

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, Blacks may have been driven out of that swimming pool. If they tried to swim in it, there would've been some Whites who would've probably, to tell you the truth, they probably would've killed them some, and then there probably would've been others who wouldn't even care, and this is the way I say that segregation is taught, indirectly, by this sort of thing. And then a lot of it, a lot of integration came about, but people just take an initiative to just to go on and do.

Paul Ortiz: Now, you said even before the sixties there were Black people who were just beginning to be fed up.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: That's right.

Paul Ortiz: And in what way? What would they do? Would they challenge? Were there individual challenges?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, I remember, I don't believe I was home at this time, but I remember there was some Black boys, they weren't really rowdy, but you would think they were more of the rowdy type. They went into this restaurant and they sat down to eat, and they knew the White kids that worked there. They were young, they knew the White kids that worked there, and they told them they were coming in there to eat and the White kids didn't believe them, so these Black boys went in there to eat and then they told them they couldn't serve them. They told them they wasn't going to leave until they serve them. They did that through fun, but I'm saying just little things like this began to happen. Yeah, it began to happen. This thing didn't happen all at once, this segregation, this integration thing didn't happen all at once.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And just like I said, you know, with riding on the bus, that wasn't just with me or with other people because other Blacks rode the bus too. They saw this thing, and like I said, people were getting fed up of it, they were getting fed up, and then when they began to have these marches and these demonstrations, sure enough, people were fed up and they began to realize that this was their rights as well as anybody else's, and frankly, I can't see what people would fight against that. But now, I remember back in the forties, I worked in a private home, and a lot of this was talked about, integration, and I worked in this family and this lady's husband was on the Board of Education, and he was a doctor, he was a dentist, and this lady had talked to her sister-in-law about what they had talked about in their meeting and she said they were talking about integrating the schools then.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, this was back in the fifties, and she said, this lady told me, she said, "Now, I don't see anything wrong with integrating the schools." She said, "I think Black and Whites ought to be able to go to school together if they want to." She said, "But now I tell you one thing, I wouldn't want my daughter to marry your nephew." I said— I didn't say anything. And she said, "Now, would you want your nephew to marry my daughter?" I said, "Ms. McGuffin, I don't know. I don't know nothing about that."

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And really, she was coming on with me because of the conversation that she had

had with her husband, and they were very liberal, and she said, "I don't think it's right for Black and White to marry." She said, "But as far as going to school together and socializing together, anything else that they want to do." She said, "I don't see anything wrong with that." I said, "No." She left me. She's like, "Do you?" At that time, I said, "No," and I left it that. I said, "No."

Paul Ortiz: And you were working in her home?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes. This was a White lady, and very liberal people.

Paul Ortiz: Would she frequently sound you out on those kinds of issues or?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Occasionally, but now, even though they were just as good as they could be, and they were liberal, they were segregated. They believed in segregation. By her saying that she didn't want her daughter to marry my nephew, that let me know right there that she believed in this segregation thing, but she was just as nice to me as she could be, she and her husband both. As far as treating people, as you might see right, and treating people nice, you wouldn't find any nicer people. We had some nice White people.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, we call them good people because when you see what some other Whites wouldn't do for Blacks, you had some Whites wouldn't— Now, even though this was a segregated town and we got along well together, you still had those Whites who would not move a foot to help Blacks, they would not move a foot, but yet still, they got along all right. And then again, you had the Whites, some Whites over here who would do anything they could for Blacks. And when it come to, oh, how can I say that?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Just like, well, one lady I was working with, we went into this drug store and we sat down and we had a drink together. Now, they were very nice, very liberal people, and she and her family would've done anything for Blacks, and I think there were a lot of Whites like that because if it wasn't, when this marching thing came about, all over the country, you wouldn't have had the integration coming about as it did if you didn't have some liberal Whites over here, as we call them, some good Whites, and they just showed what they could do, but it did come about. And then, of course, you had those others who would, like I said, they wouldn't dare have you come across this line. Did you see the movie, Mississippi Burning?

Paul Ortiz: I haven't seen it.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Played the other night on TV. It has, It's an old movie. It came out about 10 years ago, I guess. It points a true picture as to how Blacks were treated. And you've had, now, you don't get me wrong, you've had some radical Blacks in here who would not do— Where you had those kind who would do— They would not do anything for Whites. If they thought they're doing this for Whites, they wouldn't do it, unless they had a job. If they had a job and that depend on it, they would do it. And then again, you had these Blacks over here who would do anything they could for Whites. It's just that they knew that this segregation thing was, I guess like Governor Wallace said, you know, it's a law. It really wasn't a law, but they made it a law. They made it within themselves that it was a law, but it took Blacks a long time to realize that they could do—

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They could go places where they wanted to go. They could sit in places where they wanted to sit, and they could attend school, they could even go to churches. Anywhere they wanted to, as well as Whites. It was only that they wanted to be treated, you might say equal, and do the things that normal people would do, because really and truly, I think Blacks were not treated as normal people. In fact, I know they weren't treated as normal people. And I don't care if you had the Blacks out here, taking my town, in Tennessee, if you had the Whites out here in the rural area, and you had Blacks here in town. Now, when those Whites would come to town, they could be as illiterate as all put out, but they would not sit or stand or eat with a Black, and the only thing they could go by would be your color because they couldn't read.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They didn't know where it said color, the White, they wouldn't know, and, of course, you had some Blacks the same way, and that's why I keep saying that this segregation thing was taught indirectly. And even now, there is a tendency to be segregated because you go into a gathering, you're going to find the Blacks gathering over here, and you're going to find the Whites gathering over here, watch it, if you haven't been in that situation, but anyway, that's the story of my life as far as segregation goes, but it was an interesting life.

Paul Ortiz: What was your early family life like?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: My immediate family?

Paul Ortiz: Your immediate family.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: My immediate family. Well, like I said, I had— There were seven girls and five boys. Okay. My baby brother died when he was 18 months old, and well, like I said, Mother was always at home and Daddy was always at work, and we went to school. Well, when we got up big enough to work, the only work that we had to do, or that was available for us to do, was to even babysit for a White family, or cook for a White family, keep house, to be a butler or a gardener, or to keep up the yard. Now, those were the jobs that you had. As far as I know, there were no others, unless in this segregated Black school, we had teachers who were qualified, well-qualified, and that's the kind of work we did as children coming up. I start babysitting, I think, when I was 12, and then I would go to a lady's house and I would clean up her house. And you're talking about the pay, they had good pay. You know how much they pay? 10 cents an hour.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And it was funny because— Well, I look at it as being funny. Now, Daddy was never for anything like that because he said, "If you are going to work for people, you're supposed to get paid." Now, he didn't know. He couldn't set no price. He didn't know any price to pay, he said. But he knew 10 cents an hour wasn't no money, but if you got a dime, then you work for it, and that's what you got, but as time went on, you get 15 cents. I remember a few years later, you get 15 cents an hour, and then a lot of this was done by the job. If you go work, if you go clean the house, lady tell you she going to give you \$2 to clean a house. You go, you know you're going to get \$2. You clean it in an hour or two hours, however how long, and then gradually pay become better because people felt that if they wanted, I shouldn't say this, if they

wanted quality Black help, you're going to have to pay for it, and so pay began—

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They began to pay better, and by that time, I was ready to leave Greeneville, but that was what you had mostly among the Blacks. In coming up as a child that I did, I worked in private homes to babysit and to clean house, and sometime it went on for a while, like I said, for 10 cents an hour, and then they paid by the job, which I thought was better. I'd rather be paid by the job than the hour. And it didn't make enough to buy you a pair of socks, but that's all you get. You just have to save it until you could do better. And then too, there was some other people who were willing to pay a little more than that. And as I said, as time went on, they did pay more. And that's basically as what it was like.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Everybody in my family worked, and that's what we worked. My brothers, they would mow lawns during the summer, and even I— My two younger brothers, they would help clean house sometime. People who need house cleaning, they would help clean house, and those kind of chores that my brothers would do. And of course, my sisters, like me, they had a job, keeping children or keeping house or cooking. Those were basically the jobs you had in those days.

Paul Ortiz: Did your grandparents live in Greeneville?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They did, but they died. I can't tell you much about them. I don't know about them, nothing, but my grandmother, my mother's mother, and she died, I think, when I was down in elementary school, so I didn't know much about her. But as far as my grandfather on my father's side, he was a farmer. As far as I know, I'm sure he was a farmer. And my grandmother, excuse me, on my mother's side, like I said, she died when I was in elementary school. She worked in a home. She cooked, she was a cook in a home, but my grandmother on my daddy's side, she didn't work, she stayed at home, but that was before my time. I didn't know her and didn't know my grandfather. They died. They both passed before I was born.

Paul Ortiz: Now, in your immediate family, who would be responsible for, say, financial or the budgeting decisions, mechanics of the household?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, Daddy was the only source of income, but Mother had to really budget to see where the dollars were going because he didn't make all that much on the railroad, but Mother was the one who had to really budget to see where the dollar was going and where it was needed. Mother was the one that really took care of that. And of course, there was things that Mother and Daddy would talk about, what they needed for the house or what needed to be done, and they would discuss that together and they would decide, but Mother was the one who— Now, I said, we lived on the outskirts of town. Now, Daddy also raised pigs, or hogs you'd call them, and we always had meat. That was for the family. We always had two cows, and he would raise hogs and that would be our meat.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: We'd have, like I said, he had the gardens, we had our vegetables, we had cherry arches. Cherries were very prominent in East Tennessee. And we had a few other trees, peach trees, pear trees, plum trees, and Mother did a lot of canning. She did a lot of canning. And with the garden and with her canning and whatnot, it kept her busy throughout the year, and that's the one thing that I can remember

most. We never had to work for any fruits or vegetables or jellifying preserves and things like that. Now, we go to the store and buy. Mother always made it. She did a lot of canning. And as we came along, we helped to do that. We'd go berry picking, pick berries, blackberries, dewberries and strawberries, and then we had, Daddy had the cherry arches. We'd go pick cherries, and we had pear trees and apple trees, plum trees, and Mother would always—

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No, we sold cherries, some cherries. And when we'd have enough milk, it's a funny thing, with these two cows, Mother had plenty of milk for the family and she had milk to sell, and people would buy milk. They would buy sweet milk and buttermilk. Now, people in the community love my mother's buttermilk and they would buy her butter, so Mother would sell buttermilk and sometimes sweet milk, and butter, and that always gave her a little change. Whereas when you come up short, she'd have a little change for something. And Daddy would raise hogs. [indistinct 00:18:42] talked out. He would sell hogs, but he would always keep about four to the butcher for the family, and that's where we had our pork, and we had our milk. I don't remember Daddy ever killing a cow. We only had kept that for milk and for butter, and we had plenty of it.

Paul Ortiz: Who would take care of the discipline?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Both of them. Mother would, you might say during the day or during the run of the day, and Daddy was, oh, he was a strict disciplinarian. You didn't defy him one way or the other because when he spoke, that's all he had to do. All he— Sometimes I think when he was thinking, you knew what he was thinking, but they both were very strict disciplinarian. And I know a lot of times of things that we would want to do or places we want to go, we'd go to Mother and ask Mother, and Mother would say, "Ask your Daddy." And sometimes we would have to ask Daddy to get Daddy's approval, but they were together on it. I think Mother knew whether, she would be skeptical sometimes in knowing whether or not Daddy would approve something, and if she thought for one minute, he didn't approve it, she wouldn't approve it.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And then you know how you can be as children, you can get persistent and you say, "Mother, will you ask Daddy for me?" Mother has already said what she thought, and then she'll tell you that you'll just have to ask your Daddy. And then Mother, we go back to Mother, "Will you ask Daddy for me?" Because we already felt that Daddy going to say no, but if she ask him, he might would say yes in a lot of instances, but they were usually together. If Daddy said no, we knew it was no, and Mother too. And Mother said, no, we knew it was no, but she was more, a little bit easier in siding with you.

Paul Ortiz: Where would she do her shopping?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: We had a section in—we had a town—in town. We had a— There was town, and then there was a grocery store about, it wasn't even a block from us, it was just across the street from us, really. It was a little grocery store and we did most of our grocery shopping there. It was owned by a White guy and he was very nice, but Mother never got stuff on credit, she didn't believe in that. She believed that if one of you get, you're supposed to pay for it, and Daddy did too. If you couldn't afford it, you left it alone, but Mother did the grocery shopping, and she would go to this, this was a grocery, and she would go there.

Sometimes she would send us, and sometimes she would send Daddy, Daddy would go, because Daddy loved to go to the store. That was his gathering place.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: It was a country store, right? I guess you'd say, and people would just come and sit and talk and Daddy enjoyed that, and he would be there a lot. And I forget this man's name. His name was Bill, Bill Woods. We call him Mr. Bill. Mr. Bill would always send us a bag of candy when Mother would go shopping, he'd send us. He knew that Daddy had all these children and he would send us a bag of candy, and we look forward to it, and there might be sometimes that he didn't wait on Daddy. His wife worked in there, and sometimes I think his daughter would help.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They wouldn't put the bag of candy in there. We'd be looking for that bag of candy, and sometimes when Daddy would go to the store, if he remember that he didn't send a bag of candy, he would give Daddy a bag of candy to bring back to the house for the children. He didn't have to do that, but he did. I thought that was very nice of him. He seemed to have thought a lot of us, and I guess we thought a lot of him too. And now, that was for the groceries, but anything else, Mother never went shopping much but she would go to town and shop. And when she— We lived about two miles from town, and Mother would get a taxi and go to town, and she'd get a taxi and come back. At that time, when I was a little girl, the buses wasn't running. We didn't have city buses, so Mother would go— She'd get a taxi and go to town, get a taxi and come back, but that didn't happen often.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Mother didn't go unless she— Christmas, go shopping for us for Christmas, go to town. She did that kind of shopping. And if we needed— And then usually towards the close of school. Schools have changed. We always had closing school programs, and some of us were always in programs and we always had to have a new pair of shoes or something like that, but we'd go to town, Mother take us to town and get it. Those were interesting days.

Paul Ortiz: What would happen if a member of the family took ill or got sick? What would be the kind of medical care in Greeneville that you had access to?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, at that time, you had family doctors, and doctors made house calls. So we didn't have a telephone when I was a little girl, but there was a phone at the store across the street. If we needed a doctor to come to the house, Mother would either go to the store and call or she would send one of the children to the store to call the doctor, and he would tell us that he would be right out or he'd tell us when he would be out. And we had a hospital there. We had two hospitals at that time. We had Greeneville Hospital and we had Tacoma Hospital, which was a Seven Day Adventist hospital, but we— Don't remember anybody having to go to the hos— Oh yes, I do. My sister got sick.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: My sister got sick when I was in high school, my last year in high school, and the doctor came. Mother called the doctor, doctor came to see her, and he recommended that she go to the hospital, so Mother took her to the hospital and they kept her, but she died. She was in the hospital about four days, about a week, I guess, and she died. She had poisoned kidneys. That was my senior year, I believe, in high school, but now I had another sister to die when I was in elementary school and she was a

sophomore in college, but she had gone— Mother had sent her to Virginia to school and she died with bronchopneumonia. She had pneumonia. And as far as our other medical thing, we had family doctor. We'd call him or either go to see— He had an office. We'd call him. If Mother needed him to come to the house, and he'd come, or if we were sick with something or hurt or something, we'd go see him.

Paul Ortiz: Would this have been a White doctor?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes. Well, at that time, there were no Black doctors in Greeneville, no Black doctors. Maybe I shouldn't say this, but the only prominent Black people you had were preachers and teachers. Now, that didn't mean that we didn't have other good people.

Paul Ortiz: In terms of providence.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes.

Paul Ortiz: Now, during your high school years, did you have favorite subjects or aspirations? A career where you're beginning to think about, I would like to be a [indistinct 00:28:29].

Cordelia Manuel Brown: One thing I liked to do when I was a little girl, I used to love to wash my sister's hair, and I wanted to be a beautician. That's what I wanted to be. That was my ambition. And even when I finished high school, that's what I wanted to be, was a beautician, but Mother didn't want me to be a beautician. She said she didn't think that was the kind of life that I need to live, and I said, "Mother, there will always be a job for me if I be a beautician." And she said, "Yes." She said, "But you just think about it." She said, "When you think about beautician, you are basically thinking about dressing hair and washing and dressing hair." And she said, "I just wouldn't want you being over somebody's head all the time." She said, "You could have, People can have all kinds of diseases and things wrong with their head and you'd be inhaling all of that."

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And she says, "I just don't think that's the thing for you." Anyway, she talked me out of it. And my sister wanted me to take business when I went off to school, when I was ready, getting ready to go off to school, but Daddy didn't want me to take business. Now, he didn't want me to take business, and in a sense, I could understand both of my parents' point. Daddy said, "When you finish school, you are going to have to work and you need to take something where you can get a job." And he said, "Around here in Greeneville—" He didn't see me leaving. He couldn't foresee me leaving. He said, "Around here in Greeneville, where are you going to get a job as a secretary or any kind of a business job, or working in a store?" You didn't even have any Blacks working in stores in those days.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And I got to thinking about that. I knew I was going to have to work, and I knew I wasn't going back to babysitting, and Daddy said, "I think you better take education because you can get a job teaching." And I said, "I always liked to work with children." And I said, "Well, that's no problem with me. I'll go out to school and I'll take education." And so I did. And my mother— Now, even though, by this time my daddy had retired, and in working on the railroad and having these children to take care of, there wasn't

too much coming in, and I didn't know how I was going to college, but I had— Like I said, when I was 12 years old, I started working in private homes, and that gave— If I made— Mother always said, "If you make a dime, you should save a nickel. Whatever you make, you should save half of it."

Cordelia Manuel Brown: So, at the end of the month, every month, I had counted my dimes and my quarters and 50 cents that I had worked for, and I would put almost all of it in the bank. No, I didn't put it in the bank, I put it in post office. That's where my savings went. In those days, you could have a savings account at the post office, and I put my little bit in the post office. So I knew I was going off the school. I didn't know what I was going to take. I didn't know where I was going. I was going to a beauty culture school, so I thought. But anyway, Daddy said he thought I should take education because I could get a job somewhere in Tennessee, if not, in Greene County, someplace in Tennessee, teaching.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: So I took, this was a junior college I went to and that's what I took. And it took my little pennies that I had saved, all I had saved, and at that time, my brothers— That was just before World War II, 1942. No, this was right after World War, during World War II. What am I trying to say? And two of my brothers went into the service. They were drafted into the Navy, two of my brothers, and they sent Mother money every month. And that's how I got to go to junior college because they sent Mother money and Mother would save some of that money so I would have enough to go to college. And because Daddy, like I said, he was retired. He wasn't making, he would make enough to buy some bread and some grains to go in the field, but that's how I got to go to junior college, through them helping me.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And my mother took ill, she had a stroke, but my brother still sent money for those two years that I was in school and I was able to finish school. As soon as I got out of a junior college, my sister, who was already teaching in one of the county schools, moved, decided to go to another county to teach, and this— You remember me telling you that I worked for this White family who was a doctor, who was also a member of the Board of Education? So when I got out of school, he was a nice person to talk to, plus Daddy was political-minded too. He did on the, he dealt with, he supported the political arena, I'd say.

Paul Ortiz: Did he vote?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Did he what?

Paul Ortiz: Did he vote?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes. All of us vote. Now, well, this is getting back to something else. No, I don't ever remember anybody in that section of Tennessee having problems to vote, White or Black. Blacks didn't have no problem voting. There was no— The only problem they had, now, Daddy would work with politics in getting Blacks to vote, to come to register to vote, then no problem, all you got to do is go register to vote, and Daddy was very instrumental in getting a lot of Blacks to vote, Whites too, because you come up, and at that time, at the age of 18, you can vote. And a lot of Whites and Blacks, they didn't think nothing about voting, but Daddy knew people. He got around and he knew people, and he would get them to come to register to vote, Black and White, no problem.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: All they had to do was just to go there and register to vote and whatever you do to sign your, All they had to do. All I remember doing was signing my name, my birthdate, and where I live, my address, and that sort of thing. To my knowledge, that's all I did, and that's— Then you go to vote.

Paul Ortiz: So you registered in Greeneville?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: At a age of 18.

Paul Ortiz: Age of 18.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah. And when you get ready to vote, you go to vote. Whatever party you're going to vote for, you go vote, and there was no problem.

Paul Ortiz: Who would you vote for in those years when you were 18? Was that a presidential election or?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, any election, presidential election, or county elections, state election. What party? What did you say? I'm sorry.

Paul Ortiz: Yeah. When you started voting, were you voting Republican, Democrat, or back and forth or?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: My daddy was strictly a Republican and we all voted Republican. That's what we did. I was never a Democrat till I came to Alabama. It didn't really change me. I really haven't changed, but I vote to Democratic now. But at home in Greeneville, my daddy was strictly a Republican. He believed in it and he got all of his children to believe in it, and that's what we voted.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: And because, whether you're a Democrat or a Republican, you've got some good and you've got some bad, and you can point out the good, you can point out the bad, so Daddy always tried to find the good in people. And if there was a Republican that he was— Now, these Republicans always, they searched out for my father to get his support. Now, don't you think Democrats didn't try to get him too? They did, but they didn't get him. If he believed in you and he wanted to support you, he would encourage all of these people that he had encouraged to become registered voters to vote for you, and that was quite a thing.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, but like I said, you need to— But remember, we didn't have but a handful of Blacks, and he would encourage them the best he could to get them to vote Republican. Of course, some of them would, some of them wouldn't vote at all, and some of them would vote Democrat, but Daddy was strictly a Republican.

Paul Ortiz: I see. Which junior college did you go to?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I went to Swift Memorial Junior College in Rogersville, Tennessee, which was a

Presbyterian school. And in those days, if you were in elementary education, you could teach on the elementary level if you finish junior college.

Paul Ortiz: And so you finished there and you came back to Greeneville to teach?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes, I did.

Paul Ortiz: And do, What year did you graduate?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: From junior college?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Oh, I'll speculate. I believe that was in '46.

Paul Ortiz: Okay.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: '46.

Paul Ortiz: Shortly after World War II. So now, how did you come to Tuskegee?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, you see, I said, if you had finished junior college, you could teach on the elementary level, but the state had a ruling, a ruling came out, and I don't think this was just the state of Tennessee. I think that ruling could have been all over. It was spreading all over the country that if you were going to teach, you got to have a degree, a BS degree, but they would give you time to get it. If you're teaching on junior college level, they'd give you time to get a degree. You could continue to teach, providing you work toward a degree. So when that came out, I said, "I'm going. I know I got to go back to school if I'm going to teach." And at that time I said, "I don't know if I'm going to teach the rest of my life, but I'm going to get my degree."

Cordelia Manuel Brown: So I came down here, I taught two years, and I came down here to go to summer school that summer, and that's where I met John Brown, and we had the same classes together, and we had an interesting time that summer. And then I left at the end of summer school and went back to Tennessee to teach another year. And we correspond, and we got married in that March, that following March.

Paul Ortiz: '48.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No, that was '50 then.

Paul Ortiz: '50.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Remember now, I taught three years in Tennessee before I came. Before I was

married.

Paul Ortiz: And so you came to Tuskegee Institute in the Education program?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Right. Really, I came here in '49. Let me see. I came here to school in '49, because we were married in '50, and I finished out that year of teaching in Tennessee and then I came here and started going back to school again. And then I started my family and I found out that, well, I could go to school during the summer and pick up a couple of subjects, a few credits, and that's what I did, picked till I got my degree.

Paul Ortiz: Was it the prestige of the education program that brought you to Tuskegee or was it a personal contact?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I think it was, what brought me to Tuskegee?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: I had a sister who came here one summer to school. She had finished junior college and she was teaching, and she came here one summer to summer school, and of course, everybody, well, I won't say everybody, but most Blacks back in those days knew about Tuskegee. You knew about Tuskegee Institute at that time, and you knew about Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver. Those were the prominent Black people you heard about if nobody else. So when my sister came here to school, she enjoyed her stay here. She came one summer, and we had talked about it. Her coming, I say, "I think I would like to go to Tuskegee." And I had other schools that I had thought about. My older sister went to Tennessee State University. Well, it was Tennessee State then and wanted me to go to Tennessee State.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: For some reason, I didn't want to go to Tennessee State. I don't know why, I just didn't, but Tuskegee Institute, I had heard about Tuskegee Institute and my sister having been here to go to summer school was what I wanted. And I thought, Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver was—I guessed, in my opinion, they were just what was happening, and I wanted to come to Tuskegee, so I did. I came that summer, like I said, and that's where I met my husband, and we had the same classes together, and we got married in '50, March of '50.

Paul Ortiz: Now, where was he coming from?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: He had just gotten out of service, but he was kind of a roundabout story. He was originally from Mississippi, and his family moved to Detroit during World War II, and he went on into service. And when he got out of service, he came to Tuskegee to school.

Paul Ortiz: On the GI Bill.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yes.

Paul Ortiz: Now, where did you, when you first came to Tuskegee, decided to actually to settle down here, where did you first live?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Where did we live?

Paul Ortiz: Yeah.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Well, I tell you where we lived. We lived in what was known as the Veterans Project.

Paul Ortiz: Veterans Project.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: That's where, well, I understand that's where, those veteran projects were built on the Tuskegee Institute's ground, and I understand that's where they had a lot of people to come here during World War II, and to work. They had an air base out here, they had an air base here, to work at the air base or to work at the institution, and there were a lot, they were veterans, and then when the veterans came to school, they had a place to stay, to go to school, and it was called the Veterans Project, and that's where we stayed.

Paul Ortiz: Was there a, oh, was that called? Washington Court or something.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: No. They had a Washington Project.

Paul Ortiz: Okay. Oh, that was a different one?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: They were similar. The same. Now, they were the same. Now, I don't know why they got Veteran Project and Washington Project.

Paul Ortiz: Oh, so they're in the same area?

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Yeah, right there together. I think maybe, primarily, veterans stayed in the Veterans Project, and in the Washington Project, they had students and then persons who worked for the institution, and then at the VA, stayed in the Washington Project. Of course, some of them stayed in the Veteran Project too because most of them were veterans. The males especially were veterans.

Paul Ortiz: I see.

Cordelia Manuel Brown: Now, that was during that time, but now, they also have a New Washington Project over here, but it came about from Washington Chapel Church. That happened about 15 years ago, 10-15 years ago, but that doesn't, that's not the Washington Project that I'm talking about.