

Storer College Oral History Project
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE)
Interview with Alvin Catlett by Elaine Eff
5000-54th Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland
April 23, 2014

EE: Today is April 23, 2014. This is Elaine Eff, and I am at the home of Alvin Catlett, 5000- 54th Avenue, Hyattsville, Maryland, and we are going to talk about Storer College for the National Park Service archives, and we will discuss his role as the son of an alumna and also as the head of the Alumni Association and organizer of the annual Storer College reunion.

So, why don't you introduce yourself and tell me a little about yourself.

[00:48.00] AC: My name is Alvin Catlett [spells last name]. I am a native of Washington, DC, and my mother, Gloria Gaines was born in Staunton, Virginia, and so she migrated this way. I'm not sure exactly the year she was there. She was there for two years before the school closed. So, Mama used to drag all of her children to her annual reunions, and I think I've been going maybe twenty years or so. And then Mama passed, but I had grown to really love the people there, and I had decided that, although Mama was gone, I would continue to come.

EE: Stop [claps hands].

[00:01:48.01] AC: So, that's my involvement with them, and then I became president because the last president, Mary Harris, was stepping down, and I wanted to see the Alumni Association as well as the annual reunion continue. So, I said I was willing to become president. I had the support of many of the alumnae.

EE: Tell me when you were born, your birthdate, and then also when your mother was born, if you know.

[00:02:20.24] AC: Yes. I was born May 1, 1952. My mother was born March 25, 1928. And, again, she was from Staunton, Virginia. So, we've been around a while, and like I said, I started coming begrudgingly in the beginning, but in time, I really liked it, and I hated for the reunion to be over because, like with my mother, I knew that more than likely by the time we had the next reunion, there would probably be a few less members. So, it was always good. I was always coming back, but for me, it was kind of sad because I knew we all have to leave. As we've been seeing every year, any number of folks have been leaving us, and some were very strong supporters of the Alumni Association and the reunion.

EE: Why don't you tell me about the reunion? Like you started going as a youngster with your mother, I assume.

AC: Yes.

EE: So, why don't you tell me about your early memories of going with her?

[00:03:46.05] AC: Oh, it was always a grand event. Mama had this thing. She was always trying to be the one who had the most number of family or friends who would attend with her. I think in her best years, she had maybe thirty, thirty-five people come with her, including her five children. And I remember having a real nice time. We would start out on Friday afternoon and get up there, and then we would go to the track where they have the buffet, but it was always fun. We always had a lot of fun, and then on Saturday, there was the picnic, and then later on, the dinner and dance. And back in those days, we had live entertainment, and it was really, really nice. I definitely enjoyed the choir. I call myself a singer. I sing with the church that I belong, but I always enjoyed them because they were very strong, and they were good. They were really, really good. And then I had an opportunity to join the choir some years later, in fact, when my mother was still here. I joined the choir.

EE: What choir is that?

[00:05:23.21] AC: It's just a Storer reunion choir. For lack of better terms, it was just a reunion choir. What we were doing when Mrs. Harris was the president, we would meet at her house—many of us would meet at her house, locally, meet at her house, and we would rehearse the music, and then later on, we would just get up there, meaning Harpers Ferry, and we would rehearse Saturday afternoon after the picnic and before the dinner dance, we would rehearse for Sunday morning, and we still do that now. And it's always good. I've always enjoyed it.

EE: So, tell me where you remember all of these events taking place, like geographically. You mentioned the racetrack.

[00:06:17.25] AC: The racetrack is in Charles Town, which is a couple of miles up from where we were actually staying, where we still stay now in Harpers Ferry. The picnic, that's in Harpers Ferry. In fact, it's on the campus where Storer College was, and the dinner dance is at the hotel. It used to be called Cliffside Inn, I believe, and now it's the Quality Inn. So, everything is local, meaning either in Charles Town or Harpers Ferry, and we've tried over the years to see if we were willing or wanted to do something away from those places, and in time, no. It wasn't doable. We just couldn't do it, and we enjoyed—at least I'd say most of us, we still enjoy doing what we do when we go up there.

EE: So, tell me what Storer College meant to your mother. What stories did your mother tell about that you recall?

[00:07:33.29] AC: Oh, my mother. My mother told us about how difficult it was for her to get there in the beginning because she didn't have a lot of money. And, in fact, that's the reason why she left because she ran out of money. But Mama, although she didn't finish at Storer, that was the beginning or the starting point because she then came to Washington, DC and she went to now closed DC Teachers College where

she got her undergraduate, and then she went on to Catholic University to get her—she got three master's, I believe, all centered around education of some sort. Mama stressed education with her five children—education, education, education. Now, it didn't necessarily mean that she was going to fund it because she made it perfectly clear, “I don't have the money, but education is important. Education is important.”

[00:08:39.08] So, I guess that's where it all started with Storer College. I tried to show my children the same thing, and I'm proud to say that a number of them have gone on—in fact, all of my children have college degrees, and my daughter has gotten her master's. So, she's kind of following in my steps. I've got two master's. But I am proud of them, and I'm going to give the credit to my mama. That's all I'm going to say about that.

EE: Now, she's from Staunton, Virginia.

AC: That is correct.

EE: And she went to Storer College in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

AC: Yes.

EE: Did she ever talk about why she picked Storer College or how she found it?

[00:09:30.21] AC: I wish I could tell you. Somebody knew something to tell her because her grandmother and grandfather actually raised her. Somebody said something to her and then for her to come to Storer College, and back in the forties, it was tough getting into school anyway, and since Storer College was around, it was known by a lot of people about Storer College, believe it or not, for us, for blacks. So, that's when, exactly how it happened, I don't know, but I don't think it was Mama's whole idea by herself.

EE: Do you know if she had any other family members who went to the college?

AC: No. To my knowledge, no others, no. In fact, I know there were no other family members that went to Storer.

EE: I wonder how she felt about—why Storer held such an important place in her heart. I'm wondering did she have a similar relationship with DC Teachers College, which I think that became UDC?

[00:10:40.14] AC: Yes, it did become UDC, right. Mama always talked about Storer College after attending, and she made it known, and if you didn't remember her talking about Storer College, you would definitely remember her talking about the reunion because the reunion, “Get ready for the reunion. Get ready for the

reunion.” She would usually start in, I guess, March, April, to remind us about the reunion and getting the money in. Well, in the beginning, she was paying for all of us, most of us anyway. But then later on, it was like, “Okay, the reunion, are you going to be able to make it? Why can't you make it? You know it's important to me.”

[00:11:29.28] So, Mama pushed Storer. Mama did have a lot of good stories about Storer, and, unfortunately, she has some bad ones, too. Some of her instructors were pretty tough on her, but I think it truly made her a stronger individual, the way she turned out to be. Mama was pretty strong in the end for a little short lady who was five feet tall. I think until I was about thirty, she just seemed like a giant in stature, but she carried herself well, and if you met Gloria Gaines or Gloria Catlett, once she married, you would not forget her.

EE: What did she look like besides being short? Can you describe her kind of energy?

[00:12:27.28] AC: Oh, Mama had a lot of energy. Mama was short, small to medium size, but you would know when she's in a room, not because she was just really loud, but she kind of drew attention to herself. Mama was the kind of person that, when she went anywhere, she would either know someone and, more than likely, have a few more friends by the time she left. She was just that kind of individual. She didn't care if she knew no one wherever she went. By the time she left, she was going to have some names and addresses. That's just how she was. And when she passed, she had many address books filled with names and names and names and names and telephone numbers and addresses also, but she was the kind of person that it would really be difficult to not like her. Now, you may not necessarily like everything she said because Mama was one who, to a large extent, did not bite her tongue. If there was something that was bothersome to her, she would let you know. She wouldn't necessarily tell the world, but she would let you know. So, she was my role model.

EE: And when did she pass?

[00:13:55.09] AC: Mama passed, it will be ten years—it was ten years April 9th, I believe, because we buried her on April 15th, and for me, that's important as a tax practitioner. So, we buried her on the fifteenth ten years ago.

EE: Was your mom involved in any way in the reunion planning or in any aspect of the reunion?

[00:14:34.02] AC: What I remember was that Mama would come to the meetings that they had to plan for Storer, the reunion. Outside of that, I have absolutely no idea. She didn't tell me, but I knew that she was coming up—we had meetings in May and October every year, and I know Mama was coming out. I came with her maybe

once or twice, but for me, I was too busy. You know, the usual kind of crap people come up with. But she definitely was coming to the meetings, the reunion meetings. One was to get us on board with planning, and the other was, "Okay, this is what happened, and so now let's just get started on the next one." I know she was coming to both of those.

EE: What year did you become involved in the planning?

[00:15:31.07] AC: Planning? Oh, that's a tough question. Mama was gone. Mama was gone by the time I actually got involved because they told me about the—the year that she passed, I came to the reunion. I remember announcing at the dinner dance that I had decided—the dinner dance and the Sunday service, that I decided that I was going to continue what she had left, and that is to continue supporting the reunion and the Alumni Association. So, probably within that year because that same year, we had the meeting in October, and I attended that meeting, and Mrs. Harris was still in office then, and I started to get more involved with the reunion and the Alumni Association. So, that's ten years ago.

EE: And so you were elected the president. So, why don't you tell me when and how that you became president in such a short time.

[00:17:00.29] AC: I think this is my fourth or—

EE: Tell us when you became president.

[00:17:14.13] AC: I became president, it will be four years this October, and what had happened, Mrs. Harris had been saying for a couple of years at least that she was going to step down. She was really getting tired, and I believe her husband at the time was also ill. So, she needed to spend more time with him, and there were a number of alumnae who indicated that they thought I might be a good president, and I was reluctant. I didn't want to hear that because I believe, "Let someone else lead, and I will do something to follow." You know, to follow, to help out, but then in time, she was stepping down. They needed a president. Most of the officers were gone as well. Either they had left the organization, or that they had passed on. And we were at a meeting and they said, "We need a president now." Period. Mrs. Harris had already stepped down. They needed a president. And so I said that I would, and for all intents and purposes, I ran unopposed, and I was voted in and accepted as the new Alumni Association president.

[00:18:49.04] We didn't have many officers, even after I stepped in. And then I think a year or two later, the treasurer stepped down, and my wife became, Isabel became, not became, she was voted in as treasurer probably because she's like I am. We both are accountants, and they figured, "Okay. She's an accountant. So that would be the way we would go."

[00:19:13.22] So, that's how I got in, and it's been a challenge to keep things going mostly

because the membership is dying. I mean, that's the bottom line. The membership is dying, and so it's tough, and to get younger folks involved. And younger folks could be either descendants or friends. They don't have to be bloodline. So, we're pushing as much as we can to try to keep this thing going. It's amazing that there are people who have heard of Storer College and people who haven't heard of Storer College. We just keep trying to—we're trying to keep things out there. We're trying to keep that exposure out there.

EE: Let me ask you a question. What is the relationship between the Alumni Association and the National Park Service?

[00:20:17.14] AC: The relationship. Oh, this is interesting. The National Park Service and Harpers Ferry, part of the National Park Service and Harpers Ferry is Storer College. They actually—don't ask me how they got it—but where we meet, where we have our dinner dance, where we have our picnic is now National Park Service land.

EE: And where is that?

AC: That's in Harpers Ferry.

EE: Which buildings? Which area?

[00:20:57.28] AC: Well, it's their administration building in Harpers Ferry. The church that we attend is still there, and it was there when they were matriculating, I guess the word. So, that's still there. Where we have our picnic, it's another building that's part of their administrative buildings there. So, the National Park Service is—in Harpers Ferry, a lot of the National Park Service is Storer College. There's another side where there's the park, but we're not there. So, I know that the National Park Service uses their building to, for a fee, because there are groups that meet there. So, we are still alive because I know they've named one of their rooms, Storer College, and they've got a lot of artifacts and things there in the building.

EE: Are any of them your mother's? Would any of them come from your family?

[00:22:25.02] AC: I don't think so. We've got some pictures that are there, and I believe Mama is in a couple of them, but that may be long after Storer College officially closed, and they kept pictures. They kept some of the pictures from the reunion.

EE: Does the Alumni Association have anything to do with the Storer room in Mather Hall, formerly Anthony Hall?

[00:22:57.09] AC: Does it have anything to do with it? I would say we—that's interesting, and the reason why I say that is because when Mama was still here, I know that they created that room. So, I'm not sure how much—I believe they had some—they would have had to have some input into the Storer College room, but how much, I

really couldn't tell you, and that was before I really got involved with the Alumni Association, but I'm sure that Mrs. Harris—I think she was there for maybe fifteen years, I believe, as president. So, they were doing things long before I got involved.

EE: Tell me how old you were when you first went to your first reunion. Do you remember? And your brothers and sisters?

[00:23:52.00] AC: Oh, lord. I had to be thirty-four, thirty-five. I'm thinking about my youngest children, and when I first took them up there, I think they were six. And so we're talking about 1981. So, '87, '81-'87, yeah. I think they were six or seven. So, we're talking a number of years that I've been going. During that time, I might have missed maybe one or two years reunion, not many, and most of it—one I know had to do with my job at the time with the telephone company. I had to do strike duty in West Virginia. Not West Virginia, sorry. Richmond, Virginia. So, I couldn't go that year. But I might have missed three years out of that entire time.

EE: Can you describe kind of the events of the reunion? When it happened and how your Alumni Weekend unfolds, how people get together?

[00:25:10.22] AC: Okay. What we do is we try to come up around midday Friday, and those to register, pick up their packets, that's Friday afternoon. Then at six thirty, seven o'clock, for those, we have the buffet dinner at Charles Town Racetrack. They actually have—Charles Town actually has a race, usually somewhere between the third and fifth race, named after Storer College. And so there's a section up there, and it could be as many as fifty, sixty seats, cordoned off just for us, and we go up there, and we have a meal. There's a lot of interaction, and sometimes people will—some of us will stay to go and gamble. Most of us don't. We don't want to lose our money. So, we end up leaving. But we have a chance to speak to a lot of people and see faces. So, that's really the first event that takes place, and that's Friday evening.

[00:26:27.13] Then on Saturday, we have the first event is picnic at noon, and it runs noon to two, two thirty or so. This is on the campus, and immediately thereafter, ten to fifteen of us, maybe twenty at most, we go to the church to rehearse the music. Around seven o'clock, we have the dinner dance, and that runs up until midnight or a little thereafter. And we get quite a few individuals to attend the dinner dance on Saturday night.

EE: And where do you hold that?

[00:27:20.17] AC: That's at the Quality Inn. That used to be the Cliffside Inn. That is Saturday night. Then on Sunday morning, we have worship service, and it starts—I think we start at ten thirty, ten forty-five, and we're done usually by noon or a little bit thereafter, and everyone goes in a different direction. And we have people coming from near and far. I think the farthest was—we had someone come from

California. Most of the folks probably East Coast, but we do get people from Pennsylvania, which is not considered East Coast. So, we get them from all over. We get them from all over, and that's usually what we do.

EE: How many people generally come?

[00:28:17.14] AC: Well, like the alumni, we're getting less and less each year. I would say last year, there were probably a total of maybe sixty folks. I think when I first was president, maybe we had eighty, eighty-five. So, as people pass, we lose a few folks and their descendants and friends, I guess. So, last year, somewhere between fifty and sixty. It's always good to see them. For me, it is.

EE: So, what would you say the highlight is? And you didn't tell me when you hold it and why you hold it?

[00:29:08.01] AC: Oh, yes. Well, I don't know why they started this, but it's always the first full weekend in August of each year, and that's when it is. In fact, I believe it's in the constitution that that's when we're going to have the reunion, that first full weekend. So, if, let's say, Saturday is the first of August, we don't hold it until the very next weekend. It's got to be the first full weekend of August of each year, and it runs from Friday afternoon until midday Sunday.

EE: So, do you have any special guests or speakers?

[00:29:56.15] AC: We have had—at the dinner dance, we've had individuals to come in to speak to us. We've had some skits and some other things going on. At the picnic, we've had individuals coming in to speak to us to either tell us about—some stories about Storer or even some things about Harpers Ferry. We've had the speaker, not the speaker, but the minister for Sunday has, to my knowledge, has always been a Storerite, has always been a Storerite, but we have had interested parties to come in to speak to us, even at the Sunday morning worship service. I know Dawn Burke produced a book, and she spoke, and she got some stories that I wasn't even aware of, but that's not totally unheard of. There's some stories out there that I haven't heard of.

[00:31:07.19] So, we've had a number of individuals down through the years to come speak to us and share. In addition to the Storerites, we've had others outside to come and speak to us.

EE: Tell me about the stories that your mother handed down to you about her experiences at Storer, like some of her classes, some of her teachers.

[00:31:36.11] AC: As we get older, our memories start to fade. All I can tell you is that Mama had shared some stories about some good experiences as well as some that weren't necessarily so good. The buildings, the shape they were in, the things that they

even had to go through, Harpers Ferry was tough on black folks back then. And, yes, they had their own little area, but going into town, it was tough. It was tough going into town. The teachers, many of them, if not all of them, were non-black, and they were catching heck as well. They were having some tough times, but Mama had some—in general, some favorable experiences when it came to Storer. I can't tell you that this instructor or teacher or professor said this to her or that, but I know it had to be—in the end, it had to be good because Mama pressed us into going year after year after year, and, believe me, if she did not believe in that, she would not have attended, period, nor would she have been dragging us up there from the beginning. So, she had a bunch of experiences, and I'm thankful that she did because, like I said earlier, that I stress the importance of education to my children and people that I come in contact with. Education is important, and you need that. It can't be taken from you. You need it.

EE: Do you recall your mother talking about the closing of the college? Obviously—were you born in '52 or '57?

AC: I was born in '52.

EE: So, you were three years old when the school closed. But, over the years, did she talk about *Brown v. Board of Ed.*, and how she felt about the school no longer being open?

[00:34:04.04] AC: Well, the fact that she left early because she ran out of money, I think that played a major—that was it. That was it for her. As far as why the school closed, through the years again, I've heard a number of stories, and I can't directly attribute them to even her, but a number of stories—yeah, *Brown v. Board of Education* caused by many folks the State to say, “Well, look, we don't have to invest in Storer College any longer because separate but equal no longer, and everyone will, they will go wherever they go, wherever they go, wherever they can attend.”

[00:34:55.29] So, as far as I know, I'm not sure. Well, I've got my own personal views. I think that was a way out for West Virginia. That was a way out for West Virginia. “We don't have to deal with you people. So, good, close. Have a nice day.”

EE: Except there was other black colleges.

[00:35:22.01] AC: Yes, but it's like, “Okay, well, you've got that school over there. So, you can go to that school. We don't have to do anything for you because there's something else out there for you. We don't have to say, 'Well, look, two, three, five schools, that's fine. No, there's one school over there. So, you guys can go to that school. We don't have to do anything else.’”

EE: Yeah, but don't you think, isn't it interesting how many of the students who were forced to leave in '55, when the school closed, went right to Shepherd?

AC: Yes.

EE: Which had no history of integration.

AC: Right.

EE: I mean, that to me is fascinating.

[00:36:02.01] AC: Yes. Well, again, but I guess it also showed although the state said, “We don't care,” there were still institutions of people that said, “Well, we do care. So, come on. We will educate you. That's fine.” So, yes, it is, but, again, as far as I'm concerned, the State was clear. “We don't care.” Shepherd, absolutely, and I think a lot of the Storer records were sent to Virginia Union. I believe they were sent to Virginia Union, yes. I believe they were sent to Virginia Union. Why, I don't know, but I know Mrs. Harris had mentioned to us that we were taking up, and we haven't done that in quite a few years, but they would take donations and send them to—in the beginning, they used to have a scholarship. They had scholarships for descendants of Storer. They would award scholarships to individuals. Well, in the end, they stopped doing that and said, “Well, we will send money to Virginia Union” because that's where our records were. I don't know if there's a library there. I don't know if they did that, but that's been gone for maybe six, eight years easily.

EE: What, Virginia Union?

[00:37:40.05] AC: No. The money went to Virginia Union. We stopped taking donations or contributions and sending them off to Virginia Union.

EE: So, now what are the dues, and what do you do with the dues that you collect?

[00:37:55.11] AC: Well, most of it sits in the treasury, believe it or not. I shouldn't say most of it. A lot of it, we use to continue the reunion. We also spend money when members leave, meaning they pass on. So, we'll send flowers and cards, and we will try to do things. I would say to you that the treasury doesn't really grow because we end up spending—we try to cover our costs in what we charge for the reunion, but we've got a little bit of money there, just a little bit. So, most of what we do centers around the reunion, but like I said, we do, when members leave us or their loved ones leave us, we will send them small tokens and flowers.

EE: How would you say the alumni feel about the Storer representation at Harpers Ferry today?

[00:39:19.07] AC: That's mixed. It's mixed because we've got individuals who live in Harpers Ferry, live in Charles Town, live in Shepherdstown that do not attend the reunion.

We have some that do. You mentioned Mrs.—

EE: Taylor.

AC: No, Mrs.—

EE: Smelley?

[00:39:44.07] AC: Mrs. Smelley. Mrs. Smelley says to me almost every year, you know, “Brother Catlett”—because we actually attend the same church—she said, “Brother Catlett, we need to contact these people because there are a lot of people up here,” and that's as far as it goes. We haven't really been—we've tried. We tried getting all the people that we could think of. We send them the cards, let them know about the reunion, let me know about the meetings that we have. We try to make it easy for them because we, every year, we would have the meetings up in Harpers Ferry because a lot of people were up there. So, a lot of us would travel an hour and a half, two hours for the meetings. And then we thought maybe we should start having the meetings here. We had them in Alexandria. We had them in my church. We had them at Mr. Vollin's church, and the participation didn't grow at all.

So, we still do Harpers Ferry in terms of our May and October meetings, and we still—I mean, we're trying. We're trying to reach out to people. When they had—a couple of years ago, there was a Roper—I think it was Roper. There was an alumnus of Storer College that in Charles Town, the high school up there named the auditorium after this woman who—I think she might have even been a principal. She might have been promoted to principal. I know she was at least a teacher there for many, many years, and they named the auditorium after Ms. Roper, and I saw a number of Storerites, some I had been seeing at the reunion, others someone else would say, “Oh, that's a Storerite right there, and that's a Storerite.” And we try to get them, and the interest just—it could be they're tired. A lot of people are tired, and so it's not for them to carry it on. It's for those who come after them, the descendants as well as friends.

EE: Tell me what the message that you think that Storer College sends because I will tell you when I tell people that I'm doing these interviews, not one person that I—certainly no white people I know have ever heard of Storer College.

AC: Sure.

EE: And it vanished at a pretty critical time, before a lot of us were born, but why should people know about Storer? How might we get it out there?

[00:42:58.24] AC: What I found out, being a member of the Alumni Association, there are many Storerites who have played a part in the history of either the United States or Harpers Ferry or Charles Town or Washington, DC or Alexandria, Virginia. There

have been a lot of Storerites who have done things of note. So, for that time period, Storer created or helped to create or helped to mold these individuals that have played a part in histories. We're trying to keep that message out there, but that's all. And for me, I didn't know a lot of them. I knew a few of them, and most notably, my mother. So, for me, that's important. I mean, that's, for me, that's where it is, is Mama.

[00:42:58.24] There are others though who I've grown to know and love in the organization, and many of them have passed on, and they did some outstanding things within their communities. They're not here now. And so Storer played a part. Storer played a part in shaping these individuals for where they went.

EE: Do you want to drop a few names or tell me a few of their stories? I don't mean to put you on the spot.

[00:44:48.25] AC: Yeah, you are, but that's okay. Oh, what was his name? He's been gone two or three years now. Names, names, names, names. The first names I can think of is the lady who passed early this year from Alexandria, and I didn't realize—it will come to mind as I stall for time—Ardelia Hunter. She did a lot within Alexandria and the public schools there. I didn't realize she had done as much. And at her homegoing service, there were a number of people within Alexandria, the NAACP in Alexandria, the Alexandria public school system that they had stories about her and what she did and what she meant to the community.

Outside of her, I am at a loss. Let me think. I can think of some people, but in terms of—what was his name? I can see this guy's face. I'm sorry. I'm at a loss.

EE: We could even take a break and like look him up if you wanted to.

AC: Sure.

EE: Tell me what your mother did, what her career was.

[00:46:19.28] AC: Mama was an early—oh, lord, excuse me. Mama was a teacher in DC public schools. She also worked with the Headstart program in the district for many years. She retired from DC public schools maybe around 1970 something or '80, '70 something. But Mama was a DC public school teacher. There were a number of people... She also did the state program. The state program was for adults who had left school early. I know she was at Spingarn State. But primarily youth, young, early—early childhood education. There were a number of people at her homegoing service who remembered her as that little lady who meant a lot, who cared a lot. Mama was a good teacher. She would tell stories about some of the situations that occurred, but, yeah, Mama was a teacher. She was a teacher. Mama had three master's. I had two. Mama had three. She was contemplating possibly going back for her doctorate. She was a tough little lady.

EE: So, we've talked about why Storer was important and what the legacy that you want to carry on as a legacy, as someone who's inherited his mother's passion. Do any of your brothers and sisters feel similarly about Storer?

AC: Not as much.

EE: Say that in a full sentence, if you could.

[00:48:24.14] AC: I'm sorry. I have one sibling who is just as interested. She's down in Athens, Georgia. The rest of them, they're kind of lukewarm to the whole idea. Actually all of them have at some point in time attended the reunion. Last year, we had all but one, and I think the year before that, four or five of us, which is the total number. Yeah, four, I believe, the year before. But sometimes we get them and sometimes we don't. My sister, Alva, probably is the one—

EE: What's her name?

[00:49:16.12] AC: Alva. Like I'm Alvin, and she's Alva. No, we're not twins. She was born a year ahead of me. The story is that her first name was Gloria, and they decided early on that was not going to work because you've got two Glorias in the house. So they changed it to Alva Gloria instead of Gloria Alva. But Alva is probably most supportive, and she tries to attend the reunions every year. I've got a brother over in Southeast, William. He and his wife, they will attend every so often. And then Nathaniel, a couple of times, and Charles, actually he's been here now two years, and he's out in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I'm the one really that's kind of breathing Storer College, yeah.

EE: Well, I think we're all very grateful for that. That's a very important contribution.

AC: Thank you.

EE: Let me ask if there's anything that I should be asking you, any questions I've forgotten or any particular memories or stories. Now your mom never talked of having boyfriends or close friends from college or did she?

[00:50:48.02] AC: Well, I'll just say this. This is going to be interesting. I would say that, no, there weren't any really close, close, either boy—there weren't any boyfriends. First of all, if she had any boyfriends, there would have only been one, knowing how she was raised, but there was no boyfriend, and I don't recall any very close classmates. She was close to a lot of them once they started the reunion, but while she was at school, no, I don't recall any.

EE: Were there any places when you went back for reunions that she said, "I've got to take you here. You've got to see this. This is a place that has importance to

me.”

[00:51:35.14] AC: There was—we went into town. There was a place in town where they dedicated—wait a minute. It was a Storerite that helped put this together.

EE: Not the Hayward Shepherd monument?

[00:51:58.25] AC: No, no, this was actually in a building that's still standing in Harpers Ferry. I don't remember his name. I don't remember his name. But what I can say is she definitely wanted us to go to the building that is still on Park Service land. We used to hike. We used to hike. Mama would take us up through the mountains, and was it Jefferson Overlook?

EE: Jefferson Rock?

[00:52:40.18] AC: Jefferson Rock, yes, thank you. Jefferson Rock. When we first started going, younger folks, we would hike. Right after the picnic, we would hike up through the woods, and she showed us some of the buildings that were still there, and what they meant to her and the school. Other than that, I don't think so. Now, you did find about Brackett. The place in, we went there. They've got a room. The museum in—

EE: Mather?

AC: No, no, no, no. This is in—

EE: Well, I think there are a lot of notables and a lot of names to remember because a lot of people have come through.

AC: Yes.

EE: So, unless there's something else that you want to discuss or any subject that I've forgotten or anything you want to say about your mom and Storer and what the message is going forward.

[00:53:55.14] AC: The only thing I can say is I appreciate what you guys are doing because this helps us to stay alive, the memory of Storer College stay alive. So, I'm very much appreciative of that effort.

EE: No, it is great that the Park Service realizes how important, the shoulders that they stand on. [laughs]

AC: Yes, yes.

EE: Well, thank you so much, Alvin. It's been a delight, and I really look forward—I wish you luck at the reunion. Have a great reunion this year.

AC: Thank you.

EE: We'll hopefully see you again.

AC: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

[00:54:33.09] [End of File]