gone to Attucks?*

**Hubbard** All of them did.

**Finchum** *All of them had.*

**Hubbard** All of them did, all of them graduated from Attucks.

**Finchum** *Okay. That’s impressive, too.*

**Hubbard** My Uncle Louis even taught at Attucks before they integrated.

**Finchum** *Was he one of the favorite teachers I hear?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah. (Laughs) Then he moved on to Vinita High School.

**Finchum** *Helped make that transition better for others?*

**Hubbard** Yeah.

**Finchum** *When did you go to Attucks?*

**Hubbard** From 1951 to 1956 I think is when it was. We used to go to the school so often. I was five years old, the girls would come by the house and pick us up to take us to school with them, you know, the older girls. As they said, since we were going there every day, we may as well enroll. So they enrolled me at five years old. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *And you were ready?*

**Hubbard** I was ready.

**Finchum** *Who was your teacher? Do you remember?*

**Hubbard** Oh lord yes.

**Finchum** *First grade teacher?*

**Hubbard** First grade teacher was Daisy Barker. She taught first and second grade. Then Ella Mae Harriss taught third and fourth grade. Mrs. Hardrick, I can’t think of her first name, taught fifth and sixth grade. That’s when we integrated, after the sixth grade.

**Finchum** *Do you remember that time period any? Switching to Vinita?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah.

**Finchum** *Was it hard?*

**Hubbard** Well, at first we didn’t want to go, you know. We got used to it. Everybody was friendly and everything. We all became friends and still are. Some of us are still friends.

**Finchum** *How many students would be in your class at Attucks?*

**Hubbard** Just in our grade? I think we had just about the biggest grade which was about, I think there was twelve of us.

**Finchum** *Pretty small.*

**Hubbard** Yeah.

**Finchum** *A good number to work with.*

**Hubbard** Yeah. We all graduated together, maybe with the exception of two or three that had moved.

**Finchum** *What would you do for like recess?*

**Hubbard** Oh, we’d go out and play. They had playground equipment. We’d play ring-around-the-roses, or volleyball, or on the swings, and the merry-go-rounds, and the slip-n-slides, get all skinned up. (Laughs) We had good times. We really did.

**Finchum** *Did it have a cafeteria?*

**Hubbard** No, huh-uh. We had to either bring our lunch or we went home for lunch.

**Finchum** *Which did you do?*

**Hubbard** Most of the times I went home for lunch.

**Finchum** *It was walking distance?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, it was walking distance.

**Finchum** *What would you have?*

**Hubbard** Usually a sandwich, or sometimes my mother would fix a full meal at noon time.

**Finchum** *So you were close enough to walk. When would school start? At eight or nine?*

**Hubbard** Nine.

**Finchum** *Nine?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, it started at nine.

**Finchum** *And go to? Finish up at?*

**Hubbard** Four o’clock.

**Finchum** *A little longer. Interesting. What were the school colors?*

**Hubbard** Blue and white.

**Finchum** *Blue and white. And the name, team name?*

**Hubbard** Warriors, Attucks Warriors.

**Finchum** *Did you attend many of the sporting events?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah.

**Finchum** *Well, since your uncle coached, I guess you did.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, he coached my dad, They had one of the best basketball teams in Oklahoma.

**Finchum** *And your dad was on the team?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *What was his name?*

**Hubbard** Dwain Willis.

**Finchum** *What position did he play?*

**Hubbard** You know, I don’t know. I was little. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *You were little. Okay. Understand.*

**Hubbard** I wasn’t born. I don’t know. I’m thinking about the baseball. He used to play baseball really good. They said he was one of the best baseball players that there was, and he should have been in the big league.

**Finchum** *Well, what stopped him?*

**Hubbard** Well, the integration thing. They say he should have been right up there with Jackie Robinson.

**Finchum** *Did any of those skills pass on down to the next generation?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah. We all played ball, softball or baseball or whatever, but we all did.

**Finchum** *Did you have to work when you were in school?*

**Hubbard** No.

**Finchum** *Any chores at home?*

**Hubbard** Oh yes. (Laughs) We did. We washed, we washed dishes, we cleaned, we ironed. I mean we ironed. You ironed sheets and everything. My grandmother would sit right there and watch you, and you better not put a wrinkle in there. She would make you sprinkle it down and get it out.

**Finchum** *Starch them too, or just iron?*

**Hubbard** She would starch them. Yes, sprinkle them down and put them in the refrigerator overnight and then we would iron them the next day.

**Finchum** *In the refrigerator?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, to keep them fresh. Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *You don’t do that today, do you?*

**Hubbard** Oh no. Very seldom do I iron anything. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Were the irons electric?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, they were electric then. We had an old wringer type washing machine, where you had to have two tubs of water for rinsing and then your wringer like washer. Then we hung them on the line.

**Finchum** *Then you pressed them.*

**Hubbard** Then we pressed them. I was so glad when we got a dryer. (Laughs) I remember the first TV we even got.

**Finchum** *Really?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. It was in the early ’50s.

**Finchum** *How many stations did you get?*

**Hubbard** I think three. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Did all the neighbors come to watch too?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, yeah, yeah, then everybody started getting TVs. We listened to the radio a lot.

**Finchum** *Music?*

**Hubbard** Yes. I mean all the kids in the neighborhood and out of the neighborhood would come to our house, because we had a basketball goal in the back, then on the south side of the house, we always played ball. We always had something going. We had two big porch swings. We’d break them down all the time, swinging so high. My cousins and I, there was three of us that stayed just real close, you know. We’d get in the living room and we’d play the piano and sing and open the window so everybody could hear us. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Could you carry a tune?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah we could, yes we could. It was really—we were good.

**Finchum** *Do you remember anything in particular that you want to sing for us?*

**Hubbard** No, (laughter), not now.

**Finchum** *Not even one little line.*

**Hubbard** Not now.

**Finchum** *As a teenager, would you go on dates?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, we would occasionally.

**Finchum** *What would you do?*

**Hubbard** Go to the movie. That’s about it.

**Finchum** *Here in Vinita?*

**Hubbard** You could go to a movie or you could go to a ballgame or something.

**Finchum** *Was the movie house integrated?*

**Hubbard** Well, we had to sit up in the balcony and the whites sit down below, but really we could see better, you know, from the balcony.

**Finchum** *They would make sure that you didn’t sit downstairs?*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *Someone there to watch?*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *Huh.*

**Hubbard** Somebody stood right there.

**Finchum** *Times have changed, thank goodness.*

**Hubbard** I know it, I know it.

**Finchum** *Have any issues with going into restaurants or places like that in town?*

**Hubbard** You know, I never did, but there was one restaurant, still is here, Clanton’s. They would have the black people to sit in the back. They had a place for them in the back. I never would go in there. My mother, she would not go in there, even if she was still living today, she wouldn’t go just because of that, you know. We didn’t go to too many restaurants. My dad, when he was off on the weekends, we’d get up early, and we’d go out for breakfast or something like that.

**Finchum** *With Vinita being here, were there rival teams for Attucks? Any rival teams?*

**Hubbard** Yes, yes.

**Finchum** *Like who would they play? Who would be their biggest…*

**Hubbard** They would play like Pawhuska, Nowata, Muskogee. I can’t remember all of them.

**Finchum** *You’d have to travel a little ways.*

**Hubbard** I think Tulsa. Yeah, they traveled a lot. They traveled a whole lot. My uncle would pack them just about all in his car. They didn’t have buses. His car and maybe another car would take them.

**Finchum** *The basketball team?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *That’s a lot of responsibility.*

**Hubbard** Yes it is.

**Finchum** *He probably fed them, too.*

**Hubbard** Yes. My uncle’s sister-in-law had a restaurant next door to us, and she would feed the team.

**Finchum** *And they won state champions a couple times?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, yeah.

**Finchum** *Did the town celebrate? Or I guess the school did at least.*

**Hubbard** The school did.

**Finchum** *Good times.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, we did. We really had good times.

**Finchum** *Describe a typical day for you. Take us through the building. Where would your classes be?*

**Hubbard** Well, my first grade class, as you come up the steps to your right, it was the first door on your right. My third and fourth grade was about two doors down from it. Then my fifth and sixth grade was across the hall from it. Then we had a big gymnasium. We had a big trophy case, and it was full.

**Finchum** *Mostly sports or some academic, too?*

**Hubbard** All sports, all sports, but I’ll tell you one thing, you learned. I mean, there wasn’t no playing around when it came to learning. They would spank you. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Girls, too?*

**Hubbard** Yeah. Well, we had one teacher, she would take your hand and she would bend it back like that, and boy, that old paddle. So we tried to stay away from the paddling. (Laughs) I mean they would make you stay after school, you know. They would teach you. My uncle would even come over to the house and help me with my homework and stuff.

**Finchum** *Did he do that for others, or just because you were a relative?*

**Hubbard** Just because I was a relative, I think. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Did it have a library? Do you remember if it had a library?*

**Hubbard** Yes, it was very small, I think, very small library.

**Finchum** *Was it just for the students, or could people in the community use it?*

**Hubbard** No, just for students.

**Finchum** *Just for students.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Were most of the classes, high school classes, geared toward getting you into college or into a trade?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah. You know, most of the people that graduated from Attucks went to college. I know my whole family did.

**Finchum** *They came from educated people, too.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Every one of them went.

**Finchum** *It was important. And was church equally important?*

**Hubbard** Oh yes, yes. We went to church all the time. If we didn’t go to church, we couldn’t go to the movie. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *So who was the disciplinarian at home? Your mom or your dad?*

**Hubbard** Well, my mom kind of ruled the roost, I think. (Laughs) All Daddy had to do was look at us, you know. He would give you a certain look, and you would straighten up. They were very good parents, very good.

**Finchum** *Did you all meet around the dinner table? Or supper table I guess I should say. Which did you call it, dinner or supper?*

**Hubbard** Dinner. Yeah, we all had to sit at the table and eat together.

**Finchum** *Would you have lunch—oh you came home for lunch.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, we’d have breakfast. My dad, he would always cook breakfast. Lunch, we had three meals a day, plus snacks. I mean, we always had plenty of food. You can look at us today and tell. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well once you got out of Attucks, you went to Vinita High School, and graduated then?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *What year?*

**Hubbard** Sixty-four.

**Finchum** *Did you have a favorite subject?*

**Hubbard** Well, what did I like? I like typing. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Not math?*

**Hubbard** Not math, not science. I kind of like history.

**Finchum** *Had you planned on going to college yourself, at that point?*

**Hubbard** Well, yeah.

**Finchum** *Were you?*

**Hubbard** Yeah. My aunt had a real estate business. One of my aunts on my dad’s side, she had a real estate business in Tulsa. She wanted me to move there and be her secretary, you know. So I did, that’s when I enrolled into Draughon’s [Business College].

**Finchum** *It was a two-year program?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, uh-huh.

**Finchum** *When you finished that, what did you do?*

**Hubbard** I came back to Vinita. I worked for the Neighborhood Youth Corp. It’s where kids that were dropping out of school, we would get jobs for them but they had to attend night classes. We would take them on field trips and things like that. Then where did I work? I think it was Sequoyah Furniture Company. Then it phased out, and I worked at Cinch, its electronic connectors, for a while, but I didn’t like that at all. (Laughs) One of my mother’s friends, she was the director of nursing at Eastern State Hospital. I came in one night and I was just a fussing, “I hate that job, I hate that job.” She says, “Well come and go to work for me.” (Laughs) I said, “Doing what?” “Secretary work like you supposed to.” She hired me at Eastern State, and I worked out there for twenty-eight years. Retired in 2000.

**Finchum** *I don’t know a great deal about Eastern State. Can you tell us a little bit about it?*

**Hubbard** It’s a mental hospital.

**Finchum** *Mental hospital.*

**Hubbard** It’s a mental hospital.

**Finchum** *Did they have many patients then?*

**Hubbard** When I first went there, they had like 2000 patients. When I left there, they had a maximum of about 200. Big change

**Finchum** *Big change.*

**Hubbard** And it’s really changed now. They don’t even have civil patients anymore. It’s all forensic, all criminals.

**Finchum** *So when did you[start] there?*

*.*

**Hubbard** Well, I started in 1972.

**Finchum** *So you saw lots of changes during that time?*

**Hubbard** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Would they accept blacks, too, at that time?*

**Hubbard** Yes, but they did have a black mental institution in Taft, Oklahoma. Then they started integrating them, too. They cleaned out Taft, and brought all of them to Vinita. What was I going to tell you? (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Closed Taft, if they brought them here.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, they closed Taft, but they opened it up with something else. It think it was a prison or something. I think that’s what they have down there. They do have a prison down there now.

**Finchum** *Well, did you feel safe working there with the mental patients?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah. Yeah, I loved it. I really did.

**Finchum** *Did they have things for them to do like…*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah.

**Finchum** *… like gardening or whatever it might be?*

**Hubbard** They had a full farm…

**Finchum** *Farm?*

**Hubbard** …when I first got there. I mean they grew all the vegetables. They had cattle and stuff like that. They had hogs, you know. They butchered all their meats and grew their vegetables. You know, they would have to buy some stuff. The patients worked. They paid them a certain amount of money. They had other jobs for them to do, too. Since it was a state institution, it really didn’t cost the patients anything if they could not pay. I’ll tell you, it was a good place to work, really. It really was. Then it just got, I don’t know just... (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Things change…*

**Hubbard** Things change, because we just used to enjoy going to work, really enjoy it.

**Finchum** *You were a …*

**Hubbard** I worked in the nursing office.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hubbard** Then I worked in the EEG/EKG department. I’ve been everywhere out there. Then they had this, what they called the Ambulance Service where we transported patients to like Oklahoma City, Little Rock, the one in Topeka, Kansas, just all over. We’d take them to Norman for medical help. Well, they wanted to know if I wanted to do that. So, I did that, oh lord, for about ten years and then I quit. (Laughs) Two months and I was back. I quit and moved to Tulsa. I worked for AVIS Reservation Center. Well, I just didn’t like that Tulsa traffic and stuff, so I came back to Vinita and back out to the hospital, and I started working in the medical records. I spent my last ten years say in medical records.

**Finchum** *Vinita’s home. You kept coming back.*

**Hubbard** Vinita’s home.

**Finchum** *Didn’t ever want to live anywhere else?*

**Hubbard** No, I really didn’t.

**Finchum** *Did you meet your husband here?*

**Hubbard** He was from Vinita.

**Finchum** *How did you meet?*

**Hubbard** Oh we just grew up together.

**Finchum** *Grew up together.*

**Hubbard** Yes. Grew up together. He went into the service and was gone a long time, and he lived up in Pennsylvania. He would come home all the time, you know. Finally, we got together. Finally. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Got married when? What year?*

**Hubbard** Ninety-six.

**Finchum** *Ninety-six.*

**Hubbard** Ninety-six.

**Finchum** *Not too long ago.*

**Hubbard** No, and he passed away.

**Finchum** *Was he in the Air Force or Army?*

**Hubbard** Army. He had a career. Then he worked as a civilian on an Army base after he retired from the Army. He retired from that and came back to Vinita.

**Finchum** *So he had gone to Attucks, too?*

**Hubbard** Yes, oh yeah.

**Finchum** *Everything comes back to there. It was a very good school I understand.*

**Hubbard** It was a good school.

**Finchum** *Did you do the “Pledge of allegiance” and say a prayer and all that in the morning?*

**Hubbard** Oh yes, and say a prayer every morning. We sure did.

**Finchum**  *Did you have programs like at Christmas?*

**Hubbard** All the time, yes. We even entertained the mental patients out there. We’d do little skits for them and sing for them. Things like that.

**Finchum** *Had buses to take you there or did you have to recruit parents?*

**Hubbard** A bus took us, a bus took us. Yeah.

**Finchum** *The school had electricity?*

**Hubbard** Oh yes.

**Finchum** *No air conditioning?*

**Hubbard** No. Had that heat though (laughs), those old radiators, you know. All those, oh they’d be so hot, you know. No air.

**Finchum** *Would you have spelling bees?*

**Hubbard** No, we never did have a spelling bee, that I know of. No, I don’t think we did.

**Finchum** *Debate teams?*

**Hubbard** No.

**Finchum** *PEP clubs?*

**Hubbard** Yep.

**Finchum** *Cheerleaders I guess, PEP clubs?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. My mother, she was a cheerleader.

**Finchum** *She had gone there, too, I guess.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, they all went there.

**Finchum** *Oh…*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *The school was important for the community wasn’t it?*

**Hubbard** Oh yes, yes it was.

**Finchum** *When they closed it and separated, did that impact the community much?*

**Hubbard** Not too bad, no. You know, they still kept the school open, but they only had grade school and it was integrated also. They changed the name of the school to South East. Then, they eventually turned it back to Attucks.

**Finchum** *Interesting. Have any idea where that name came from?*

**Hubbard** Attucks? Yes. There was a guy named Attucks. Christopher Attucks, I’m trying to think, what did he do? I can’t remember. That’s who it was named for, Christopher Attucks.

**Finchum** *Was your mother a homeroom mother?*

**Hubbard** Yes, oh yeah. They had the PTA.

**Finchum** *An active one?*

**Hubbard** Very active.

**Finchum** *Would they have fall carnivals?*

**Hubbard** No, we never did have a carnival.

**Finchum** *Art classes?*

**Hubbard** No.

**Finchum** *No? No art? Just music.*

**Hubbard** Just music.

**Finchum** *And math and science.*

**Hubbard** And math and science and plenty of it. Home ec…

**Finchum** *When they made you switch over to Vinita, did you ride a bus?*

**Hubbard** No, we walked.

**Finchum** *You walked?*

**Hubbard** Yes, it wasn’t that far, maybe about twenty minutes. Then, if it rained or snowed or whatever, my dad would take us.

**Finchum** *Had a car?*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *By that time.*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *Did your mother sew much?*

**Hubbard** All the time. She used to make all of our clothes, except the boys. She made the girls’ clothes.

**Finchum** *Didn’t do boys?*

**Hubbard** No. I think that’s where I learned to sew. I used to make all my clothes. She would cut her own patterns and stuff out. She would look in the catalog, and she would see something, and she’d cut that pattern out and make it. She was a pretty talented lady. (Laughs) And one of the best cooks that there is.

**Finchum** *What was her favorite dish?*

**Hubbard** You know, I don’t know what her favorite dish was, but she loved to get in there and make just a plain old cake. That was the best tasting cake.

**Finchum** *From scratch?*

**Hubbard** From scratch. No recipes or nothing. She never used a recipe. Never.

**Finchum** *Did they have a garden?*

**Hubbard** Uh, did we have a garden? Yes we did. All the salad. You’d have to see. You’d have to see the lots. All the south side and all the west side, garden. Finally, my mother got tired of the garden, so she planted a bunch of fruit trees out there in the back. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well, she still had to can I guess.*

**Hubbard** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Can the fruit.*

**Hubbard** At least she didn’t have to tend to them like she did the garden. Well, we did too. We’d have to get out there and pull weeds and stuff, too.

**Finchum** *She did a lot of canning and your grandmother, too?*

**Hubbard** We all did. We all helped. I’d get tired of peeling those old peaches. I’d reach up under that water and squeeze them trying to get rid of them. I was ornery. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *You solved problems creatively.*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *Being ornery. They had the big cellar then if she canned a lot?*

**Hubbard** Well, they had what they called a smokehouse a long time ago. They even smoked their meats and stuff. That was before I came along. They would smoke their meats and stuff. They burned coal. They had what they call a coalhouse, and we had this big old stove right in the front. You talk, it’d keep the whole house warm.

**Finchum** *All seventeen rooms?*

**Hubbard** Just about. I’ll tell you that heat would go upstairs. It would be something else. Don’t get close to it, you would burn yourself. I’ve got scars all over me from that stove.

**Finchum** *Did the house have an indoor toilet, bathtub?*

**Hubbard** Yeah. Yeah. One upstairs and one downstairs.

**Finchum** *You didn’t have to worry about going to the outhouse then.*

**Hubbard** No. Oh no, never went to an outhouse.

**Finchum** *A lot of people have.*

**Hubbard** Oh, I know.

**Finchum** *Just asking.*

**Hubbard** I know. There was a guy that lived down the street from us. He hasn’t had bathroom facilities very long at all. Maybe ten years.

**Finchum** *Really?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Did the house have electricity by that time?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah.

**Finchum** *When your grandparents built it, would they have already had power by then?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Finchum** *I can’t imagine growing up in a seventeen-room house. Plenty of room, if you wanted to be by yourself you could find a spot.*

**Hubbard** We had a third floor that they had parties and stuff, you know. A lot of Attucks proms were held there. They had big bands that would come and play on weekends. I mean it just, everybody came there for everything.

**Finchum** *Kind of just the community center for the neighborhood.*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *Do you remember some of the bands?*

**Hubbard** The only one I really remember was the Ivory Star, and he used to come there all the time.

**Finchum** *The dances would be slow dance, ballroom, jitterbug, what?*

**Hubbard** Oh, just everything.

**Finchum** *All of it?*

**Hubbard** All of it. Yeah.

**Finchum** *And you’d get to go?*

**Hubbard** No, not until later.

**Finchum** *When you were in Attucks, did they still have them there?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, we had them there. We had the parties there. They sure did. We had parties there even after I grew up. Everybody said, “Where can we have a party,” and I said, “Well we still got 219, an empty hall upstairs.” (Laughs) So we had several parties there.

**Finchum** *The third floor wasn’t broken into individual rooms?*

**Hubbard** It had two rooms, one on each end.

**Finchum** *Two big ones.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Then a great big hallway. Almost as big as, as long as the house.

**Finchum** *Had a piano?*

**Hubbard** Had a piano.

**Finchum** *Did you take piano lessons?*

**Hubbard** Yes I did. Can’t play today. (Laughs) My piano teacher, she had a habit of hitting your fingers when you’d mess up, you know. I got tired of that and I just quit. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Would you have to do recitals?*

**Hubbard** Yes. Sure did. Mrs. Blye was my piano teacher. She was the principal’s wife, the principal of Attucks.

**Finchum** *They kept tabs on you in and out of school.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Finchum** *How long did your grandmother live?*

**Hubbard** She was eighty-five, I think. She passed away in ’75, I think.

**Finchum** *Had been a widow for quite a while then. It was your mother’s mother who had had the seventeen-room house?*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *They had come from Tennessee or Mississippi?*

**Hubbard** She came from Tennessee. Yeah, she was born in Tennessee, and he was born in Mississippi. Covington, Tennessee is where she’s from.

**Finchum** *Then your father?*

**Hubbard** He’s from Vinita.

**Finchum** *He’s from here. Okay.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Are they still living, your parents?*

**Hubbard** No. They both passed away. My dad passed away in ’92 and she passed away in ’04, I think. The house caught on fire.

**Finchum** *The seventeen-room house?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, but just that one area burned. They never did decide what caused the fire or anything. Anyway, my sister happened to be home, late for work. It’s a good thing she was because she heard the fire alarm go off. She said, “Oh what did Geraldine do now?” So she walks in there, she’s on fire. She died from thermal burns.

**Finchum** *Awful way to go.*

**Hubbard** It is, it is. I mean she didn’t completely burn up or anything like that. She was just bad scarring.

**Finchum** *Pretty long life otherwise.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, she would be eight-eight now.

**Finchum** *Do you have children?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh, three.

**Finchum** *They wouldn’t have gone to Attucks.*

**Hubbard** Well, they went to Southeast.

**Finchum** *Okay. Are they in Vinita?*

**Hubbard** Yes, they are in Vinita.

**Finchum** *They all stayed home, too.*

**Hubbard** They all stayed home, too.

**Finchum** *What is it about Attucks and this community that keeps people here?*

**Hubbard** You know, I don’t know because there really is not that much around here, you know. Not really, especially job wise. I guess everybody worked at the hospital. Now my middle daughter is a beautician. Angela, my oldest daughter, she had to retire early because of her health. She has arthritis so bad where she’s been thrown around at that hospital.

**Finchum** *Lifting.*

**Hubbard** Lifting and patients fighting you, whatever, you know. Then my middle daughter, she works for the Home of Hope.

**Finchum** *I’m not familiar with that.*

**Hubbard** Okay, that’s for adult special needs.

**Finchum** *She has**patience then.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, it’s kind of like a private deal, you know.

**Finchum** *They all stayed in Vinita. It’s just home, I guess, is what it comes down to.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, it’s home. See we go all the time. It’s all right to visit Tulsa. I have plenty of kin people in Tulsa, a whole lot of them. We go to Joplin. We go everywhere.

**Finchum** *When you were in high school and a little bit older, did you go to Boley any?*

**Hubbard** Boley?

**Finchum** *Boley?*

**Hubbard** My aunt lived in Boley.

**Finchum** *And what was her name?*

**Hubbard** Bee, the one who worked for the banks.

**Finchum** *And her last name?*

**Hubbard** Irons.

**Finchum** *Irons. Okay.*

**Hubbard** Lela Bea Irons, Yeah, her husband ran the training school there in Boley.

**Finchum** *Okay. I’ve talk with Henrietta Hicks. Does that name sound familiar? She’s in Boley.*

**Hubbard** Henrietta Hicks, that name sounds, yes.

**Finchum** *It was a happening place back in its day.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. I know Henrietta and her sister both.

**Finchum** *JoAnn.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Mary Jo [Matthews].

**Finchum** Yes.

**Hubbard** Yes she, Mary Jo, then my cousin that lives in Oklahoma City now, they were good friends in high school in Boley.

**Finchum** They had dances and dance halls and all that.

**Hubbard** They had a little bit of everything. We used to go Boley and spend the summer. I’d go to Boley and spend the summer. They’d come to Vinita and spend a summer or whatever.

**Finchum** *They talked a lot about Trulove’s hamburgers.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. I remember that. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *One of the things they missed.*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *So Vinita didn’t have that kind of happening scene?*

**Hubbard** Well, we had—my mother had a little restaurant before she became an LPN. She did hamburgers and you know ice cream and stuff like that. Nothing big, chili and stew. Then her sister-in-law’s sister had a little restaurant right next door to us. She did barbeque, chicken. I mean she did everything. That little place stayed busy. Had it right there in her house. All the front of her house was restaurant.

**Finchum** *So cooking ran in the family a little bit?*

**Hubbard** Yes.

**Finchum** *People would come from other places to there, too, or just mostly the neighborhood?*

**Hubbard** Yeah. Everybody would come there. Most of the kids ate lunch there and everything. I used to go over there and have lunch every once in a while.

**Finchum** *What was Vinita the town like when you were in high school?*

**Hubbard** You know, we used to have a lot of fun in Vinita is all I can say. We did. I mean, we’d go up town and look around. We’d walk at night, and we had what they called the Sale Ground Hill. It’s right down the street from us. Anyways, it’s a big steep hill. We’d ride our bicycles down that thing. You talk about skinned up now. I got more scars on me from that thing cause it was rock for a long time. It was a rock road. We’d take those old bicycles down that road. It was fun though. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *It was called what hill?*

**Hubbard** Sale Ground Hill

**Finchum** *Sale Ground. Well if you had snow, did you sled down it in the winter?*

**Hubbard** No, huh-uh. It was a little dangerous.

**Finchum** *Okay, just checking. (Laughter) Not too many hills in Stillwater. That’s why I was asking.*

**Hubbard** I see a lot of kids, though, in the snow. Where Walmart is, there is a big hill right behind the old country club. I see a lot of them sledding down that.

**Finchum** *What were some of the family traditions that have been passed down to you or do you have any?*

**Hubbard** Cooking.

**Finchum** *Cooking.*

**Hubbard** Holidays we barbeque. Summer holidays we barbeque. I mean we really do it. Then Thanksgiving, Christmas, I mean every holiday we do something. The whole family used to get together on holidays. I mean the entire family, Ryan bunch, used to together.

**Finchum** *Well, what was the one dish that everyone expected to have?*

**Hubbard** Turkey and dressing.

**Finchum** *Not a particular pie?*

**Hubbard** Well, they want that too. They want everything. My oldest daughter will just start naming off stuff. I said, “You’re not going to help cook. I’m not cooking all that stuff.” (Laughter) I do all the cooking. All of it…

**Finchum** *Dressing from scratch pretty much?*

**Hubbard** Yes, Uh-huh. Everything from scratch.

**Finchum** *Do you have a recipe book?*

**Hubbard** I have recipe books. I use them sometimes.

**Finchum** *Sometimes?*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Like my dressing and stuff like that I don’t have to have a recipe for that. You just go by taste.

**Finchum** *They might not be able to replicate it. You might want to write it down for their daughters.*

**Hubbard** Well, they watched me enough. I learned to make it by watching my mother, you know.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Hubbard** I told them, “If you all get in this kitchen, you all can do it.” “We rather you do it.” I say, “Yeah.”

**Finchum** *Well, at Christmas would you have a tree as a youngster?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah. Oh yeah, always.

**Finchum** *Real or artificial?*

**Hubbard** Well, we had real ones for a long time. Then when the artificial ones came out—I remember the first artificial tree we had was aluminum. Remember those?

**Finchum** *I remember silver ones.*

**Hubbard** Yeah, those silver.

**Finchum** *Uh-huh.*

**Hubbard** They had the lights, you know, the color lights that you had a little wheel that went around. That was the prettiest thing I thought. Then the more I looked at that I said, “That’s ugly. (Laughs) I need a real tree.”

**Finchum** *And it doesn’t smell. You need the smell.*

**Hubbard** You need that smell. Now we use artificial. I’ll get tired of one and go buy another color or something like that.

**Finchum** *Do you exchange Christmas letters where you tell what’s going on for the whole year?*

**Hubbard** No, I never have done that. Now I have a cousin who does it all the time.

**Finchum** *Some people get into it, others don’t. I thought I’d ask.*

**Hubbard** No, huh-uh.

**Finchum** *Have you traveled very much?*

**Hubbard** Yes, just in the states. Well I went to Mexico a couple of times, but that don’t count. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *You may count it. I’ve been there once, won’t go back.*

**Hubbard** I’m not going back. We’ve been to California, Las Vegas. I use to travel a whole lot when I was bowling.

**Finchum** *Bowling?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, we’d go to the national tournaments. Been everywhere; Florida, Milwaukee, Indiana. Did I say Las Vegas? Las Vegas. Where’s that other town at in Nevada?

**Finchum** *Reno?*

**Hubbard** Reno. Yeah. Lake Tahoe, I’ve been a lot of places.

**Finchum** *You’re actually competing yourself?*

**Hubbard** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Bowling?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, yeah.

**Finchum** *How long did you do that?*

**Hubbard** I’ve been bowling ever since the late ’60s, until my knees got so bad I had to quit. I quit just about five years ago.

**Finchum** *Did they have a bowling alley in Vinita?*

**Hubbard** Used to have. She was going to rebuild and they couldn’t get the loan, so she just quit altogether. She only had like a six-lane bowling alley. We always went to Miami or Pryor and bowled in leagues.

**Finchum** *How heavy was your ball?*

**Hubbard** Twelve pounds, yes. I tried heavier balls, but it didn’t work. It hurt. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well, do you have a favorite memory from Attucks from your days at the Attucks school?*

**Hubbard** Oh, really I like the music department. I really loved the music department. We had a really good music teacher. Her name was Ella Mae Harriss. She was just really good. She gave everybody a chance at singing and stuff like that. I really liked that. I liked the little picnics that we used to have all the time.

**Finchum** *Did you have to bring your own things for the picnic or the school did it?*

**Hubbard** No, the school did it. Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Things you miss the most?*

**Hubbard** Things I miss the most are those teachers. I really do. Now, the teachers, a lot of the teachers that were from out of town, they stayed at our house.

**Finchum** *For the year?*

**Hubbard** Yeah, just for the year. They’d go home on weekends, you know. In fact, one of them just passed away not too long ago. Mrs. Marian Ford, she was the typing teaching. She just lived in Wagoner. I went to her funeral.

**Finchum** *They would come and stay during the week and teach, then go back wherever they…*

**Hubbard** Uh-huh. Then go—uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Interesting.*

**Hubbard** We had a couple from Tulsa, one from Ponca City, one from Kansas, somewhere up in Kansas. Emporia is where she was from.

**Finchum** *Attucks must have been a pretty good place for people to come to want to work?*

**Hubbard** It was, it really was.

**Finchum** *Did it have a fight song or cheer or anything that you remember? A particular one?*

**Hubbard** Uh, no.

**Finchum** *No.*

**Hubbard** No, I don’t remember.

**Finchum** *I think that runs through my questions. Is there anything else that you want to add before we close off?*

**Hubbard** Well, I can’t really think of anything.

**Finchum** *The transitioning wasn’t hard?*

**Hubbard** No, it wasn’t bad. After we did it, you know. Like I said, everyone got along. Still have friends, white friends and black friends, you know.

**Finchum** *Some of the ones that were in your classes at Attucks were in your classes, too, in Vinita?*

**Hubbard** Oh yeah.

**Finchum** *So you weren’t just there by yourself.*

**Hubbard** No, I wasn’t there just by myself. Huh-uh. In fact, I think, we had no dropouts.

**Finchum** *That’s really good. Well, “Yay Attucks!” (Laughter) Well then I will close out and say thank you very much for coming. It’s been a pleasure.*

**Hubbard** Well, I enjoyed. Nice meeting you.

**Finchum** *Nice meeting you, too.*

**------- *End of interview*** *-------*