

## **Transcript of interview with BettyJo Patterson by Chris Dyer, February 26, 2010**

This interview will become part of the Georgetown Public Library's oral history collection. This project focuses on people's memories of Marshall and Carver Schools and the issues and events of the 1950s and '60s that led to desegregation. Today is February 26, 2010. It is about 2:05 p.m. I am Chris Dyer. We're interviewing in the study room at the Georgetown Public Library.

CHRIS DYER: Please give me your full name.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: BettyJo Miranda Patterson.

CHRIS DYER: Do you have any nicknames?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: BJ, sometimes.

CHRIS DYER: And what is your date of birth?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: 12-15-59. I'm officially 50 years old!

CHRIS DYER: All right! Congratulations. Thanks for letting me interview you today. First off, did you grow up in Georgetown?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Born and raised.

CHRIS DYER: Born and raised. And where did you live in Georgetown?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I lived what we called "out in the country" off of Route 2, which is now Airport Road.

CHRIS DYER: So that's west of present-day IH-35?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes.

CHRIS DYER: Great. It wasn't a neighborhood. It wasn't a subdivision? It was just out in the country.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, out in the country. It was dairy and farming. It was a ranch.

CHRIS DYER: What did your parents do for a living?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: My parents ran the dairy--they were dairymen...

CHRIS DYER: And I guess you pitched in...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: they were dairymen...when I was young. I'm one of 10 children...so I'm one of the younger children, so I didn't have to milk the cows as much as my older siblings did. They actually worked very, very hard.

CHRIS DYER: You got the good deal then?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes! I did.

CHRIS DYER: Do you have any...you said you have a lot of siblings. Do you have a lot of relatives here in Georgetown still?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, still.

CHRIS DYER: Most of your family, or who's still around?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Hmm. A lot of relatives, aunts, uncles, lots of cousins.

CHRIS DYER: OK. Great. Did you and your family belong to a church in Georgetown?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes. St. Helen's Catholic Church.

CHRIS DYER: Kind of consider that people listening to this interview really have no idea of where anything is...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: St. Helen's at that time--when I was a child anyways--was on University, not too far from where The Ridge is now.

CHRIS DYER: OK. And what is The Ridge?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: The Ridge is off of Scenic Drive.

CHRIS DYER: And so why is it called The Ridge? Again, we're being...we're just explaining to anybody who wouldn't...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: The Ridge was predominantly the black section of the town.

CHRIS DYER: And what is your ethnic background?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Hispanic, I mean Mexican-American. Back then we said Mexican-American, nowadays you say Hispanic.

CHRIS DYER: OK, great. So, we're kind of talking about growing up in Georgetown. What did your family do for fun? What did you guys do?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: My family...what we did then...everything was family-oriented. My parents ran the dairy. Dairy is 24 hours a day. I mean, my father would get up like at 4:00, my siblings had to be at the dairy by 5:30, and they'd milk cows until about 7:30, then they had to rush to go get cleaned up to go to school. Mostly they were late to school because the buses already ran at my house by 7:10, so they...there was one car that my brother got to drive and...however they got to school, they were usually late. I remember they used to get in trouble for that. But this was their livelihood, so... Then

when they came home from school they would ride the bus home from school, or if my brother had his car...soon as they got home from school they had to undress and go and get ready to go back to work in the dairy again until 5:30, 6:00, 6:30 at night.

CHRIS DYER: So, it didn't sound like there was much time for fun!

BETTYJO PATTERSON: No, but in between my parents tried to...like, my father was very family oriented, so we did lots of things together. For example, over in the area off of Airport Road, there was Berry Creek that's still there, and back then the property went all the way from Berry Creek all the way...it was A.G. Braun and Curtis Braun that owned the property. It went all the way from there to Berry Creek and from Berry Creek to [IH]-35--it was over 400 acres.

CHRIS DYER: Did it include...I know driving on that road there's that old bridge that crosses...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, yes, we drove over that old bridge all the time. In fact, I remember Mr. Fisher, our bus driver, we used to tell him, "Go fast, Mr. Fisher, go fast!" because if he just went a little bit fast it would bump the back end and we would all jump up in the air.

CHRIS DYER: Yeah, I remember we did that as kids as well.... Were there other Hispanic families around you guys or...?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: No. Not for us. Hausenflukes were across the street from us. Mrs Hausenfluke was a teacher. She taught third grade. She was one of my teachers. That was I.M. Hausenfluke and his family. Matter of fact, the ranch where we lived, the real descendants were the Hausenflukes. There's a story you have about slave quarters and I've got proof of that.

CHRIS DYER: Oh, great. Well, what we'll do is we'll go through this and we may get back...'cause all of this is interesting to me. So, we're talking a little bit about the '50s and '60s and desegregation, so how were you affected by desegregation when it came? Would you talk a little about that?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I guess the reason I'm here is that I didn't realize until I was probably in my 30s that I must have been a pilot for desegregation. What happened was, I remember my kindergarten class, there were two classes. Mrs. Wilcox had one, she was my teacher and Mrs. Schwausch had the other class. We actually attended at Carver when it was an all black school and I believe that was in 1964. They put us at the very end of the building. Our two rooms shared facilities like the restrooms and everything. Our lunches were brought to us in carts. We ate inside the classroom. We only left the classroom to get a few hours of play, outside the building on the side, and when we would come back in, I didn't even know it was an all-black school. The only reason I realized it was when we came back in, it must have been a hot day and we all played outside and we were real hot and sweaty--you know, they didn't have all the air conditioning like they do nowadays--and I remember myself and Pat Cruz, we were the last two in line, and Mrs. Wilcox was telling us, "Hurry up! Hurry up!" but everybody was so thirsty, they were getting a little extra water from the fountain. She started to pinch us a little bit, like "hurry up, hurry up." The bell rang, and when the bell rang I remember

looking--Pat was still getting a drink--and I saw these tall, black kids--tall, skinny black kids, that was my vision--they were at their lockers, getting things from their lockers.

CHRIS DYER: So, were you involved with a group of Mexican-American students that came in, or how did that...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: It was mixed, it was everybody: Anglo, white, Mexican, black. I don't believe there were any Asian children at that time in Georgetown, at least in our two...well, there were only two kindergarten classes, so I think we were just a pilot project and I think they chose families that either, possibly either had siblings already in the school system, because I know a couple of the other kids had older siblings as well in school already.

CHRIS DYER: That's interesting! So, you said that you all were kept separate--so kind of talk about a day in the classroom.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: It was fun! I remember kids of different colors. That didn't bother me, didn't have any bearing whatsoever. We had all very nice classrooms. They were big.

CHRIS DYER: At Carver School?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: At the Carver School. And I remember, of course, there were little settings for a kitchenette and stuff. You didn't have those back then; kitchenettes back then were homemade, they weren't already modeled and premade. We had little dishes to play with. I know we had a puppet area. Both teachers had things on their walls. They were very creative themselves. It wasn't things that they could buy, it was things that they had to create back then.

CHRIS DYER: And what age were you?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: We were kindergarten.

CHRIS DYER: You were kindergarten. I was about to ask where did you go to school before, but that was your first.... And talk about your siblings. You said you were one of the younger ones. Where...what...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I'm number seven.

CHRIS DYER: So where did your siblings go? Did they...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: My siblings all went to the Georgetown...

CHRIS DYER: They went to Georgetown...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Back then, it was integrated to where Hispanics could attend school, but it was only white and Hispanics--or white and Mexican-American.

CHRIS DYER: That's right because those schools, which I always thought was interesting, that they integrated earlier, you know...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Not all Mexican-Americans attended the school.

CHRIS DYER: Right, right.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Some were still segregated.

CHRIS DYER: Do you have anything else on that...about your school experience that you want to share?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Other than that, the experience was just fine. To this day I still remember a lot of the kids...their names, like Pat Cruz, Dexter Satterfield, the Wyatt brothers, Frank and Troy. I remember Margaret Schwausch and...

CHRIS DYER: You said Schwausch was the teacher, too.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, her son also attended. So she must have been, you know, really wanting to push the program as well, because she put her own son in the program.

CHRIS DYER: So was she an Anglo teacher?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, both teachers were Anglos. Mrs. Wilcox and Mrs. Schwausch. And I think Mrs. Schwausch is still living.

CHRIS DYER: Ok, I'm taking notes here.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: The funny thing I did find about this, when I asked my mother, probably about ten or so many years ago, I said, Mom, did you realize, I think we were a pilot project. And she said, no, she didn't realize that at all. So, I don't know if they completely explained to my mother that it was the first kind of integrated class. And then the next year, after our class, they moved kindergarten to Annie Purl and then it was standard after that.

CHRIS DYER: So, you were at Carver for a year, or were you there longer? You said you went in '64?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes.

CHRIS DYER: So how long did you stay at Carver? Just that school year?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, just that school year.

CHRIS DYER: And then you went to Annie Purl.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, I went to Annie Purl in first grade and I had Mrs. Purl as my teacher in first grade.

CHRIS DYER: And that school, for those who don't know, was basically where Dos Salsas is now, was it kind of in that area?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: No, it wasn't that one...

CHRIS DYER: It was the other one! I'm talking about...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: There's two Annie Purls. Originally there was an Annie Purl...and both of them were named Annie Purl, so that's where the confusion is. The original Annie Purl of Georgetown was single, never married, never had children, but she was very much into teaching. And that was over there...not exactly where Dos Salsas was...it was almost where the Oil Exchange is now. And it was, I believe, a three-storey building, according to Cliff Gustafson. He was telling me, we were kind of...sometimes. You know, I think those of us who have been born in Georgetown and raised together, we may be different colors and different religions, but sometimes those of us that have roots here, we all pretend we're kind of kin. So we all...so he told me it was a three-storey... 'cause I thought it was at Dos Salsas...long time ago, before that, there was a Dairy Queen there...he said no, it was closer to Austin Avenue...where the Oil Exchange is...

CHRIS DYER: Well, yes, on the corner of University and Austin.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: He said it was three stories, yes. And the second Annie Purl, she just happened to be another teacher, but she also gave many years to Georgetown ISD as well. The first Annie Purl gave probably her whole life. And the second Annie Purl gave more than 30 years. [The Annie Purl School that Ms. Patterson attended is located at 1700 Laurel St.]

CHRIS DYER: We talked a little bit about...is there anything else you remember from elementary and then moving into a desegregated school in middle school and all that. Do you have any memories from that? You said you thought it was a pretty positive experience. Do you have any memories of desegregating...you know, the transition from Carver to Annie Purl...anything like that?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: No. As far as the other students, I think I got along well. Sometimes there were little cliques, but there are little cliques today, just for different reasons. And not always for race and stuff. I remember, when it came to sports, that was sometimes still hard, even through my high school...sometimes when we played different cities...

CHRIS DYER: Tell me more about that.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: When I was in middle school, well, what we called junior high...middle school...junior high...it was junior high for us but nowadays it's middle school...sometimes we'd play different towns and I know some of the athletic people or ladies, they would be kind of nervous when we went to different towns, like Taylor. One of my friends, Sippy [Patricia Thomas], she was real upset, and I said what's wrong? And she said because we're going to play this town, which happened to be Taylor...

CHRIS DYER: But was it because they were afraid of...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, yes. She said that the KKK is there. I guess her family had instilled in her, be careful, don't ever go there, don't ever go alone, you know. And she didn't have any of her family with her. It was just our coaches and us players. And that was it. But everything went fine.

CHRIS DYER: Did...were those other sports teams, were they integrated sports teams?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: They were integrated but even back then, between Taylor and Round Rock, they were predominantly white teams.

CHRIS DYER: That's interesting...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: It was rare to see people of different colors on...even Hispanics...even Mexican-Americans.

CHRIS DYER: Why do you think that is?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I think it was probably still people getting used to that, and you had more people with stronger beliefs that it was wrong to put them on, so then it was favoritism.

CHRIS DYER: Yeah, and a lot of times kids don't really notice that, but it's mainly the parents who are fighting it out.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes. It's the parents who are fighting. The kids don't know. The kids usually never know. It's rare.

CHRIS DYER: Do you have anything...we're kind of in the high school now...do you remember anything from that? You know, any memories...that was a little while after desegregation, but do you remember anything from high school...anything experiences or anything like that?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: No. It was all positive...for me, it was all positive.

CHRIS DYER: Good! And my last question was going to be, do you have any not so good memories from school, but it seems like maybe just the sports team...that might have been...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I do remember once, when Pat Cruz and I...I think it was [her]...there was a gift store in town that was real popular...

CHRIS DYER: In Georgetown?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes, in Georgetown, sorry. We...my mother went there predominantly and shopped there and she used to buy lots of our dainty clothes there, underclothes and stuff, and then she would shop there often. One day I brought another girl, she was Hispanic...she was darker than I am...and we just happened to go to the gift shop. And we waited and we waited to be waited on. It was a gift shop that you had to be waited on. Waited, and we waited. They ignored us. I was buying just a small birthday gift for someone...I think she was buying...it must have been Mother's Day because she wanted to buy something, too. I went back and told my mom, you know, Mom, I went to the gift shop but, you know, they took forever to wait on us. We spent more than 30 minutes, just waiting. First thing that came out of my mother's mouth was, "Who were you with?" I looked at her like, what does that have to do with anything..."Who were you

with?" And I told her my friend. She said, that's why. So, either you were all known and OK or...

CHRIS DYER: Or they just didn't know who she was, then...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Well, they knew who she was but her family, I guess, wasn't prominent enough. And then I'm sure it was partly because of her color as well.

CHRIS DYER: Because she was dark. She was Mexican-American but she was darker. That's interesting.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: So they did not really wait on us. They finally waited on me but they kind of ignored her, so I just kind of took care of her....

CHRIS DYER: Wow, I couldn't imagine how she must have felt. Or, as a kid you might not even have realized that was going on.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Right, as a kid I didn't. Georgetown was pretty good. Most of the shops and the...everything was pretty good. 'Course, we were a big family so...what was neat about back then was you couldn't get in trouble, that's for sure! Because everybody knew everybody. They'd always say, you're one of those Miranda girls, aren't you. And I'd say, yes, sir and yes, ma'am.

CHRIS DYER: So you didn't really...in Georgetown...other than that, did you experience any trouble like that? So, they knew your family, you could go in and...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Pretty much. But, had I been in a different town, where they didn't know my family, it would have been a different story.

CHRIS DYER: Really? Did any of your friends have experiences like that?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Yes they did. I think in other towns, like Round Rock. Not so much in Austin, but the smaller towns. Yes. Sometimes they'd tell you, we won't wait on you.

CHRIS DYER: I knew that was prominent in the black community...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I didn't experience that until I was in college...went to Seminole and...I had no clue and then somebody else told me.

CHRIS DYER: Yes. Like we were saying, as kids sometimes you don't really really notice that...you're oblivious to...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Now my siblings experienced that. I remember, my oldest sister, Tina, and Paulette Taylor, well, they were the first two to go on...it was something to do with school and a kind of co-op thing...actually going to get more training for teaching. And it was very rare that they got to go into certain places. And I know, my sister was sometimes allowed but then they'd give her a hard time for Paulette. My sister still remembers that to this day.



CHRIS DYER: Oh, yes, your sister is Mexican-American, Paulette is African-American. I'll make sure we ask Paulette about that. We need to interview her.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: My sister she used to feel really bad. And she'd kind of explain, what's the difference? We're both here for the same program, we're both educated people, where's the holdup.

CHRIS DYER: I come from a different time, so it's hard for me to comprehend that, but that's why we're doing this project. Do you have any other stories, or any other...we have a few more minutes. Is there anything else you want to share with me? Memories of school, desegregation, teachers in school, anything?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: I do have one I want to share that not too many people know about. Every time I mention it, the people that hear about it, it kind of goes by the wayside, or they end up passing away, so nobody's done much...but, I know of a true slave quarters in Georgetown that still exists.

CHRIS DYER: OK, so tell me about that.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Where I was raised, on the dairy off Airport Road...

CHRIS DYER: That's Airport Road now...

BETTYJO PATTERSON: There's still existing slave quarters and I brought pictures and stuff to show you. George Taylor's been helping with the project a little bit. George Taylor actually had a restaurant in Georgetown.

CHRIS DYER: Where was that located?

BETTYJO PATTERSON: Right on the corner of Austin Avenue and...L&M Cafe...almost across from where the Oil lube is now...and you know how it separates into the building almost where Jack Brown Cleaners is? On that corner he had L&M Cafe.

CHRIS DYER: Yes. Yes. OK.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: So, he's a good person to talk to to get some of the history. And we're trying to see if we can make this a historical site. Years ago I mentioned it to...a Council member for the City of Georgetown...years ago, and he passed away. And when I mentioned it to him he was interested but he...too many things on his plate and then later he got sick and then he died. Mr. Bonner...Council member Bonner.

CHRIS DYER: Before we part ways today, off tape we'll talk about how to do that because we can get an historical marker for that.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: And I can give you the history of the family and stuff.

CHRIS DYER: Great. And that's out on Airport Road. I think I know where you're talking about. So we'll talk about that. Well, thanks for your time today and, you know, as we go through this we may find some more things we want to come back and ask you. And we also might want to talk to some of your siblings, which is great so we can get the whole

age perspective, you know, since you had a couple older ones and you gave me a couple of great names, too, that we can track down. So, thanks for your time.

BETTYJO PATTERSON: You're welcome!