

INTERVIEW #1

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Interviewer: TOM WILSON

Interviewee: MARIA MOORE

Wilson: This is Tom Wilson. I am conducting an oral interview with Maria Moore. We're at the Burley Community Park, and she is going to talk about the Burley community from the time she arrived until today.

Moore: Okay, yes, we moved here in 1979. Actually we bought five acres that our house (*not audible*) I always loved (*not audible*) where people know each other. And then when the Burley Store opened again, I was hired to work there, and I've been working there ever since. I believe it was opened in 1986. I've been working since 1986 so it could be a little bit before then. So I have worked for them, with (*not audible*) and Fran Dixon. They were the first ones who opened the store. The store has changed hands since a few times, but I'm there, I'm like dust. You dust your couch but then they say the dust is there. I enjoy working. I know a lot of the people, and I like to talk so I usually get to know them very easy. I don't think you could find a better community to live in, at least I'm prejudiced . . . yes, I like it. I like here, and I don't want to move anywhere else.

Wilson: You're also part of the Burley Community Hall.

Moore: Yes. I was a volunteer for I would say more than ten years I was a (*not audible*) for that many years, and I enjoyed it but it was time for me to move on. I just told (*not audible*) and it was too much work for me because Brian and the Burley Store, and he got a notice that I was working (*not audible*) again and I was no . . . capable of doing everything the way it should be done, so I kinda . . . well, slowed back a little bit of my volunteer work for the Burley Community Hall right here and do what I should have been doing, so I just eliminated the volunteer work.

Wilson: Well, the park we're sitting in is part of the Burley Community Club.

Moore: Yes, it is.

Wilson: What is with the Burley Library Association? When I look on the Internet it says Burley Library Association, but there are no books there.

Moore: There were.

Wilson: They were?

Moore: There was a library that was . . . okay, my husband and I and a couple of friends opened the Radio Room there, ham radio, and to make room for it all the books got eliminated, were eliminated, to make an area, but it was a library association that

some people would just like to call it a community hall, but old-timers like me would like to keep “library association” on it, too. And there were books, yeah. Old books. I mean I wish I would have saved one.

Wilson: I actually saw one of the books. It was from 1902, and it was donated by a gentleman in Chicago when they were trying to support the old socialist community out here. I thought that was really interesting, but there was only one I saw, and I don't know what's happened to the rest of them.

Moore: Well, we took boxes and boxes, a lot of the books away. I think we should have kept them behind the stage, but that would have involved building bookcases to put them in another time, and most of us members of the club, I guess we thought it was better to get rid of them. The ones who wanted them to stay (*not audible*). At the time we didn't think about it. Now I personally think we should have kept them, but too late now.

Wilson: What else is the Burley community . . . I know you take care of the Burley Hall, and you told me earlier today that the Post Office gets rented from the Burley Community Center?

Moore: Yes. Okay, the way this Burley Community Hall is maintained, pay the bills and (*not audible*) staff and so on . . . but the community hall I don't believe has paid staffers any more. I'm (*not audible*). The Post Office pays rent to the community hall, they rent the hall for parties, the Catholic Church meets there. I believe the (*not audible*) is

related to the Chuckwagon so the senior citizens can have their meals there. Who also meets there? AA, they meet there. So it's always occupied with something. The (*not audible*) there that take care of the hall.

Wilson: But it's not a lot of (*not audible*.)

Moore: Oh, gosh, no, no, it is not, no.

Wilson: And the park we're in is maintained by volunteers?

Moore: Volunteers. Yeah, my husband actually cut the grass quite a few times. I think in '87 or '88 we started our once-a-year cookout, we call it a cookout, and the first year we roasted a pig, or two pigs. We had about 150 people the first time in here, so it still maintained . . . the new members, they still had the picnic. Once a year, usually it's in August.

Wilson: So it's just not the older members of the community, the newer members have taken up the . . .

Moore: The last one . . . not last year, because I was in Mexico, but the year before I came to the picnic. It was beautiful. And then this park has helped the Radio Room by having . . . once a year the ham radio have what they call a field day, and they have to go out where the room is, so they have had it here a couple times. In 1998 Burley became 100 years old, and I arranged the day . . . Kitsap County . . . to get a . . . we

didn't get a permit, but we just . . . anyway I spoke to the man and we were able to have a parade from the Burley Church all the way here. It was, you know, I wanted a bigger parade but they wouldn't let me, because it would involve more police. But we were 100 years old, we had a parade, we had the Radio Room, we had a huge picnic here with some music. People came to the picnic . . . play instruments, play music. My husband designed a stamp for the Burley Post Office and we had stamps for that day only.

Wilson: You actually made a metal stamp.

Moore: Yeah. He designed it and we gave it to (*not audible*). At that time she was the postmaster, and she (*not audible*) we have postcards with the stamp, we have envelopes with the stamp, and that was in 1998. We had hayrides, and people with horses, and it was a really nice parade.

Wilson: There is a community cemetery, too, isn't there, that you maintain?

Moore: What is it?

Wilson: A community cemetery.

Moore: Oh, yes. And that is volunteer. Most of the time it was Boy Scouts. At least they used to do it quite often, and they are the ones who used to volunteer, like Mother's Day coming up. They would (*not audible*). Yes. I know a couple of people

that do the cutting of the lawn here and at the Burley Hall, and I don't know if they are involved in the cemetery or not, I have no idea.

Wilson: What's funny is the whole idea of Burley was a community built on brotherhood.

Moore: Yeah.

Wilson: That was the original name. But it didn't last. They couldn't seem to get along, but 100 years later the community, I want to say what's left of the community, is still that spirit that maintains something that probably should have just gone by. It should have been forgotten, but the community has never forgotten.

Moore: No, I don't think so, because once you get to start investigating how we got started . . . I personally, I have always been interested in American history, ever since I was in Mexico as a kid in third grade. So when my daughter found out I was putting some books for . . . Kitsap County got us books . . . for me. So I always read history and I am always interested in it. So moving here and hearing all about it got my interest more so. I just love . . . I think also when you get to know the people, you know, you know you care about the community . . . they respond to it. Most of us were responding . . . you get to know them and approach them the right way, you know, instead of being like a master, big and bossy let's put it that way . . . which I can be bossy, I have been bossy. I think more acceptable now. There are so many people that I have met since I

have been in this area. A lot of them are gone. We also understand if they're going, somebody is going to come over, they will be younger than them, or me, you know.

Wilson: I can understand the members of the community whose family goes back to the beginning, and I can understand their desire to keep the history alive, but you, like myself, are relative newcomers to this community, but you've adopted the community.

Moore: Yes, I have.

Wilson: And you were born originally in . . . ?

Moore: Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

Wilson: If I could pronounce that I would try, but I can't, so I won't even. And you're an American citizen?

Moore: Absolutely, yes, absolutely.

Wilson: And a proud American citizen.

Moore: Oh, yes, yes. Very proud of it.

Wilson: And the community has adopted you . . . I mean everybody knows Maria at the community center.

Moore: Good or bad, they know me.

Wilson: The one thing I have ever seen you do, is I was in there one night when you were shoing kids out who were about 15, trying to buy cigarettes, and you told them they shouldn't do it because, I thought you said it would stunt their growth or something like that.

Moore: It's quite possible that I said it.

Wilson: They weren't happy with you.

Moore: That's the case, you know, but you know I gotta do what I have to do.

Wilson: Now are you worried that this community is going to disappear?

Moore: Yes, yes, because they are, well, people, I know a few people that have come from California. I came from Mexico, even farther. But it has to be within your blood to get informed about what's going on, and if you want to preserve what you can, you know. I think it will eventually, you know, we have new little houses moving in, so it's part of, you know, a part of life.

Wilson: And that's part of your reason for doing this is because you want to at least preserve this part.

Moore: Oh, while I'm alive, I will do whatever I can to do it. I love going to the cemetery and sit. You can see, in the cemetery you see all the families have died within a very short period of time, and I think (*not audible*) it disappears so quick because there were so many, they got sick and there was no medical help, that's what I think. You look there and the whole families go . . .

Wilson: What I have learned about the community, there was no ambulance service, basically no fire service. People out here were pretty much on their own. And Gig Harbor hadn't even, well Gig Harbor didn't become Gig Harbor for a lot of years, until the Narrows Bridge was put in, and now we've seen the changes. Gig Harbor is expanding closer and closer to us all the time.

Moore: Absolutely. But also . . . Burley used to be the main road to Tacoma. They come on bus, they come from downtown Port Orchard all the way, and this was the road, Burley, and then they get over to Purdy, which at that time there was no Highway 16, either.

Wilson: You remember the time when Highway 16 wasn't here yet?

Moore: Absolutely. There was one lane each direction, and you know Olalla Burley, Sedgwick, all of those you can cross, but not any more.

Wilson: I went down and looked at Olympic the other day, and I didn't realize, because I came here after the highway was completed, that Olympic just dead-ends right there, and when the highway came in, it actually kind of cut Burley in half a little bit.

Moore: Yes. Olympic also got cut. It cut a lot of areas. And that's we call it progress. Good or bad, you know.

Wilson: It's progress. We do have ambulance service and we do have a hospital close by now.

Moore: Very close, yeah.

Wilson: Which we never had before. And we can shop. But the Burley Store, and the Burley Post Office are still the centers of this community.

Moore: Yes, that is Burley. Downtown Burley.

Wilson: And the people.

Moore: The people, yeah, the people. What is interesting about the Burley Store also is if you get to know the people, and you are coming there, and like Mr. and Mrs. Williams, they come over there, have a cup of coffee, stand up and talk, and then there's another lady that comes, she is from England, she comes over on Sundays.

She doesn't drink coffee but we stand up there and talk. We don't have chairs to sit down but we still visit quite a bit. That's like a center where people get together.

Wilson: I've seen that at the Post Office, too. People go in and pick up their mail and they see somebody they haven't seen in awhile, and a five-minute trip to the Post Office turns into 20 minutes of conversation, catching up on family.

Moore: In a way, it's so nice, you know, even being kind of silly. You know we named ourselves Burley City Council, you know, we named us, you know, just as a joke. Well, we came to the picnic one day and everybody (*not audible*) city council. And they said, "When's the meeting?" So we told them it was every first Monday of the month over at the Burley Store. You wouldn't believe how many people came, and then we told them there was not a real city council. They thought there was a real one. (*not audible*)

Wilson: I know there was an attempt a few years ago to try to turn Burley into a city.

Moore: Yes, yes. We collected, Burley Store collected signatures, and a lot of people wanted it, and at that time . . . that was quite a few years back, maybe 20 years back or so or more . . . and they wanted to . . . they collected all the signatures from the people, and Frank and his wife, and (*not audible*) and went to the main Post Office in Seattle and they wouldn't let us. I think it would have been great. (*not audible*) and I think that is what they were looking at, because I don't think Burley can support a, you know, a fire station and all of that. So I understand that part, now that I know a little more about it.

Wilson: Well, Burley is the very tail end of the southern part of Kitsap County. From the store to the county line is maybe a mile?

Moore: Maybe so, yes, around there, yeah.

Wilson: The community, I mean it has changed. We have seen newer developments, not developments but newer houses, come in. We have seen people move in who have taken advantages of the slump in prices. Burley . . . the economy of South Kitsap is pretty much tied to the shipyard.

Moore: Oh, yeah.

Wilson: And as the shipyard rises and falls so does the county. Right now it's at least stable, but we've had times where it was not as stable and people left the community.

Moore: *(not audible)* A lot of people *(not audible)* well *(not audible)* as a church, the Burley Church. *(not audible)* you know, shipyard workers there, and brings them in the afternoon . . . all connected to the military.

Wilson: Maria, thank you very much for your time. I really appreciated our time together.

Moore: You're very welcome. I hope I helped you some.

Wilson: Yes, you have.

Moore: Thank you.

(end of recording)

VERIFICATION:

I make the following statement under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington and affirm that the following is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that a recording of the foregoing transcript was given to me, that it was transcribed by me, that the transcript is as complete a transcript as could be obtained from said recording, to the extent that it was either audible or intelligible, that I have produced said transcript to the best of my abilities, and that any errors or omissions in the transcript are/may be in no way be an intentional and/or deliberate act of negligence by me.

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