

Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions
Oral History Documentation Project
Mary Frances Greene Morgan
Interviewed by Alma Jordon
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55 minutes, 18 seconds

Alma Jordon ([00:00](#)):

Good afternoon.

Mary Morgan ([00:04](#)):

Good afternoon too.

Alma Jordon ([00:07](#)):

Would you give us your name please? Your full name and where you were born?

Mary Morgan ([00:13](#)):

Excuse me. Mary Frances Morgan. I was Mary Frances Greene. I married Dan Morgan. He passed some years ago. We had one son, he passed, but we had two grandchildren, grandson and granddaughter, and I have a great, great-granddaughter. Let's see. I think I told you I was born and raised in Drayden, Maryland. And my parents were George Louise Greene, and my mother's maiden name was Mason.

([00:53](#)):

She raised 12 children. She died in childbirth with the 13th child, which was a boy. Buddy is the youngest. I'm the oldest. I went to Jarboesville High School, graduated from there. Then I went to Cortez Peters, went to business school, finished there. Then I got married. I went to Baltimore. Then I got married and we lived in Washington and I've been in Washington ever since. And I think I told you I had one son.

Alma Jordon ([01:38](#)):

Yes.

Mary Morgan ([01:39](#)):

Two grands, and one great-grand.

Alma Jordon ([01:46](#)):

Tell us about your earliest memories.

Mary Morgan ([01:49](#)):

Of growing up?

Alma Jordon ([01:50](#)):

Yes.

Mary Morgan ([01:50](#)):

Oh, I had a very strict mother and father, but a loving mother and father. When she said, "Do something," you did it. You didn't ask any questions. She was a good cook. We were blessed. We were blessed raising as many children as they had and to raise them, all of her children. There's not a mark against any of us, I don't think. Child or grandchild or great-grandchild. My son, he passed, but he finished Hampton. Tiffy and Jermaine, my daughter-in-law wasn't into the education part. And I tried to get her to send my grands to a college. It was because she didn't have the money. She just wasn't interested.

([02:58](#)):

But they are beautiful children because most grandparents think they're children are, but they are. They have never given us one minute's trouble because Tiffy has a little girl. Jermaine, he's not married, hasn't married yet. He's a pistol. Like, I said, "Jermaine, when are you getting married?" He said, "When I find somebody, I feel like I want to live with." I said, okay, "That's it." But I'm blessed because they have never given, I had a son who never gave me immense trouble, my grandchildren have never given me immense trouble, and I'm really blessed in that way.

([03:47](#)):

In my family, as you can see, but all of them the same way. Any of them come in this area, we can try to get to see them. But my sisters and brothers, I think I just lost a sister last December. Buddy, did Marie passed last December-

Buddy ([04:08](#)):

Last December.

Mary Morgan ([04:08](#)):

... or December before?

Buddy ([04:09](#)):

No, last December.

Mary Morgan ([04:09](#)):

Yeah. And Dolly, she lived in Detroit. She's gone. Georgine lived in Portsmouth, she's gone. And Marie, she just passed. Ernestine too. Georgia, she's sick, she has... was it Alzheimer's?

Buddy ([04:37](#)):

No, not quite, it's a little dementia.

Mary Morgan ([04:39](#)):

Is it? Whatever it is. I know she's not herself and it hurts because she was her for my sister Marie's funeral. She didn't look like herself.

Alma Jordon ([04:58](#)):

Now, which one was that? Can you tell us how many siblings you had?

Mary Morgan ([05:02](#)):

There were 12 of us. Mother died in childbirth with the 13th one, and we had three boys and nine girls. Buddy's the youngest. I'm the oldest and now there's not that many, I think it's five of us left.

Buddy ([05:22](#)):

Six. Is it six? I think it's six.

Mary Morgan ([05:22](#)):

It's six of us.

Buddy ([05:22](#)):

I believe so, yeah.

Mary Morgan ([05:22](#)):

Yeah.

Buddy ([05:22](#)):

Yeah.

Mary Morgan ([05:29](#)):

And we had a family reunion a couple years ago and that was super. And my grandmother was there and she looked at me and she said, "Mary Frances?" I said, "Yes, grandma?" She said, "I started all of this," [all laugh] which she was a dream, had-

Speaker 7 ([05:58](#)):

Excuse me, [inaudible 00:06:03].

Mary Morgan ([06:02](#)):

... a couch and had one job. And that was her.

Buddy ([06:11](#)):

Okay, that was her?

Speaker 7 ([06:11](#)):

Sorry for bothering you [inaudible 00:06:12].

Buddy ([06:11](#)):

Now excuse me.

Mary Morgan ([06:11](#)):

Buddy, how many children did Vernon have?

Buddy ([06:13](#)):

Excuse me?

Mary Morgan ([06:14](#)):

Yeah.

Buddy ([06:15](#)):

Who?

Mary Morgan ([06:15](#)):

Vernon.

Buddy ([06:15](#)):

How many children did he have?

Mary Morgan ([06:15](#)):

Yeah.

Buddy ([06:15](#)):

One, I believe.

Mary Morgan ([06:26](#)):

One. And Matthews, how many did he have? He didn't stay in touch that much, because he was-

Mary Morgan ([06:32](#)):

... my mother and father raised us strict, but she always told us, "Watch the people you associate with because they recognize you by the friends you keep. If you are out with someone and they're doing things that you know wrong, always when you get a chance, excuse yourself and leave. Because you don't want to be associated with that type of person." It wasn't hard. It wasn't hard at all. And I think they, she and daddy, did a beautiful job. My nephew was here. Was it last week Ronald was here? Yeah, so I think it's forty-some.

Buddy ([07:26](#)):

There's more than that.

Mary Morgan ([07:27](#)):

Grandchildren.

Buddy ([07:30](#)):

Oh, grandchildren, great-grandchildren? I guess it's approaching 75.

Mary Morgan (07:35):

Yeah, it's a good many. I'm bragging, I know. But our family's a very close family and we get together. We don't care whether anybody's around or not. We have a ball. We really have a good time. That's way mother and daddy raised us to get along with each other.

Alma Jordon (08:03):

Well, you're talking about your siblings. What type of things did you do together when you were small? What kind of games did you play at home, what did you do?

Mary Morgan (08:16):

Merry-go-round, Ring Around The Roses, where you take the ball, throw it over the house to the next one, the one over... Y'all ever play that? Yeah, I don't know. We played games and we used to play baseball and played... We just... Buddy, help me out.

Buddy (08:46):

But I can't help you out.

Merideth Taylor (08:46):

Yeah.

Alma Jordon (08:46):

It's-

Merideth Taylor (08:51):

Yeah, do you want to go ahead, Alma, and explain it? If he's off camera, it makes it difficult.

Alma Jordon (09:00):

Right, because he's not on camera, so you don't know who that is that's giving you answers. So don't worry if you don't know everything or don't remember everything, it'll be a great interview anyway. And we are just honored that you're here with us.

Mary Morgan (09:16):

Well, one thing, I just felt so beautiful, because everything that you do, I said, well, "I wish mother and daddy were here to see it and mother to know that her child was asked to interview for an association like this." I'll be 90 in a couple of months. And I have enjoyed, I really have enjoyed my life. I've been blessed with a good husband, good son, and I have two grands, one great grand. And we sisters and brothers, we do, we really, when they come this way and we all get together, we soon forget that other people.

(10:06):

And sometime when we were growing up, and mother and daddy were very particularly with where we went to play and with one family, and I would say, "Mother, they always come to play with us. Why can't we go and play with them?" So mother sat me down one day and said, "Mary Frances, they can come here anytime they like, but you can't go there because they drink and we don't want our girls

around people that drink." I never bothered her anymore, but I felt bad because those girls, we were friends, but that's the way mother and daddy raised us.

(10:55):

We had to be careful, but that family was the only family. And when she explained to me why, and yet when they came and ate, if it was pot of beans, we all sat around the table and ate those beans together and whatnot. My life growing up, we didn't have that much, but we had fun and it was beautiful. It was a beautiful life.

Alma Jordon (11:26):

Would you share a little bit with us about school and your education?

Mary Morgan (11:32):

Oh, I went to Drayden, one-room school. The first to third grade, the one side of the room. Fourth to the seventh was on the other side of the room. When I was growing up, and I thought, "Lord, I'd be so glad when I can get over on the other side," because that's where all the big children were. And when I got to fourth grade and went over there, nobody could tell me anything. Because it wasn't that school is... I think that's a historical school now. It's still there.

(12:13):

And Mr. Stuckey was our teacher. He was a pistol. I'll never forget he whipped... No, that wasn't Mr. Stuckey. That was one of the sisters. And you don't remember what sister it was, do you? She came home and told Mother that the sister had whipped her. And mother, the whelps were still on, mother and daddy got in the car, we live in Drayden, and they went to St. Peter's.

Buddy (12:50):

Oh.

Mary Morgan (12:50):

Huh?

Alma Jordon (12:56):

Oh, was that Drayden's school or was that another school?

Mary Morgan (13:01):

St. Peter Claver's.

Alma Jordon (13:10):

Okay, okay.

Mary Morgan (13:10):

One of the nuns whipped her, my sister. And mother said, my children can be punished, but you don't put these kind of whelps on my children. I can't remember who listened to mother about the beat whelps. And so I know they said that nun never put her hands on that child again, but that's the way they were. They didn't uphold you in what you did, but you treat them right. Mm-hmm.

(13:42):

To me, I always say we had a beautiful life. We were poor. We might not have had nothing but a pot of beans, but we had enough to eat and we were happy. And mother always said, I'm going to see that all my children get at least a high school education, because you don't have to pay for that. But I'm saying, we had Marie, Ernestine, Buddy, all went to college. I went to business school, but all of them got some type of education more than their high school when they grew up and went out, mm-hmm. My life growing up was wonderful. It was wonderful. I feel that I was blessed because of having the kind of parents that I had. I don't think that I would be the lady that I am today, mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon (14:54):

Can you share some more about Drayden School and some of your classmates and what you did and the classes and the books?

Mary Morgan (15:03):

Drayden School, there was one first grade to the third grade on one side of the room, fourth to the seventh was on the other side of the room. First teacher I had was Mr. Stuckey, and the last teacher I had was Ms. Tilghman. I think she was a Ms. Stacey then. They were good. Only time in school that I got hit that I felt to this day it wasn't right, Ms. Tilghman hit me for talking and I told her, "It wasn't me." I knew who it was, but I wasn't going to tell her. She said, "Who was it?" I said, "I don't know what it was me," but she was a good teacher. I went to Drayden.

Alma Jordon (15:57):

Do you remember the desk, what type of desk you had and the books and all that?

Mary Morgan (16:03):

Yeah. Well, the books we had, I think a lot of them were brought from Great Mills over to our school. We didn't get new books.

(16:20):

We got hand-me-downs, but yet we got a good education because when I graduated, I graduated to seventh grade. It was only two of us. No, it was only two of us who graduated from high school. That's what it was, and it was Chester Clayton and me, mm-hmm. And I made my dress and Ms. Dent, I think that was the superintendent, asked her... I forgot who, was going to teach or somebody, "How come she didn't make her dress, graduation dress?" And she said, "She did." She said she couldn't believe it.

(17:06):

But I picked that pattern out. To this day, that's why I don't like sewing. It was long-waisted. They were wearing long-waisted dresses then, pleated all the way around, it was pretty. And Ms. Hall she saw to it every pleat was measured. It had to be the exact, sewn right, but when it was finished, it was pretty though. It was really pretty.

Alma Jordon (17:41):

Was Ms. Hall a teacher at your school?

Mary Morgan (17:45):

She was. Ms. Hall was a teacher at high school. At elementary school. The only two teachers I had was Mr. Stuckey, and Ms. Tilghman. Ms. Hall was at home economics, teacher, yeah. Uh-huh.

Alma Jordon ([18:01](#)):

Now, regarding Drayden school, do you remember anything about the types of desks you had then? Were they all wooden desks or how were they?

Mary Morgan ([18:09](#)):

All wooden desk, yes.

Alma Jordon ([18:14](#)):

Oh, okay.

Mary Morgan ([18:14](#)):

Yes, yes. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([18:14](#)):

Okay.

Mary Morgan ([18:19](#)):

It was we had fun. I'm not going to say anything that we had, it was school. It was naturally all black. Mr. Stuckey was strict. I know he flipped me and Mother took him to court. Then he came back and he whipped one of his daughters and he said, "This is mine. I can do what I want with him." But he never whipped me again, mm-mm. And I don't know what it was, I could have sassed him out, no, because I would talk back.

Alma Jordon ([19:05](#)):

Do you remember any of the other students at the school? You remember any names of other students?

Mary Morgan ([19:11](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Alma Jordon ([19:12](#)):

Would you share that with us?

Mary Morgan ([19:13](#)):

Of course. Lesley Dyson's... It was Catherine... No, Catherine. Catherine went. Eva Stuckey. That was Mr. Stuckey's daughter. Son, Alton, Gertie and Cole. There was Catherine Dyson, Margaret, Isabel, Christine Fendrick, Genevieve Fenwick. Fenwicks, Dysons, Greenes, Theo and Elgman. I think I was in the first grade and they came out of school. But at that time, you went from the first grade to the seventh grade.

([20:06](#)):

Now I think it's the eighth grade you have to go through. And then at Christmastime, it was fun, because they had a Santa Claus. And we all got our bag and in the bag was an apple and an orange and candied

nuts. But when you're growing up, you don't think about things like that until you get older and you think back. Those were some good days. They were some fun days and we did Drayden's school, it was good, because it gave me my first founding for education and it must've been a good one because when I went to high school, I wasn't a dummy. And it was fun.

Alma Jordon ([21:14](#)):

You talked about being at home with your family and your siblings, did you have chores around the house?

Mary Morgan ([21:21](#)):

Oh, yes.

Alma Jordon ([21:23](#)):

What type of things were you responsible for?

Mary Morgan ([21:27](#)):

There were two groups. This week, one group did downstairs and the other group did upstairs.

Alma Jordon ([21:36](#)):

Is that cleaning?

Mary Morgan ([21:36](#)):

Cleaning, whatever had to be done. And you knew what you had to do. We had washing, laundry, all those things. Each one, all of us had our certain chores we had to do and we did them.

Alma Jordon ([21:55](#)):

Did you have a special chore that you were expected to do, or?

Mary Morgan ([22:01](#)):

Well, you had washing dishes, cleaning, things like that. That one, you washed dishes if it was today or this week, then next week another group did it, but mother saw to it that all of us had chores to do in the house. And she taught us how to cook. And I never forget one time mother went somewhere, I tried to make a cake, do you know what? That cake, mother said that cake was delicious. I don't know whether she told me that because she didn't want me to feel bad, but I know one thing it did none of it go to waste.

([22:52](#)):

My mother was a beautiful person and she taught, things that she taught us how to do. Because she grew up in Baltimore and she taught there for a while until they got married. In her day, if you married, you didn't teach. And she taught in Baltimore and she'd helped us with our homework. And at night, in the summertime we did our homework, then we played. But in the wintertime, see it got dark early, so she would let us play. Then we'd come in and do our homework and she helped us a lot with it. She was a beautiful person.

Alma Jordon ([23:46](#)):

Now, you talked about your mom and dad and your mom was a teacher prior to getting married, but did your parents both work? What were their occupations outside of-

Mary Morgan ([23:59](#)):

Daddy worked for, I don't know whether y'all remember, Alan Coad? Because he wasn't the one that had the money. She was the one that had the money. That's who daddy worked for for years. And mother, I think one year she worked on McKay's Beach, but she didn't do too much work, because she was busy raising her children. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([24:40](#)):

Okay. Okay. We talked about your family. Do you remember any serious illnesses that your family had and did you have a family doctor or how was that handled?

Mary Morgan ([24:52](#)):

Dr. Bean was our family doctor. My sister Bernice had Scarlet Fever. Nobody believed it because they said they can't believe that someone has Scarlet Fever and came out like she did, but mother did what the doctor told her to do. She had a dress she kept by the door. When she walked in that room, she put that dress on. When she came out, she took the dress off. And Dolly when it was over with, she had scales, big scales. That's how a person with Scarlet Fever had, and that's the only real bad illness I can remember if I had bad tonsils or things like that.

Alma Jordon ([25:39](#)):

Now, did the doctor come to your house or did your mom have any home remedies and things?

Mary Morgan ([25:47](#)):

Well, for the Scarlet Fever, I think he came, I can't remember because it was Dr. Bean and that was the doctor that we had. And then when Dr. Patrick came back, we went to see doctor. I think Dr. Patrick tended my mother when she passed. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([26:15](#)):

Okay. Well, we have some older home remedies. Did your family use any of those?

Mary Morgan ([26:22](#)):

Yes, she had pain cane, what was it? I can't remember the name of it. A man used to come around selling it, all these different remedies and I can't remember his name. I remember she used to take sugar, put a few drops of kerosene on it. You remember that? And give it to you for your cold, when you had colds. Can't remember what she did. But I know one thing, most of the time I went to the doctor, you had to be sick for when you went to the doctor's because they had their own remedies.

Alma Jordon ([27:15](#)):

You talked about your family being at home and playing together and everything. Do you remember any type of discipline that your parents gave to you?

Mary Morgan ([27:27](#)):

The worst discipline you had was you had to go pick your own switch. And if it wasn't the right one, you'd go back and until you got the right one. Yes, indeed. My mother was a beautiful person too. She and daddy would sit down when we'd go out and play. They would sit on the porch and watch us play games and whatnot. And that was the bit to me that was beautiful to have our parents watch us while we played. Now, what was the question?

Alma Jordon ([28:05](#)):

So I talked about disciplining, and you mentioned the switch that she had to-

Mary Morgan ([28:09](#)):

Yes, she did. Yes, yes, yes. She gave you that switch. And I'll never forget, the last whipping I got was I was 14, she said, and I knew, "Not to get off of the bus at the store." This day I decide I'm going to get off the bus. And you know why? The boys. Boys sitting on the porch. So I didn't go up on the porch, I just got off the bus and walked on up the road to my house and my mother met me at the gate with a switch. That's the last whipping I got. And I was 14 years old. When my mother tell you not to do something, you didn't do it and you know she had a good reason for it. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([28:54](#)):

Do you feel that that is the way your mom and your dad prepared you for life later on?

Mary Morgan ([29:01](#)):

Part of it, of course. If they hadn't corrected our mistakes, where would we be today?

Alma Jordon ([29:11](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Mary Morgan ([29:12](#)):

That's it.

Alma Jordon ([29:18](#)):

Okay. About your teenage years, you talked about getting a switch when you were 14. Do you remember when you started dating or going out?

Mary Morgan ([29:30](#)):

Let's see. The first person I went out, they allowed me to go out with was Dan, the man I married. Yeah.

Alma Jordon ([29:43](#)):

Do you remember how old you were when you started dating?

Mary Morgan ([29:48](#)):

Ooh, how old was I? 18 or 19, I'd say.

Alma Jordon ([29:56](#)):

Yeah? Mm-hmm, okay.

Mary Morgan ([29:56](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([29:57](#)):

And so you married your first date?

Mary Morgan ([30:02](#)):

Real date, yes. He was a super guy. I was blessed. We were married 47 years. We were hoping for 50, but it's still 47 years. I was blessed to have had him for that long. And people don't believe it. We never had an argument. We planned it like that. He said we would discuss it, we wouldn't argue. If it's something that I did or something that he did, we discussed it.

([30:40](#)):

And I'll never forget one day, Junior, my son was sitting at the table, we were eating, and something was said, and Dan said, "You did?" I said, "I didn't." He said, "Yes, you did, honey, you did." I said, "I didn't," I don't know what it was. I can't remember that.

([30:55](#)):

Jermaine looked to me, Junior looked and said, "Y'all, stop that fussing." And I said, "Child, if you only knew what fussing was." I said, "we weren't fussing, we were discussing. That's all." He just looked at, and he said, "You were fussing." So you see how much fussing that he heard around our house.

Alma Jordon ([31:21](#)):

So what was it really like when you went out on your own, maybe before you got married? Were you out on your own during that time?

Mary Morgan ([31:31](#)):

I'm going to be true, because the only real date that I had was Dan. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([31:40](#)):

Okay. You mentioned, tell me about high school and then after high school, what? Did you work, or?

Mary Morgan ([31:48](#)):

Well, after high school, that's when I went to Baltimore, and I went to business school. I went to Cortez Peters, and I finished there. Then I went to work.

Alma Jordon ([32:02](#)):

Where did you work then when you finished?

Mary Morgan ([32:04](#)):

In J.J. Brill's? I don't know why I can remember it, but there was a private five and ten cents store. And I went in there and it was prejudiced. It was prejudiced at that time because all the light girls was in the front. All the dark ones was in the back. And I thought to myself, "Where do I want to be? Put me in the middle." [all laugh] Mm-hmm, but they were nice. They were nice, but it was one girl who worked in the grocery store and they had a grocery store in the back of Brill's.

(32:45):

None of y'all been to Baltimore? It was on Pennsylvania Avenue. And her name was Hazel and they caught her... She was the nicest lady. Oh, she was a doll. And she would go out there, even she had had her bag, she took her groceries home, but she was a nice lady. She still was a nice lady, and I'll never forget it. Mr. Brill owned the store, but Mr. Henry ran it. And he had to go and tell her.

(33:25):

And I said, "Mr. Henry," I said, "Now you have the experience. You don't have to do this. Let them or let one of his sons do that." But we had sense enough to know that they didn't take it out on the girls. They knew who it was of course, because he had to go and Mr. Carroll did walk around, have a cigar at his mouth, big and that. He had a son also who was in the store, but that was the first job I had. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon (34:10):

Do you remember how the pay, what type of pay?

Mary Morgan (34:13):

Yes.

Alma Jordon (34:13):

In dollars?

Mary Morgan (34:15):

\$20 a week is what we got. Now they get more than that a day. We thought it was making big money. And you got to know how long ago that was, when I'll be 90 in a couple of months.

Alma Jordon (34:31):

Did you have opportunities to advance in your job?

Mary Morgan (34:38):

Well, no. I came out the store. I got married then when I got married, when did I? Worked in the Navy Annex, went over there and I did. I started out as a grade one and when I retired I was a grade nine, so that wasn't bad. And we had fifteens and sixteens in the Black race in my job, that people that rose on the job quite up like that. But with me even at a nine, I was blessed. I was happy to get there.

Alma Jordon (35:28):

We talked about Dan, your husband. How did you meet him? Tell us when-

Mary Morgan (35:41):

It was up at Happyland. Every Sunday, mother, daddy would take us to Happyland and we would go in and if they play the... What you call it then? Victrola, and that's where I met him. And we were at the baseball field, he started talking and I started to talk and he asked me, "Could he come to see me?" I said, "Yeah." Because I knew who he was and I knew I'd better... Staying good, mother and dad were very particular, about who came to the house to see us.

(36:18):

Because one time some boys came up to the house, daddy met him at the door. He said, "Did you come see me?" "No, sir." "If you didn't come to see me, move." He left too. When I started going with Dan, there was a happy man. He was so happy because, see, daddy and Dan used to work together at the hotel down at... Is it Piney Point, St. George's Island? That's where they used to work together.

Alma Jordon ([36:58](#)):

Okay. You talked about your family and the things you shared and the things that you did together. What about religion in your family life?

Mary Morgan ([37:08](#)):

Staunch Catholics, and we had to walk to church and that's about two miles. Now you know where my home is, where my father's home is and we walked to church. We went to church every Sunday. Yeah.

Alma Jordon ([37:26](#)):

Okay. So obviously religion played an important part in your life?

Mary Morgan ([37:35](#)):

Very much so. Very much so.

Alma Jordon ([37:38](#)):

What about community activities? Did the church have a lot of activities?

Mary Morgan ([37:44](#)):

Back then, no. Not like they do now. Mm-mm. Went to catechism and you made your first Holy Communion, was confirmed and that was it. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon ([38:00](#)):

Well, Ms. Morgan, how do you feel about life today in general as compared to when you were growing up?

Mary Morgan ([38:09](#)):

To me, children nowadays, they do not know how lucky they are to be able to get out, go places, see things, do things which elevate them. They grow up, just like with my granddaughter, I wanted her to go to college, her mother didn't. Education wasn't anything with her, because Junior went to Hampton, finished, did well. But she didn't encourage my grands to go to college, so they didn't go. Jermaine has a great name. Jermaine has a good job. Tiffy, I know the word for it, but I can't call it. But anyway, they have it down here. Buddy, what is it?

Buddy ([39:12](#)):

Uber.

Mary Morgan ([39:15](#)):

Uber, yeah, that's what it is. That's what she does. And she loves it.

Alma Jordon ([39:25](#)):

Excuse me. So do you feel that the quality of life is better or worse now than it was then?

Mary Morgan ([39:37](#)):

It depends. It depends upon the person. Just depends upon you. Do you want to stay the way you are or would you want to elevate yourself? That children nowadays, and a lot of them take advantage of it, had the opportunity to go on through school, get good jobs. The kind of job that our race have now, they didn't have them back then. And this is it that Jermaine, my grandson, the kind of job he has, to me, if I had something like that growing up, nobody could tell me anything.

([40:22](#)):

Now I can't exactly, but I know it's a desk job, and that it's a very good job. Tiffy works for Uber and she loves that. She said, "Grandma, I make more money working for Uber than I would anything else and I don't want anything else." And she'll sometimes come in and say, "Grandma, guess how much money I made today?" I said, "I don't know." But I said, "Just be careful. Don't work at night, because it is dangerous."

([40:53](#)):

It's dangerous in Washington, but she does pretty good. It's not what I wanted her to do, but that's her life and it's honest. So as long as they have an honest job and doing well at it, don't interfere with it. Because if you do, it might be worse.

Alma Jordon ([41:20](#)):

Mm-hmm. You mentioned a few things. Well you did mention a bit about race relations in your job. How was it, race relations, in your community growing up?

Mary Morgan ([41:38](#)):

With Drayden?

Alma Jordon ([41:42](#)):

Well, in St. Mary's County on the whole, do you remember? And how did you get your news back then?

Mary Morgan ([42:01](#)):

We had radios and then you had TV. It was years before it got to TV, but you had the radio. We didn't get out that much, but I still feel we had a good life because the children, all of us, are together, play. And the best thing about that was when mother and daddy sat out on the porch and watched us play, play baseball, play dodgeball, all those things.

Alma Jordon ([42:27](#)):

That's wonderful. So you feel that, I know you don't live in St. Mary's County, but do you feel that things in St. Mary's County is a lot different now than they were?

Mary Morgan ([42:40](#)):

My gosh, since when I can remember it. Oh, yes, yes, indeed. Things are all together different.

Alma Jordon ([42:51](#)):

In what way?

Mary Morgan ([42:52](#)):

Every way you can think of, you go to the stores, you can sit where you want, you go to church and you can sit where you want. It's just better. It's just better all the way around. You go now and go in the restaurants, get your food and sit anywhere you want. There was a time, this would make me not angry, mad, when I saw the people go up here to the juice, used to be the juice store. You know where that was? You know where that was, it was the juice store. It's just before you get to Valley Lee right on the corner.

([43:43](#)):

And they'd go around to the back and buy their alcohol. And I said, "Why couldn't they go up to Leroy's?" Because we used to call the grandfather Leroy, "Go up to Leroy's and buy, why they have to go and go to the back and buy their alcohol?" But they did. Of course now it's all positive, you can go in there and sit down if you want to, but it's the life down here in St. Mary's, it's different. You can go from one to 10, go to 10. Much, much better. It's much better. Mm-hmm. I just said I wish my parents were living so they could see the way things are down here now, living the way we live.

Alma Jordon ([44:41](#)):

Is there anything else you want to share with us during this interview?

Mary Morgan ([44:54](#)):

I can't think of it. That's my problem. You know what, when I leave here I say, "Oh, I should have said this." But when you're put on the spot, a lot of times you can't think, your mind... Just it's that you girls are very blessed to be living here now than when you was when I was a child growing up, because things are better for you. Go anywhere you want to. You can go in the stores, buy your clothes and whatnot.

([45:22](#)):

It was like, I bought a skirt I was going to wear, got ready, put the skirt on, the skirt wouldn't go on me. I said, "No, I couldn't mean I got that big..." The skirt, I didn't try it on. In the store, the white one fit, when I got there and put it on, it wouldn't go down over my hips, it wasn't. You know what? I'd just take it back. I can take it back, I think, I hope, if I can't get my money, I'll just get a larger skirt that's all.

([45:53](#)):

Now, things here in St. Mary's County for the Black race, just like I say from one to 10, is a 10, all together things are just nice. It's really nice. It's nice to come home and be able to go in the stores, to go in the restaurants if you don't have to feel shunned. Like I say, I love my hometown now.

Merideth Taylor ([46:32](#)):

Could I ask you a little bit more, so when you were talking about the skirt, were you talking about back then? Can we talk about back then?

Mary Morgan ([46:40](#)):

No, that was this morning.

Merideth Taylor ([46:41](#)):

That was this morning. I thought you were saying you couldn't try it on in the store.

Mary Morgan ([46:46](#)):

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. That was this morning. I went to put the brand new skirt. Tiff bought it. My granddaughter bought it from me. And looked like it fit and I went to put it, and I said, "No, you won't wear this today."

Merideth Taylor ([47:01](#)):

Well, you have such a great memory. You remember all those people's names from your elementary school?

Mary Morgan ([47:07](#)):

Yeah.

Merideth Taylor ([47:07](#)):

Could you tell us a little bit more what the day was like? At Drayden, how did it start in the morning and what did you do for lunch-

Mary Morgan ([47:14](#)):

Oh, we got there in the morning, we started out with prayer, always started out with prayer. And then it was the first to third grade was on one side of the school, fourth to the seventh was on the other side of the school. And the teacher started out with the early grades first and she went over to the older grades. And I used to sit over there and see the older ones over there, I said, "Ooh, be glad when I get over there." When I got into fourth grade and was able to get on that side, nobody could tell me anything, because it was great.

([47:58](#)):

I guess some of y'all know Mr. Stuckey. That was my school teacher. Then after he left Ms. Tilghman, we all know her because she married Mr. Stacey and, yeah, was our teacher. Our education, to me, it was pretty good for the way things were back then. Because mother said all of her children are going to finish at least high school. You don't have to pay for it. After that, it's up to you. But I think out of the family, I think Buddy, Ernestine, Marie, all went to college. Who else, Buddy?

Buddy ([48:58](#)):

There were others that went to vocational or technical trade training schools.

Mary Morgan ([49:03](#)):

Yeah, because I went to Cortez Peters, and I finished at Cortez Peters. But I'm talking about daddy's and mother's children. Not the grandchildren. Most of the grandchildren, great-grands finished college and go to college. Then-

Merideth Taylor ([49:17](#)):

When you were at Drayden, what'd you do for lunch?

Mary Morgan ([49:24](#)):

We had lunch breaks. We had 10:30, 15-minute play. Then you had 12 o'clock lunch. Then you had, I think, 2:30 break where you went out and played.

Merideth Taylor ([49:40](#)):

You brought your lunch?

Mary Morgan ([49:42](#)):

Yeah. You brought your own lunch. We didn't know nothing about no cafeteria back then? [laughs] Mm-mm. No. When the weather was good, we sat outside and ate our lunch and trade sandwiches. I don't know whether y'all did that or not.

Alma Jordon: [laughs]

Mary Morgan:

And say, "What you got in there?" But you got, if you had something that I wanted to trade with, "Okay, trade." If you didn't have anything to trade, I kept my sandwich, but it was nice.

([50:22](#)):

Back in those days, growing up, you didn't think things were great, but as you got older, you look back, think about how great things were back then because you had fun. These children nowadays, I don't think they even know what fun is. They're caught up and carry on in the schools and whatnot. We didn't have nothing like that in school then.

([50:55](#)):

I think I remember once Mr. Stuckey whipped one of the boys and they took him to court. And so when he came back, I never forget it. He said, one of his children did something, and he whipped them, said, "This is mine. Nobody can tell me what to do with it." But he was a good teacher. He was good.

([51:33](#)):

Ms. Tilghman. She was good, but the only thing, one, Ms. Tilghman hit me one time for something I didn't do, and I've never forgotten it. She said I was talking, I wasn't talking, it was the person behind me was talking. We're in line, the one in class. And she reached up and hit me and I said, "Why did you hit me?" "Sister hit you for talking." I said, "That wasn't me." Didn't make any difference to her, and I've never forgotten it.

([51:55](#)):

And you know things in your heart then, you never forget it and you try to forgive them, but there's certain things so hard to forgive. I love that teacher. I loved Ms. Tilghman, but I never forget the time that she hit me, as I said, for nothing.

Janice Walthour ([52:21](#)):

I know you went to Jarboesville too?

Mary Morgan ([52:21](#)):

Yeah, I finished Jarboesville.

Janice Walthour ([52:26](#)):

Which Jarboesville did you go to?

Mary Morgan ([52:27](#)):

Old one.

Janice Walthour ([52:28](#)):

The first one or-

Mary Morgan ([52:28](#)):

The first one.

Janice Walthour ([52:30](#)):

Okay. The one on the Base? Where the Base-

Mary Morgan ([52:33](#)):

No, no.

Janice Walthour ([52:34](#)):

The dormitory?

Mary Morgan ([52:35](#)):

No, the Jarboesville I went to was on the highway, Hermanville Road.

Janice Walthour ([52:42](#)):

Okay.

Mary Morgan ([52:43](#)):

Yeah, that was the old one. Must've been the first one. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Janice Walthour ([52:49](#)):

Who were your teachers there?

Mary Morgan ([52:52](#)):

Mrs. Mayors. And the home-ec teacher, because I think Ms. Hall went back home. Mrs. Mayors and Ms. Hall was the homeroom teacher. I can't think of the other teacher, I know we had... I can't think of her right now, but Mrs. Mayors, she died. Yeah.

Alma Jordon ([53:30](#)):

You mentioned your graduation from Jarboesville, who, you mentioned someone else that graduated with you?

Mary Morgan ([53:39](#)):

Chester Craig. We were the only two that graduated that year. Two of us. And I'll never forget that. Ms. Dent asked her, told, I don't know who, just one of the teachers, "Why didn't she make her dress, her graduation dress?" And Ms. Hall, she said, "She did make it," and I did make it. That's why I don't like sewing today.

(54:06):

And I picked a dress that was long-waisted, y'all don't remember that. You remember when it was long-waisted with pleated skirts all the way around. And I didn't know I was getting in trouble. That's the pattern I picked out. Me and that pattern fought. But Ms. Hall, everything had to be perfect, so perfect that Ms. Dent didn't believe I made it, but it taught me a lesson in why I don't like sewing today. Something needs stitched up, I'll put it aside [laughs].

Alma Jordon (54:46):

And who was Ms. Dent?

Mary Morgan (54:48):

She was the superintendent of the schools. And I guess it was southern Maryland, but she was the superintendent. And Mr. Waters was the supervisor. Mm-hmm.

Alma Jordon (55:06):

Okay. Well, we thank you very much, Ms. Morgan, for sharing your life with us. I really appreciate it.

Mary Morgan (55:14):

Well, it wasn't that much.

Alma Jordon (55:17):

You grew up around here, so thank you.

Mary Morgan (55:17):

Yeah.