

## TRANSCRIPT, Interview of Harvey Miller by Ben Trollinger, February 4, 2009

This is Ben Trollinger. I'm sitting with Harvey Miller in San Marcos, Texas, at 2:11 on February 4, 2009.

BEN TROLLINGER: Last time we talked about where you grew up, you gave your full name and date of birth...maybe if you could just repeat your full name and date of birth, and then we'll start in on some other questions.

HARVEY MILLER: OK. My name is Harvey Miller and I guess I might have told you last time that my real name is Harvey Ercy Miller. We talked about that...

BEN TROLLINGER: You had it changed...

HARVEY MILLER: I changed...my grandma here was named was Ercy and my mama's daddy was named Harvey and her mom was named Ercy, so she named me Harvey Ercy Miller. When I was in high school they kept calling me a sissy because of that name, so when I got my social security card, later, I changed to Harvey Edward Miller, because they said, Harvey E. Miller...and they said you gotta fill that E out... so Harvey Edward Miller, born in Oglesby, Texas, while Mama and Dad was picking cotton, and, course, it's kind of like in Georgetown...November 4, 1929. Course, then I grew up in Georgetown and there was an area in Georgetown, I don't know whether it's still there or not, they referred to it as Rocky Hollow. I know they've got the Rocky Hollow Cemetery up there. Have you heard of Rocky Hollow?

BEN TROLLINGER: Um hmm. Yes, you told me about it last time.

HARVEY MILLER: Rocky Hollow...they got the Rocky Hollow Cemetery there...some of my people are there. So I grew up and went to school there and grew up and I went to Carver School and graduated from Carver School in 1948. Kind of unusual, but I ended up getting married in 1948 to my high school sweetheart--Ara Bell Jefferson, at that time. And I was starting to get involved in things at that time...getting involved in Boy Scouts...a lot of things in the community, after we got married. And then, course, prior to that time was when I filed the suit to integrate the schools...well, but then we filed the suit to integrate the schools because we were already married and had some kids. The reason of this was...hadn't thought about it...because at that time, as I probably said last time, at that time we had a lot of problems in the South. At that time there was a lot of racial things going on in Mississippi and Louisiana and Alabama and so on.

But when my wife was president of the Carver PTA asked for a new Carver School, because it was about to fall down, there on the bluffs of the Blue Hole...when it came out in the paper...I think I showed you that article...I got it in my book I made...Carver PTA Asks for a New School...and when it came out in the paper is says \$142,000 to build a new Carver School. And, a group of white people from Southwestern University there got together and called a meeting and they called me and they said, Harvey, I know you're involved in a lot of things, but we need to meet with you. And I said, for what? And they mentioned that and it kind of shocked me. I almost had a heart attack. And they said that it's time to integrate. We're not going to pay out taxpayers' money for no

segregated school. And it just shocked me. So they called it the Committee for Better Schools and we started meeting on a regular basis and that's when we decided that then, by that time...I got a lot of articles in the book that I made...that's why we ended up going to court.

Course we went to court, and I always say this, that the day that we were in court...Southwest Texas then...was filing the suit to integrate at the same time, so that case was right in front of ours. And I remember the lawyer called to me and said, Mr. Miller, we're going to be going to court tomorrow. Have you ever tried to go to school up there? I said, no, I never tried to go to school up there. I said, why? He said, well, if we get Mr. Barnes, Superintendent Barnes on the stand and start drilling him about integration and all that, probably the first thing he's going to say is, how do they know, they never tried to come up here.

So the next day Pastor...Reverend Givens...took a group of twenty-nine kids up there to the high school to register them. When we got up there, the people who were registering them said, why are you bringing these kids up here? We can't take these colored kids up here. Why did you all bring them up here? That's when I kind of got into trouble with my oldest daughter. I think I remember telling you...she was about twelve years old...she's passed on, Crys...I said, my daughter here wants to be a doctor and, I said, they don't have no chemistry and no science, nothing like that, and if you're going to be a doctor you need that in your background when you go to college...and so on and so forth, you know. And I remember my daughter looked up at me, like that, and I patted her on the head. Course, when I got outside I said, why are you looking at me like that? And she said, I was going to ask you who said I wanted to be a doctor? I said, you're going to mess up my story! But then we went on and talked a little bit and the next day an article come out in the paper...I got that article...article comes out in the Williamson County Sun...29 Negroes Turn Out at Georgetown High.

So, when the lawyer called me and asked about it, I went ahead and sent him a copy of that, and he said, that's all we need...so that's when we went on to court...in Austin...and they ruled a grade a year. And that wouldn't do my kids any good. First grade this year...take twelve grades before the integration. First grade this year, second grade next year, and on and on. And so, we got together again and decided with our lawyer--Price Ashton out of Austin--we got together and had another meeting and that's when we decided to... (phone rings, slight interruption in conversation). We had this meeting and decided we'd go before the Fifth Circuit Court and that was one of the highest courts down in Louisiana somewhere and they ruled freedom of choice. Any colored kid wanted to go to the white school can go and any colored kid wanted to stay at Carver could stay at that school. Next thing I know, we was integrated.

**BEN TROLLINGER:** You mentioned that there was a Southwestern group...I think the phrase you used was that you almost had a heart attack when they asked you...could you describe that in a little more detail. Who was this group at Southwestern..?

**HARVEY MILLER:** Well, it was a group of teachers and people in the administration...I don't think in my article...I'll show you the article...I don't think in the article they specifically said...well, as a matter of fact I do have pictures of some of them, of some of them that was on the board...I've got pictures of them...I got them out of a University annual...have pictures of them. And they...just the general people in Georgetown hadn't said anything about it, but when this came out in the paper at the University,

Southwestern University, that's when it happened, that's when a bunch of teachers and things got together and I've got some of them...when I went back up there to Georgetown and we had a Carver reunion, I brought that up. Some of those people come down and they'd forgot all about that. You'd be surprised, so many people's forgotten about that. I had to go and get my booklet and bring it out and show it to them and they just like had a heart attack because they look at that...yeah, that's me...and I say that's your name, isn't it?...that's my name, that's me...and they was...

But I didn't know why *they* was so interested and all of a sudden, you know, so when they called, when that came out in the paper, the Georgetown paper, and they called me. Like, I was involved in a lot of things even back then in the community...they called me and said, Harvey we know you're involved in a lot of things but we need to meet with you. And I said, why? He said, well, we saw the article in the paper and we aren't going to pay our taxpayers' money for no segregated school. It's time to integrate. And that's when I almost had a heart attack, because I'm thinking of all the things that happened in the South at that time...Louisiana and Mississippi...and then all of a sudden they want to integrate. It's just like...I can't believe it! I was all for it, cause that was what it was all about. And we called this meeting and they named it the Committee for Better Schools. And that's where we got started from.

BEN TROLLINGER: So that's how you came to have such a prominent role in desegregation...you were a guy who was involved in the community...people knew who you were...and there these...Southwestern teachers, staff, whatever...saw an article about...this article on the Carver School possibly getting some taxpayer money to fix it...

HARVEY MILLER: Yes, \$142,000 to rebuild a new Carver School.

BEN TROLLINGER: And they said, to heck with that, we want to...it's time to integrate. And they called you. So, describe, maybe, to give me a little understanding why they picked Harvey Miller.

HARVEY MILLER: Well, it was kind of unusual. I was involved with quite a few things and in the paper, and I guess...I didn't realize they recognized me. And one thing that...I don't know at that time...I ended up being a cook at the L&M Cafe and at that time I cooked at Southwestern University for a while. I don't know if they got related to me then or not. I don't know how many articles came out in the paper...I had a few articles come out in the paper about organizing first black Boy Scouts...parks and recreation...I got an article where I organized the recreation program for that side of town. At that time we lived on the Ridge.

There were three sections that black people lived in at that time: the Ridge, Grasshopper, and the Track. Ridge was down there where the school is, down where Carver School was, down in there. Grasshopper was further back up, and on like that. So when they saw that article in the paper that it was going to cost \$142,000...I think, something like that...to build this new Carver School, because it was beginning to fall down, you know. And that's when the article...people from the University called...saw that article in the paper. I got a copy of that article...they saw that article in the paper. That's when they said, what? We're not going to pay our taxpayer money for no segregated school. It's time to integrate.

BEN TROLLINGER: The name of the group...these teachers at Southwestern...you...these other people. What was the name of that group?

HARVEY MILLER: The Committee for Better Schools. That's what they named it.

BEN TROLLINGER: So, you said you supported integration...up until that point, what did you think should have been done? Were you all for repairing Carver, or did you kind of feel the same way as the professors?

HARVEY MILLER: Well, at that time I was feeling the way the professors...at that time, at that young age, I was trying to integrate things in. I didn't realize at my age...I...when I organized my Boy Scouts...the black Boy Scouts could only go to Camp Tom Wooten the last week of the month. That's the way they had it set up. White kids go all up...down to the one in Austin...and we'd go the last weekends. So I was just feeling all this segregation in different ways, you know. Being a cook and black people had to come in the kitchen to eat because they couldn't eat up front. So I was just very sensitive to all the things as far as segregation was going, you know. Black people had to live on this side of town, you know, and things of that nature, so even at that age I was sensitive to that, and I was keeping up with some of the things that were happening in the South at that time.

BEN TROLLINGER: Were you anxious at all to take on such a prominent role?

HARVEY MILLER: Yeah, I was. I was just all excited about it and I was ready to get started and we started to get some more black people involved in it and some of them kind of opposed it because they didn't like the idea of losing their connection with the black kids...they thought there would be a better connection between the black students and the black teacher than it would if we went to integrated school. I was reading an article a while ago, and I'll give you a copy of that book that explains all this...some of the parents and students didn't want it...they still wanted Carver School. They wanted that connection, you know. Matter of fact, there was a little committee formed against it. One of them was my cousin and he was a teacher. His name was Charlie Miller. He opposed it. He kind of formed a committee to oppose it, but by that time we'd gotten to a certain degree that it just went on to being totally integrated. I think it was in '65 when we...'58 when we asked for the school and then '62, '63, '64 when all was making the changes and getting involved and everything. Like I say, I've got articles to back all of that up in that booklet I put together.

BEN TROLLINGER: It seems that, in a way, taking such a prominent position in the effort to integrate Georgetown schools, didn't just put you crossways with people in the white community, but also some of the people in the black community as well. You just mentioned that they didn't all agree. They weren't all on the same page. So, that must have put you really in an awkward position at times, but, so why did you keep going?

HARVEY MILLER: Well, I just felt it was the best thing to do cause I'd already kind of made a statement and even some of the articles...I just wanted a better education for my girls because of the...cause we got all the leftover stuff from the high school, you know...all the stuff...books, used books...and the stuff they used for the home economics...we had a little of that home economics...and we got all that and we didn't get a lot of new stuff. So we just felt the need for it.

A lot of times I think about...now I'm 79 and I'll soon be 80...keep thinking about why I was so sensitive to things way back at that time. I was just sensitive to things and one day I was riding to Austin on a Greyhound bus. At that time black people had to sit in the back seats. If there wasn't no seats you had to stand up back there. And I was on my way to Austin that day and the seat was full, so I deliberately come up front and stood up and was standing right behind the driver, kind of holding on to the rail, you know, looking around like that and like that and I was kind of playing a game. Wasn't any white people there. There was a white lady sitting kind of behind me and she said, why are you standing up? And I said, well, our seats are all full, and instead of me standing up back there I thought I'd stand up here and watch the scenery. She said, what does it look like outside. It looks cool out there and everything. And she said, come sit down here. I didn't know what to do. I sit down beside her and some of the other white people looking back there, and I guess, saying, what you doing sitting over there? But when we got to Austin, and got out, I thanked her and everything.

I was just kind of pulling little tricks like that, like I say, when I organized the Boy Scouts...I think I said this earlier...when I organized the black Boy Scout troop number 155, and the black students supposed to go to Camp Tom Wooten the last week of the month and I deliberately took my twelve, fifteen kids down there early and I got some pictures of that and a little article of that...in the book...I took them down there in the middle of the week. I get down there and we're about to pull up and the guy said...at the gate...said, sir, you can't bring...your colored kids can't come until next week. I said, oh my god, what am I going to do? These kids are going to be so disappointed and everything and I was going on and on, playing a game-like. And the man at the gate said, sir, come over here. Your name's Harvey what? I said, Harvey Miller. He said, and I told him, explained to him...and he said, I'll tell you what. We've got one booth down there that nobody showed up in. Go ahead and take your students...your scouts...down there. I took my scouts and put them in that booth and that was the first time that black scouts...colored scouts and white scouts had ever been together like that. And I tell you, they just had fun. You would think maybe they'd be fussing but they just got together for that whole weekend, three days, I think, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, we just had fun. So I was always kind of pulling little tricks like that.

**BEN TROLLINGER:** When you decided to take kind of a leadership role in desegregation, did people ever threaten you or...in any way.

**HARVEY MILLER:** No, never did. I kept thinking about that. Some of my people worried about it. There was some people on the school board that really opposed it and got a little rude about it. They really opposed it. They didn't want (integration) and they was on the school board. Now, I don't know if I'm supposed to call their name or not, but...I was looking at the story as you see it there...I don't think it specifically stated how they opposed, but I think (unintelligible). Jay Wolf...at that time, I think he owned a ranch out there...Jay Wolf he was really against integration and he put forth a lot of effort to try to stop it, you know. And then Carl Doering, who was the chairman of the board at that time, also opposed it to some degree, but not real militant like Mr. Wolf. But he was overruled on the board, you know, and by that time...like I say...a lot of articles will back this all up. I was keeping...collecting articles back in those days and making booklets out of them. But, other than that, that little bit there, and I don't think that really got out into the public too much. And then when we finally took the kids up there, they took them up there and it wasn't no problem.

BEN TROLLINGER: What did Wolf and Doering say to you?

HARVEY MILLER: I don't think they ever really talked to me, I was just there at the meetings a couple of times and they talked in the meeting about it. They just...and I can't remember what their reasons were at that time...now, I can't remember what it was...but they just opposed integration. That was when I was trying to tell them what we needed. They said, well, if we build...and they did go ahead and build a new school on the west side, you know, down there, but they went ahead and integrated it right off, you know. They went ahead and used the money to build one on that side of town and next thing you know we had an integrated school over there on the...well, it was really out on the Track, the part we called the Track. You know where Westside School is? Yeah, so it was in that area called the Track. That's where I grew up on the Track...and the Grasshopper some, too...and I ended up and got married and I lived on the Track, out there.

BEN TROLLINGER: So, was the school board in general, was it split on the issue, or were they...

HARVEY MILLER: I think this little issue just came up because of the time. I think Mr. Wolf and them just kind of fell on it and it was just a concern they had and they voiced their opinion pretty strong. Especially Jay Wolf, but Carl Doering to a degree. But they didn't go ahead and try to fight it and start a big mess about it, it was just kind of a discussion and I don't know whether it ever got out public. I've been thinking about that later. I've been looking at some articles, and think maybe one of them...a few articles might have indicated that they opposed it, but I don't think...it never did get to be a big issue. It was only a little opposition, as I remember, that they did.

BEN TROLLINGER: So, you don't remember being threatened in any way...any of your friends or family?

HARVEY MILLER: No, never. I always thought about that because of what was happening in the South at that time. Used to talk about the Ku Klux Klan and all that kind of stuff and what they were doing in the South and everything. When we integrated, the only problem we had, in our integration...I was just reading about my brother Bruce Miller, who's passed on now, in this booklet here...there's going to be something about him...I'm going to give you a copy of this booklet...there's going to be something about him. But when we played one of the towns, and I don't know what town it was, whether it was...well, he had a little problem when he got on the football team cause he was the only black on it, first time they integrated on the team. Bunch of the white kids was kind of looking at him and when they would be practicing, they just kind of double tackled him. Sometimes two or three of them would hit him...and all that...he could really sense that at that time. But when we went to one school, I don't think it was Luling...Granger, Taylor, one of those schools we played with white kids. One of the kids tackled him, but when he tackled him and went down, he deliberately kned him in the side...just kned him in the side. It kind of hurt him, but not real bad, but as a result it ended up that he had a kidney problem after he got grown and when he died, he died of that...that's what the doctor said. That injury caused him to have kidney problem. He was on kidney dialysis for about...I think...thirty years. They said he set a record being on the kidney machine for that long. But, other than that we wasn't having any problems. The teams that we played after we integrated, we wasn't having any problems with them. Like Taylor, and Round Rock, and Granger...all those towns in that district. I can't remember

all of them. But we really didn't have no problem, you know and a lot of people was kind of sensitive to that because based on what was happening in the South, what they was reading and hearing about in the South, kind of bothered them. I remember, got an article that Lockhart integrated, no problem, and then Taylor...some of the others.

BEN TROLLINGER: Did the Klan have any kind of presence in the county at that time?

HARVEY MILLER: I think it...I've got an article on it. I think they did kind of have it, but it never was to that degree where it was real...like it was in the South. I think we organized and I think I got some pictures of some of them with their white caps on, like that, but it was like another organization, like the Lions Club. They was organized but not to the degree that it was militant like it was way back when they first got organized, I guess. And I'm not sure of it. I think we had one there, but it wasn't no problem.

BEN TROLLINGER: You were a cook at the L&M. I'm kind of interested in...maybe a description...could you describe the cafe...what you did there...how long you worked there...who owned it...

HARVEY MILLER: Well, I don't remember who owned it. I worked there for several years. I ended up being the head cook. I started out as the dishwasher and worked my way up to be the head cook there at the L&M Cafe. Cooking at that time...when I was cooking then, black people had to come in the back. They didn't eat...couldn't come in the front, you know...had to come in the back. That was the only thing that bothered me, lot of them coming back there...it was a way of life...I didn't think about it but they was always getting in my way because they had to sit at a table there where I'm cutting meat and making pies along with my other cooks and things like that. And they kind of bothered me a little bit, you know, because they'd get in my way. And I wasn't bothered about that being...you know...cause that was just the way of life, you know...but I kept thinking about it, you know, why couldn't they sit where there were all those seats up front.

I think I might have told you when my daughter grew up and she got to be about twelve or thirteen years old, one day...and I don't know whether my wife brought her to town...how she got up to the L&M Cafe...but the next thing I notice, Crys is sitting at the counter up front. And it was one of the head ladies that worked there come back there and said, Harvey, your daughter...I guess her name was Chubby...your daughter wants us to order a Coke. What am I supposed to do? I said, well, Chubby, you know what you're supposed to do. Send her back here where's she's supposed to...and all those white people looking up there, and I guess they're saying, what's that little colored girl doing sitting up there? And she deliberately did that, cause she was pulling tricks at that age. She said, no, I'll go ahead and give her one. She didn't know Crys was going to leave, so she went and gave Crys a Coke. When she got it, Crys paid for it...she was about twelve or thirteen...she paid for it and got up and left. And she knew she wasn't supposed to do that, but she was pulling tricks like that herself and she got to be kind of famous because of things like that. She ended up working with the Austin Police Department after she got married...and things like that. Just like I said, it was a way of life, but I was just sensitive to it...

BEN TROLLINGER: So they had to sit in the back...in the back of the restaurant...or was there another room?

HARVEY MILLER: No, it was really at this time in a lot of places they had to sit back, they kind of had a place for them to come back in the other cafes, but in my cafe...the L&M...and that was one of the biggest cafes...they had to sit kind of around the table and they'd end up, a lot of them, would be sitting on the table where I was mixing food and stuff like that.

BEN TROLLINGER: So, almost in the kitchen?

HARVEY MILLER: Yeah, kind of in the kitchen. They'd come back to the kitchen. That was just a way of life for everybody and they knew that...that was just a way of life...they'd just come on back there and eat, you know.

BEN TROLLINGER: The school board members, the prominent people in town, all came there to eat?

HARVEY MILLER: Yeah! Everybody. Oh, man, it was just packed...it was just...that was a big cafe for a long time, the L&M Cafe. Like I said it was just a way of life for everything. Like restrooms. You had a restroom, one says colored and one says white. Now that's where my daughter's pulled another trick on me. She went to the courthouse...I took her to the courthouse one day and she went inside to use the restroom, so I had to wait outside. And it was taking so long to come out I go in to check. When I get in there, the police got her. Now I should have known something was wrong...funny...because he come out laughing. He says, is this your little girl? I said yeah, why, what did she do? She was drinking off the white folks' water fountain. I said, what? He said I asked her why and she said I just wanted to know if the white folks' water was colder than ours. And that's the reason he started laughing. And she was just pulling them kind of tricks, you know. Instead of that...and then they had a restroom, one colored, one white back in those days...that was just the way life was, you know. Go to a certain section of town, sit in the back of the bus, eat in the back of the cafe, the water fountain. I got pictures now, when people see this, both white and black people see this, they can't believe it. I got pictures of that now, with pictures of the water fountain, one says colored up there and one says white...restroom, one says colored, one says white, you know. Back in those days that's just the way life was.

BEN TROLLINGER: In addition to L&M you also did some work at Southwestern?

HARVEY MILLER: I cooked at Southwestern University, yeah. I cooked there. I don't remember doing much other work there cause I was just mostly...all that time I was a cook.

BEN TROLLINGER: I don't know if you've talked about some of the lawyers, some of the people you worked with during...after you'd filed the law suit. How did all of that come about? What kind of effect did that have on your family?

HARVEY MILLER: Well, there was no problem after the lawyer that was going to file the suit...and like I said he was the same one that was working with...when they integrated Southwest Texas here at that time...they was just helping us and nobody else had anything to do...nobody had any oppositions to it. Other than the opposition to...when they went to school that first year up there and everything...and kids they had a little problem, like I say, some of the kids was having trouble getting on as a cheerleader. My daughter, same daughter, ended up being a cheerleader and my next daughter being a

cheerleader, so when they got up there they just got involved in things in school and they could join the cheerleaders and some of them got in the band the next year. A lot of them couldn't get into it that first year, but that next year they was in the...joined the band, some of them. We used to try to have a Carver High School band at Carver School, had one down there, and had black cheerleaders because we were playing football around Taylor and Granger, playing the black teams before they integrated...we were playing football and all that.

But, like I say, everything just went smooth there and I always admired San Marcos when Brown v. the Board of Education was passed in 1954 that all the schools of America would be integrated, and it was in the middle of the term. San Marcos integrated in 1955, the next year, because it was in the middle of the term...school had already started when the law was passed, so the next year they integrated and had no problems. Where at that time I was filing the suit to integrate, and where other schools...lot of schools went ahead and integrated...and then there were a lot of schools...I think I got a few articles that had some opposition and had to file suits and things like that to integrate, but I think Georgetown, to my knowledge, was the only one to actually file a suit, went through that process. After it went through that process, filing the suit and all that, and they approved it and everything...well it just went on to the school and everything went well. We never did have any problem, except a little bit, like I say and especially didn't have much problem, any problem to my knowledge, at the school after then integrated.

BEN TROLLINGER: How did...were you here...were you in Georgetown to see integration come to pass, or had you already moved to San Marcos?

HARVEY MILLER: No, I was there when my kids went to school there and everything, so I got a chance to see it...we moved down here in '66. They had already enrolled at the white school. All of them that had been in school was going and that's when my daughter that lives with me now was a cheerleader and I had a picture of her when she was a cheerleader.

BEN TROLLINGER: How did you feel, when that happened, when it was all kind of...

HARVEY MILLER: I was just excited about it. Like I say, I was just excited about the community, and I was just so proud of Georgetown where everything went...we wasn't having that much problem in Texas, to my knowledge, in other cities in Texas, like they were having in the South...Mississippi and Louisiana and Arkansas and Alabama and all that...where they was really having racial problems, really big. I remember I used to take the *Ebony* magazine ever since I was little, my dad and them used to get it, and it always had these articles in *Ebony* magazine and they come out in some of the papers about it, you know, in *Austin American Statesman* and things like that, they come out about the racial problems that they was having in the South. And I've got some booklets and stories about when they integrate some universities down there and you know they went ahead and integrated them and I got one picture of this girl...first girl integrated Alabama...showed a picture in the paper where she was walking on campus and a bunch of white girls was standing kind of behind her and they were just kind of looking at her like, what's this colored girl doing? Kind of what the expression on their face was...and I got that picture in my collection...you know, what's this colored girl doing up there? You know, but it wasn't...they didn't have much problem. People was raising Cain and everything down there, but they did have a lot of problems in the South. So that's

why we was sensitive. I don't ever recall any real racial things...issues... in the State of Texas. It might have been...I might could look through my collection, but I never did...it was just in the South at that time.

BEN TROLLINGER: Still, you know, I think...I've been doing a little reading back here...I just still get a kick out of thinking about that day in 1962, when you took the kids up to Georgetown High School and wanted to enroll...I just get a kick out of that. It's just such a bold thing to do. But, do you remember what kind of day it was? What the weather was like? What was it like to do that on that day?

HARVEY MILLER: Well, it was a kind of normal day. Let's see...the time to register school...when do you start registering school as a kid...go to school?.....I remember the day itself, as far as weather was concerned was just kind of a normal day...and I wasn't expecting to have to do that until this lawyer called me and tells me about this stuff...and he said that we'll be going to court tomorrow and I'd already made arrangements to get off my job and go down to Austin to the court and that's when he called me and said this...and that's when...I think he said we'll be going tomorrow...but we had to take the kids...and I don't know whether we got together and took the kids that day...well, we had to take them before then, so maybe he said we'll be going in a few days from now and that's when I got with this...and I didn't know who to get...it wasn't my church, Reverend Givens belongs to the Methodist Church down there. And I'm not sure how I ended up with him...cause we'd had a kind of committee...PTA committee...going on and we used to meet at his church, you know, parents and teachers those days...it was for the Carver. Back in those days it was segregated, the white people they had a PTA meeting and black schools had to have one, too, you know.

BEN TROLLINGER: So one of the reasons for doing it...the lawyer explained that if they had a school administrator on the stand and that they couldn't say that they never tried to...

HARVEY MILLER: Yeah, that's almost the words he said...you know. If I get up and talk and start giving Superintendent Barnes a hard time about it, probably the first thing he's going to say is, how do they know, they never tried to come up there? And then he made that remark to me in our conversation and that's what made me decide that's what we need to do.

BEN TROLLINGER: So this way you could say, well we tried and you wouldn't let us...

HARVEY MILLER: Yeah, we tried and you wouldn't let us. It didn't turn out to be a big issue, but that's what it was all about. That's what he was saying, you know. And they was just shocked when we came up there and...to make that approach...approach them on that. Like I say, I'll show you some of the articles in the book I made. I just gave you a set of it to take with you. I was just shocked that everything went so great. I was just comparing it with...let's see...you know, with the things that was happening in the South at that time.

BEN TROLLINGER: What do you think...because the way you describe it, it seems like the integration process in Georgetown was fairly smooth...what do you think the elements were that made that possible. In other words, why was it...what was unique about Georgetown, and the people involved in the integration process, that was different than what was happening in Alabama or Mississippi? What was the difference?

HARVEY MILLER: I don't know. I think the community at that time, we were communicating with Southwestern University in some areas...they had some special organized programs there to work with the black kids in the community and a lot of things were just voluntarily going on and a lot was with Southwestern University students and things like that, you know. And just being a way of life, you know, about going in the back door of the cafe and like that, I can't remember now when that changed...what changed that. But just kind of a way of life and we was just...wasn't having any problems...wasn't having any racial problems, I guess because nobody was trying to break the color line, one of the things. But when the schools integrated and the kids got to...getting to know each other...going to school and getting to know each other...parents, I guess, and things like that, so things just started kind of filtering in. To my knowledge...others may remember some things happening...but everything just kind of went smooth. I was kind of shocked and surprised...like I say, I was expecting, and really, didn't know why I was expecting my community to react, I guess because of the way they were reacting in the South, but when they was talking about this, when they integrated and took the kids up there and stuff like that, well, everything went fine. And I don't know at what point we could start using all the same restrooms. I can't remember when that might have happened. But when they go in the courthouse (unintelligible). I don't know, like I say, you had to go in the back door of the cafe, you had to go in the back room of the cafe, whatever it was...it was just a way of life. I admired Georgetown when this all happened, it just kind of filtered right in, you know.

BEN TROLLINGER: How important do you think...and this is something I haven't really heard discussed too often...how important do you think Southwestern's role in the whole integration process in Georgetown was?

HARVEY MILLER: Well, I think they was one of the major roles. I can't recall...and some other people might recall...but I can't recall any other efforts and then I was shocked when Southwestern made this move. Especially being teachers...you could have probably thought about some of the other residents as going out to pay the tax money for segregated schools, and maybe a lot of residents just felt like that was a way of life...that was OK. I never did realize why Southwestern University become so involved all of a sudden. And it wasn't because I cooked up there, because I don't think they knew me that much because of that...I cooked up there at one time but I can't remember what stage it was prior to that. I don't know if it was just some of the faculty members...and I think my doctor, Dr. Douglas Benold, was involved in helping to get integrated. I went and talked with him way back...back when we had that Carver reunion, after it had been integrated for years, we started having a Carver reunion...get all the Carver students, ex-students come around there, and that's when we'd invite them and we'd specifically invite white people. We'd have a Carver reunion but we'd raise it...and I don't know if any of them remember or that I said it, but I always put an article in the paper and said the community was invited. Because I had a little theory there...you can't fight integration if you're going to practice it. So whatever we had for the black kids, the white kids could do it too, you know. I always used to say that, so when we'd have a meeting or anything like that...well, this is open to the public. A lot of times a few white people come. So we had some white people come to the Carver reunion with us...teachers and things like that, you know.

BEN TROLLINGER: I know you played a big role in integration, but are there other people that come to mind who, white or black, played a really important role in making it happen in Georgetown?

HARVEY MILLER: The parents in the PTA, most of them supported us. The article that I have has got the names of who they are, who was on the PTA that supported the integration. It was just a few of them that opposed it, because of the connections. I know one lady, and she went on to be a teacher there, and I won't call her name, cause she'd get on me every time I go to Georgetown. It ended up being...good for her because she taught at Carver and she ended up teaching up there, at the white school. Sometimes people up there, they say, Harvey said he did this and he did that and everything. Only way I back things up is I have articles. I was a fanatic about writing articles. I'd go put an article in the paper about it. Other than that, the black community at that time just fell in with it. A few opposed it at first because they would take away their relationship because they thought sometimes...a black teacher...I read an article today in this booklet...they say that black kids had a better relationship with a black teacher than they did with a white teacher.

BEN TROLLINGER: Did you agree with that?

HARVEY MILLER: Well, I didn't agree with it because I felt like the way my kids and my brother Bruce and my relatives got along up there that everything went fine. I never recalled any problem with a white teacher was any different with black kids than they were with white kids or Hispanic kids at that time. Some of them was just *saying* that...that was some of the objections that they were using, you know. I think in this booklet it tells...there was an article in the paper...I put together a booklet...an article in the paper later come out and some of them talked about this. Then they had an article in the paper where they interviewed a lot of black people in this booklet I made...it goes on to say what the different ones said about different things. I don't recall anybody having any problem or any real major objections to it. Even though they didn't have a choice once they integrated...didn't have a choice but to let the kid go there, you know.