

Henryetta and Edward McDonald Transcription

Kathryn: So she went to Geneva High and you guys went to DeSales?

Henryetta: That's right.

K: Where did you go to elementary school?

H: We started out at High Street School

K: At High St School?

H: Right. And our brothers-

K: at that time, do you remember if there were other black kids going to High St School?

H: no.

K: no. you don't remember that there were-

H: oh, wait a minute! Paula Moore.

K: Paula Moore?

H: Paula Moore of the Moore family. (*speaks to Edward*) Paula. Paula Moore.

Edward: yeah.

(*cut*)

H: they (*Edward and Edgar*) were going to High Street School and they had classes in the morning and afternoon, okay? and Edgar, they were changing classes so Paula Moore was the one that told the teacher, that's not Edgar, that's Eddie, okay.

So Mrs. Wright, she was the principal, High St School, do you remember that?

E: mhmm

H: Mrs. Wright.

E: I remember.

H: Okay, and so Mrs. Wright came to my mother and she told her, she thought it was funny, but we gotta do something. and to the day, my mother was very hurt because she let her do it her way. what she should have told Mrs. Wright was put 'em both in the class in the morning. No, she says, we'll put one ahead of the other.

K: Why? Just because she didn't want to have to tell them apart?

H: Because she couldn't tell them apart.

K: (laughs) sheez

H: but see, you laugh, you laugh, but you laugh. and its just like when I went to school and the things that I had dealings with these nuns (*who told her about what the brothers did*). and when I got older, I laughed, I just say, they did that to you?

K: well tell me, tell me about the nuns

H: (laughs) well I'll get to that in a minute, let me finish. Anyhow, to make a long story short, this is what happened. So, we, in High St School we passed every half year, right? Then when we went to, we decided we wanted to become Catholic and our mother agreed, was agreeable at it. She got us together and she talked about it, she said you know you gotta go to church that's what they want...

E: see my mother was Methodist and my father was Catholic.

K: oh.

E: and we converted with the permission of my mother.

K: you kids decided that you wanted to convert? or your father...

E: well, my father, I think, was the main instigator. Behind that. but he figured we'd get better training in Catholic school, which we did. But...

H: we went on, and they still hold the record. I hold the record of being the only black gal to go to Catholic high school in Geneva, and graduated from it.

K: really?

H: DeSales.

K: really?

H: and...

K: is that still true?

H: mmmm. our brothers, I know its graduation, but I don't know how far KC, KC was a gal Cooke.

K: right. is her name White now?

H: and she married the soldier and she came back to Geneva, this was in later years and she sent two of her sons to DeSales, so they were telling me, the Genevans, but I don't think they graduated, I don't know, but they, I think our brothers still have the record of being the two blacks that graduated from...boys

K: right.

H: I'm the gal.

E: the one time, as I said, my sister, my brother and I were the only blacks in school, outside of my father. and I don't remember any after that.

K: do you remember feeling any reaction to being the only black in the school?

E: no. I've had that question before, in Geneva it's...as I said my father was the coach at St Francis DeSales. and he was loved by all the kids, which were all white except my brother and I, and my sister. and all the time that we grew up in Geneva, I've never heard, had been called a name, not even one of us, have you?

H: no.

E: all the time we were there. grew up I mean. and you could tell, too, because my father had the whole school, athletic director, and everybody respected him.

(cut)

E: Every day my father would go down to the high school and go in, now the only persons that could do that was principal or the bishop. and he'd go to any one of the classes at random and the teachers would stop the class, and my father would talk to them for ten or fifteen minutes. Then he would go from there to Hobart, and watch whatever games were playing, lacrosse or football or what. check that out then go home. but before that he would meet with the city manager and the mayor...and two and three other city officials. I guess he talked over what was happening that day.

H: He'd have coffee from downtown every morning?

E: Yep every morning down at the cafeteria, they'd have coffee and all of 'em would sit in a big circle and talk. And then my father would go visit the school and up to Hobart, then go home and read or watch tv. And he did that every single day.

(cut)

and he had many, many friends and most of them were city officials or sports people or somebody at the college, at the high school. And every weekend my father would go to a place in, near Canandaigua called Town Pump. It was a nightclub.

H: A restaurant

E: and a restaurant. And many of his friends would be there, they'd come down with their wives, to Canandaigua

H: from Rochester.

E: Rochester and from there... like we were home weekends... we wouldn't see my father until late Friday night. He didn't drink and then Saturday night would be the same thing. And he'd go up to the place, they used to have an inn up on top of the hill on Hamilton St called...

(Henryetta and Edward trying to think of the name)

H: where they...they have, up there on...but I don't know...they had one there to...

E: I can say Mona Lisa

H: what do you mean

E: what's the name of that restaurant, Vicky (*his wife*), what's the name of the restaurant on top of the hill where the...Coach used to go to the nightclub

H: oh that burned down? in Geneva?

Cora (Edward's wife): Yeah. Ponderosa there now it used to be...what

E: Lafayette Inn

(all agree and repeat the name)

E: Well my father would go there.

H: historic place. looked like, all them big pillars.

C: Lafayette Inn, yeah.

H: Lafayette right.

E: and he would go there with all his friends, which were all white. and go around talk with them and everything and my father carried a card. (*gets up*)

C: (laughs) It's up there someplace. Oh I gotta clean that board off.

E: this is funny.

K: *(laughs at card)*

E: he's really good though, he's at the Lafayette Inn

K: that's funny.

E: and this rich couple came in, they were elderly people they're sitting at the long...and I think it was the owner or somebody wanted them to meet my father. So he took my father over to the table and he talked with the man and the Mrs. and then he went away before, he went away he handed the lady his card. Ten minutes later the father come over and gave my father five dollars.

(all laugh)

E: It said, Henry McDonald, retired, no address...

H: It reminds me of....

C: I was thinking the same thing...I remember you...

K: is this the only copy of this card you have? is that the only?

E: do we have any cards like this

H: huh?

E: do we have any cards like this?

H: no

C: can you Xerox that?

K: that's great.

E: I'll get you one

K: let me just read it into the into the tape it just says oh okay Henry McDonald in parentheses Retired, no address, no phone, no friends, no money.
That's a great card.

C: yeah, it is.