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Interview with

G. A. MOORE

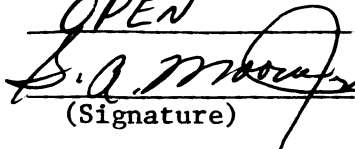
May 28, 1982

Place of Interview: Pilot Point, Texas

Interviewer: Randy Cummings
R. E. Marcello

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Oral History Collection

G. A. Moore

Interviewers: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello
Mr. Randy Cummings

Place of Interview: Pilot Point, Texas

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Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello and Randy Cummings interviewing Coach G. A. Moore for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 28, 1982, in Pilot Point, Texas. We are interviewing Coach Moore in order to get his experiences and impressions while he was a teammate of Abner Haynes, who was the first black varsity football player at North Texas State University.

Coach, to begin this interview, why don't you give us a brief biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell us when you were born, where you were born, your education-- things of that nature.

Coach Moore: Well, I'm from Pilot Point, originally. I still live out on the farm where I grew up. I went to high school here at Pilot Point and went to college at North Texas. Of course, that was the association that I had with Abner.

Well, really, the first association was when I was in high school, and he came up with Vernon Cole, who was, I guess, my best friend, when we were growing up all through high school. Vernon was a year ahead of myself. When he went to North Texas, he came back quite frequently, and Abner

came with him, It was a big deal then because Abner was black, and we hadn't associated with blacks that much at that time,

I went to North Texas and played with Abner there, and then after getting out of college, I began coaching, and this is my twentieth year of coaching. I came back to Pilot Point and coached eight years and left and went to Celina and then came back again. So my coaching career has been right in this area. Also, I've been close to North Texas most all my life.

Marcello: When were you born?

Moore: November 23, 1938,

Cummings: Why did you select North Texas State? I know Vernon was out here. Did Vernon have a big influence on your going to school here?

Moore: Well, that probably was the biggest thing that affected my decision, I was going to Texas Tech up until a month or so before the time to check in. Really, that was about the only opportunities I had, you know, that I was really interested in and that were really that interested in me, was Texas Tech and North Texas. Of course, Arlington State was a junior college at that time, and that was when Chena Gilstrap was there, and they had been to the Junior Rose Bowl. Really, when it got right down to it, I wanted to go to Arlington or North Texas. I had never been away from home that much, and I knew Vernon and I knew most everyone that played on the freshman team. This included Abner and Leon King, who were the only two blacks.

I guess, when it got right down to it, the fact that I knew those guys,,.plus I knew Coach Mitchell. I had been to his house many times when we were growing up. He had a daughter that was the same age that I was, and we were good friends. There was just a group of us, and we spent a lot of time at his house. We went to all the North Texas football games, and I guess, when it got down to it, I kind of wanted to stay at home, and kind of considered North Texas home.

Cummings: You said Vernon brought Abner to visit back up here at Pilot Point. Was that really the first contact that you had had with black athletes, or had you played against them in high school?

Moore: I never played against any and never played with any at that time. I grew up here in Pilot Point. Of course, we have quite a few blacks, and I grew up with them, so it wasn't any big deal to me. I had always been around them and good friends with them. I lived on the farm, and I grew up in a cotton patch pulling bolls and all that kind of stuff, and I guess there were quite a few of the blacks here that did that. There's also quite a few of the whites that did that, so it wasn't really any big deal. I was one of the whites that did it. I had some real good friends that were black,

But Abner was the first athlete, of a caliber like he was, that I had ever been around. The first time that I met him was when I was in high school. They had come to some of our football games when I was playing, but we had a real good basketball team,

and so Vernon got a crew of the freshman football players at North Texas, and they came up and we scrimmaged them two or three times in the afternoon, Abner and Leon came with them, and that was the first time that I ever really competed against a black athlete.

Of course, Abner had a sense of humor and a personality that made him a big success. Not just anyone could have stepped in and come through North Texas and been a success that Abner was. He had the personality to go along with being the first black, I think, that there was.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that this was the first time that you had competed against a black athlete. What were your feelings or your impressions at that time, do you recall?

Moore: Well, really, it wasn't a big deal to me. I had been with them a lot. The fact that he came up with Vernon, I guess, as far as I was concerned, made it all right. If Vernon liked him, I knew that he was all right. They were real good friends. I guess they were probably as close as anybody going through North Texas. Of course, because of that relationship, I became involved with Abner, too.

Marcello: Where did blacks from Pilot Point go to high school?

Moore: They went to Denton--Fred Moore High School. We had some real good ones--some guys that I knew that went and played at Fred Moore--but at the same time, I never did play against them. I never did get to play with them and didn't get to see them play that much.

- Cummings: At that time, did you ever stop and question why the kids were segregated, or was it just a matter of fact in those times?
- Moore: Well, that was just something that had taken place. When I was coming up, that was the way it was, and I guess I just had accepted that. I never felt like I was any better than a person because he was black, but at the same time--at that time--they had black water fountains and white water fountains and this kind of thing. But at our house, at home, my dad was a farmer, and we had a lot of cotton and a lot of,..just a lot of farm work. A lot of the people that worked with Dad were black, and when we ate lunch, they all came in our house and sat down at the same table with us and ate. It wasn't like that everywhere, but it was in my home. I was brought up that way, so I never really felt like there was that much difference in a person being black and a person being white.
- Cummings: During your high school days here and your early association with Vernon and Abner and the people over at North Texas, did you ever experience any segregating while you were with them?
- Moore: The biggest thing, I guess, that I remember was the fact that we all lived in a football dorm, and Abner couldn't live in the dorm. He lived over in the black section of Denton. He had to go back and forth each day to school, and the reason I was so close to that is that he was always out there in my car when football practice was over, and I was the one that usually had to take him over there (laughter). I happened to have a car. I didn't really

understand that, but I didn't really question it, either. I was one of these who believed that things were as they were, and I just accepted that, I guess, at that time. That was probably the biggest thing, was that Abner didn't live in the dorm. All the other athletes lived there in the dorm, but he and Leon lived over in,,well, it was a house over there, but it was rented for them,

Marcello: Did you and your teammates ever talk about this or discuss this situation, or, again, was it one of those things, like you mentioned awhile ago, that was simply accepted?

Moore: Well, I think Abner probably talked about it more than anybody--cutting up. He had quite a sense of humor and personality, like I said awhile ago. I don't remember what all he would say, but he was always popping off, you know, about him being black. But he just had a sense of humor about it. I guess he accepted it, and we accepted it, and it was just one of those things that...we respected Abner. I did and I think everybody on the team respected him so much because he was such an exceptional athlete. He could do so many things that just not many people that have ever come along now or any other time could do, as far as running with the football and making moves and catching the ball. He could do just about anything that there was to do. He could have made All-American at any college, I think. I don't think that there was any doubt about it. But the fact that he was that good but yet was still...I guess you would say he was a humble person. Nowadays it

seems like when someone's real good, they want their contract renegotiated every year, and all you hear about is what they've done. I don't think that I can ever remember Abner popping off to us or to anyone else about how good he was and what he had done and this kind of thing. I think that's the main reason he was as successful as he was.

Marcello: I think this brings up another interesting question. You mentioned on several occasions that you accepted certain things as they existed at that time. How about Abner?

Moore: Well, I think he accepted them, too, really. He came to North Texas, and I believe it was the University of Colorado that wanted him real bad at that time. He could have gone up there and just stepped in and probably had a better and easier situation than he had at North Texas, but yet he went ahead and broke the color barrier. Like I say, now when I got to North Texas, he had already been there a year. Now he had already established himself as a freshman because at that time you only played freshman ball. That freshman team that Abner and Leon and Vernon and that bunch played on was undefeated. That probably had a lot to do with him being successful, too, because he was one of the main cogs in that. He was the difference in winning some ballgames and losing some ballgames because of the talent he had. That might have helped him be successful, but he was already established to a certain extent when I got to North Texas.

Marcello: Did you ever hear him talk about why he came to North Texas as

opposed to going to Colorado?

Moore: I've heard him talk about it, and I don't even remember exactly what he said. I never did pay a whole lot of attention to some of the things he said because he talks all the time, anyway.
(laughter).

Cummings: Concerning that freshman team that Vernon and Abner were on when you were still here in high school, did Vernon ever come back home and when you all were alone maybe tell you some stories of how the players were reacting to Abner and Leon?

Moore: Well, not really, I don't think. The only thing...I don't guess I ever heard Vernon say anything bad, hardly, about anyone, but he thought that Abner just was one of the greatest things that had ever happened down there. He was excited about it. He loved football--Vernon did--and they played together. Of course, Vernon was the quarterback and Abner was running back, and they spent a lot of time together. I think that he just respected Abner so much for his talent and for his personality and all, too. They spent a lot of time together. I think, for the most part, that most of the whole team evidently felt that same way--the freshmen that came in.

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that, in your impression, Abner was a humble person. Therefore, I'm assuming that from what you could tell, he didn't see himself as being a militant or a pioneer or anything of that nature in coming to North Texas and integrating athletics?

Moore: No, he didn't do it for any reason like that. He couldn't have hid something like that, if that would've been the reason, as far as I'm concerned. I think he came because he really wanted to play football close to Dallas, which is where he is from. As a matter of fact, while I was at North Texas, I went back to Lincoln High School with him. Do you remember when I was telling you how these guys came up and played basketball and stuff when I was in high school? When I was in college, we had a little team--Abner and Leon and myself and Vernon. There was six or seven of us, and we went to Dallas, down to Lincoln High School, to his old high school, and played them the same way that they came up here and played. It didn't bother me to go down there. There wasn't anything but the blacks there, but it just wasn't that big a deal. I felt like Abner...I felt as comfortable with him, I guess, as I did with a white. I don't know,

Cummings: Didn't it ever cross your mind, or the players' minds, when they would have to go out and play other teams in some of these other towns where segregation was still intact? I know from talking to a lot of the coaches that the team experienced a lot of problems as far as eating together and staying together at hotels. Did the team ever stop and think, you know, "We're really pioneering a new movement in having these blacks on our team,"

Moore: Well, we experienced some of those things, but they never were really that major, I don't think. I was trying to think of one

road trip where we went in someplace, and I can't even remember exactly,, I can't remember exactly where it was. That was a few years ago (laughter). But we went in one place to eat, and they told Abner that he and Leon would have to eat over here, and we could eat over there. We just left. It wasn't any big deal. We just went someplace else and ate, Abner didn't say a word about it, and I guess that he would have gone over there and sat down and just been content, but we didn't feel like that was right at that time because he was with us. We were a group and a team more or less, and I just don't see how you could be split. I think that was kind of the feeling then. I just remember it happening, but I don't remember all that much about it.

I remember one incident that I never will forget. I guess it was the only real big fight that I ever saw on the football field, or was ever involved in. We were playing...I think it was New Mexico. We was playing in Denton, and they had a big black lineman, and he was mean. He mouthed off to Abner. I don't know what he said because they was on the other side of the football field. I think Abner called him a nigger, and (laughter) both benches emptied, and they had a little scrap out there for a little while. It didn't last long, but in Abner's eyes,, I think he was a gentleman, and I think what he was referring to to this fellow was that he wasn't a gentlemen. It wasn't necessarily because he was black or anything else, but I thought that was kind of funny. He was calling somebody else a

nigger at that time. But a nigger to him, I think, was different. To him it meant a little different than it would to someone that had never been around blacks,

Cummings: The coaches told me that it didn't take any time at all after Abner got there for the team to really become a cohesive unit and rally behind him and Leon when they were faced with incidents like you referred to just a minute ago in the restaurant. Was that the feeling you had on the team when you got up there to North Texas?

Moore: Yes, I think that that team was probably as close as any college team. Of course, that was the only college team that I was ever really that associated with because I have just coached in high school. But the feeling I get from a lot of the college teams is that there is a lot of different individuals on them now. The difference, I think, in that group was the togetherness, and I think a lot of it possibly was because of Abner and the fact that a lot of the people that we played and a lot of the fans from other places didn't like it. And as a result, it made us closer together because we respected him, and he was very, very instrumental in the success of the team. There was a lot of the things that he had that made him successful in breaking that color barrier that someone else might not could have done. I don't know of many people,,, I don't know of anyone else, really, that could have come in and did what he did and did it any better. Boy, he could run with that football!

Marcello: We talked about the pressure on Abner in breaking the color line. I would assume that there might have been a certain amount of pressure on the white ball players on that team, too, at least in terms of the reaction of fans in other places where you played and so on. In other words, did you ever hear any negative things being yelled at the white players themselves from the stands because of the fact that they were playing with a black guy?

Moore: Well, there might have been. I guess I just really didn't pay that much attention to it. I was always, I guess, kind of so interested in playing and wanting to play that I never did really pay that much attention to it. In looking back---and I never did think about this at the time--I think there was probably as much pressure on the coaches then as there was on anybody, and maybe more. They may have received some ridicule that we never knew about or we never thought about. We didn't worry about it, really. I don't suppose I never did hear any of them say anything, but I'm sure that it caused some problems with the coaches that would have been eliminated had Abner not been there. But they handled it awful smooth because I don't suppose anyone ever knew it. I never did.

Cummings: Don't you think Abner's personality, coupled with his obvious talent, probably was the greatest factor in making that transition of breaking the color line so smoothly?

Moore: Oh, yes, I think it was. Like I said, I don't think that you

could have found a person to break it like he did, if you were just going to sit down and draw up the guidelines that you wanted for someone to come in and to do what had to be done there, I don't think you could have found anyone more perfect. He had a sense of humor. He could laugh off anything, and everyone that was around him liked him. He was, in my opinion, humble, and he was a good person. I believe that his dad was a preacher. His brother used to come up. I didn't know him well, but I met him. Evidently, he came from an awfully good family. I think he had a pretty stable background before he got there, too. Plus, one of the big things--he had all those things--is that he was one of the most fabulous running backs that probably ever played the game.

I never will forget the first time that I was going to tackle him when I was a freshman. Now, boy, they picked on freshmen back then (laughter). They can't do that anymore. At the end of the first week, the varsity scrimmaged the freshmen, when I was a freshman, and that's when they tried to find out how tough all the freshmen were--all the varsity people. I never will forget Abner, I knew Abner, but I didn't know him that well at that time. I guess you always...a lot of people, when they go into college, they are a little cocky because they think, you know, maybe it is not as tough as some people make it out to be. Anyway, I remember the first time that he came around the end. We were scrimmaging, and he was kind of

hemmed up on the sideline, and I just thought, well, I was just going to wipe him out, I didn't even touch him. I just kind of sailed on by. I ducked my head, didn't keep my eyes on him, He could run backwards and sideways as he could forward. I think that from then on, I had a different opinion of him as a football player because you just didn't hit him, You might drag him down finally, but he didn't take many hard licks.

Marcello: Do you also think it would be safe to say that the fact that you had winning teams also helped ease that transition?

Moore: Yes, I'm sure it did. I think that had a lot to do with it, I think everything just kind of fell in place, when you look back on it, We didn't realize it at the time. I just don't see how it went that smooth (chuckle).

Marcello: You've been a coach long enough, I guess, to know that winning teams are always much happier teams than losing teams (chuckle).

Moore: That's right, and, of course, the fans are a lot happier.

Cummings: Do you remember reactions from either the faculty or of your fellow students toward you and the other white players on the football team? Did they ever ask, "What are you doing playing with that black kid" or "What's it like playing with that black kid?" Were they inquisitive as to what was going on with the football team?

Moore: Really, I don't remember any instances like that at North Texas. When I came in, of course, it was a year later. Abner's cousin came in as a freshman fullback that year. He played freshman

ball, and he never did play anymore,

Cummings: What was his name?

Moore: Robert Hines, Robert was Abner's cousin, He came from Dallas, and he was on the freshman team when I was there. But the transition had already been made a little bit before I got there, I wasn't in on the initial thing, so there might have been some the first year, but while I was there, I never did hear anything, really, but support, Abner was the hero. It didn't take him long to become a hero because when we needed a yard or two or something, everybody knew who was going to get the football because he could just do things with it that the average ball player couldn't do,

Cummings: Talk about some of those characteristics of his football talent that made him as great as he was,

Moore: Well, the greatest thing, as far as his running, was just his ability in the open field or his ability to hit the hole. Well, he was so quick off the ball, I think, plus, he just didn't need much of a hole, He could turn sideways and just kind of slither, I don't know whether that's a good term to use or not, but that's one that to me kind of describes the way that he ran, Plus, everytime he touched the football, there was a good chance, we felt like,,I played the other halfback position, and I felt like if Abner was carrying the football, if I just blocked a little bit, he is going to make my block look good because it don't make any difference where I block them, I think that's

the way that everybody felt, that Abner could do so many things that makes me look good and it makes them look good. Our linemen might not have been worth a darn for an average running back, but they looked like All-Americans sometimes with Abner because he could get through the hole and be gone, where a lot of other people couldn't.

He had a God-given talent, and you can't coach that kind of stuff--the things he could do. He could run backwards and forwards; he would run to this sideline; and he might stop and run back to this sideline. I saw him do this in a spring game one time when we were scrimmaging the freshmen. This was after I was on the varsity, thank goodness; I wasn't out there then. He ran to this sideline, and they had him hemmed up. Of course, we all knew how to stop him. You didn't run up and hit Abner. You got him kind of hemmed up in there, and then you grabbed hold of him, and then somebody else is going to have to hit him. But he ran to this sideline, and he went back to the other side. I don't know,, he went back and forth two or three times, and he finally just,, he got tired, is what he did (chuckle), and he laid down and just put his feet up in the air like that (gesture) and just laughed. They never did tackle him; the freshmen couldn't even tackle him. He was a comedian. The coaches got on him. Boy, they used to get on him kind of hard. They had to, I guess, because he was so good. He was comical. He was different.

Cummings: You say you played halfback? Did you go both ways?

Moore: Well, at that time you had to go both ways. You didn't have a choice then like you do now. I wished that it would have been like it is now because I got to play defense more than I did offense. At that time you could send one guy in...you could only go in one time a quarter, and then you could send one or two in. But everything was two units; you had a first unit and a second unit. I played on one unit, and Abner was on the other unit, really, but we played together quite a bit, too.

I loved to play when Abner was playing because he would make you look so good if you were blocking. If he was playing, they were going to be keying on him, so then somebody else would have a lot better chance of getting away. Now if he wasn't out there, it was a lot tougher. It didn't take long for everyone to know who they had to stop, really, when they played North Texas.

Cummings: What position on defense did you play?

Moore: I played halfback. The way we did it at that time, if you were a right halfback, you were a right halfback on defense; if you were a left halfback, you was left halfback on defense. The quarterback was the safety, and the center played linebacker. They had it all lined up; you played both places. If you played center on offense, you played a certain position on defense. They recruited, I guess, and they picked people that way. At that time you had to play both ways,

Cummings: Abner, I know, was a defensive back, also, so I guess during your

- second and third years, when Abner was a junior and senior...
- Moore: Well, see, I got my wrist broke when I was a junior. It got broke when I was a sophomore, but I came back when I was a junior and rebroke it, which ended my football. So the last year, I didn't get to play with him when he was a senior. I was there, but that's when I got hurt the last time.
- Cummings: As a junior?
- Moore: When I was a junior and he was a senior. That was the year I had looked forward to, I guess, all my life.
- Cummings: Then you were hurt also as a sophomore?
- Moore: I broke it as a sophomore.
- Cummings: What time period are we talking about? Was it during the season or...
- Moore: I broke it at Cincinnati, which was about the sixth ballgame.
- Cummings: That put you out for the rest of the year?
- Moore: Yes, I wore a cast for thirteen months off and on and finally had it operated on about seven years later, and they took the broken bone out. It would heal back, and then everytime I would get a lick, it would break. It would just pop it again.
- Cummings: So did you end up playing with him your junior year?
- Moore: I played with him two years, I played part of my junior year until I rebroke it.
- Cummings: When did you get injured during your junior year?
- Moore: It was early, I didn't get to play much when I was a junior because I was wearing a special brace on it, and what we was

doing was more or less trying it out. My sophomore year, I guess, was my biggest year, as far as I was concerned, in getting to play with him because we got to play longer and more that year. Of course, during my freshman year, I didn't play with him because we played separate.

Marcello: I guess that by the time you did play with Abner, the real rabid segregationist schools had already dropped North Texas from the schedule.

Moore: Well, gosh, I don't even remember.

Marcello: For example, at one time Ol' Miss and Mississippi State used to be on the schedule, and I think they dropped North Texas very quickly.

Moore: That may have been what happened, but I didn't know if that's what happened, if it did. But I don't guess it was advertised that much. We didn't play Ol' Miss or Mississippi. As a matter of fact, we played...well, of course, we were in the Missouri Valley Conference. We played Houston, and Houston wasn't in the Missouri Valley at that time. That was about the biggest game. Then we played Oklahoma State, Brigham Young, and those people.

Cummings: Speaking of Houston, were you on that Houston trip that they took on the train? They had to take a train down there because they couldn't find a hotel or restaurant in Houston that would accept the team, so they ended up taking a train down there.

Moore: That must have been later on.

Cummings: I'm not sure what year that was,

Moore: When I was playing, we played Houston in Denton. We played them twice in Denton. I'm trying to think...in Abner's senior year, I don't think we played Houston that year. Are you talking about when Abner was playing?

Cummings: Yes, That might have been his sophomore year, when you were a freshman.

Moore: It might have been that year because when I was a sophomore, we played Houston in Denton, and I don't think we played Houston when I was a junior. So I guess that's probably when it happened. There was some things that took place then...of course, I was a freshman, and I didn't get to go on road trips,

Cummings: It sounds like, from talking to Coach Bahnsen and Coach McCain, the coaches tried their best to keep the problems that they were encountering from the players, as far as getting a hotel, getting restaurants, getting travel accommodations, and all those kind of things.

Moore: I'm sure that they did because I don't guess that I ever heard anything about that. In looking back at that time, I guess when you are that age, you don't worry about those kind of things; but in looking back now, I'm sure that they had lots of problems that we as players didn't know about,

Cummings: A lot of pressures, too.

Moore: Yes, That's what I was saying awhile ago, I think they are the ones that probably had more pressure on them than any of the

players, the whites or Abner or anybody else, because all we had to do was play. They had to take care of all the arrangements, and I guess that it presented a barrier there that we were unaware of. We thought that all we had to do was get in the bus and go to Dallas and get on an airplane and take off, and everything was set up. When we went someplace, they told us when we was getting on the bus and when we was getting off and when we was getting on a plane and everything. We didn't have much free time. Everything was lined out. But whoever was making those reservations, I imagine, had some problems.

Marcello: Another thing that might have helped, too, was the fact that Denton was kind of isolated at that time. We didn't have interstate highways or anything of that nature.

Moore: That's right. Of course, Denton had Fred Moore High School. They had a fine black high school football team. They were in the playoffs every year. We used to go watch them every Saturday night. So I think a lot of people in Denton had been watching blacks play--a lot of the big football fans. There was a lot of things that, I guess, just kind of fell in place. It seemed to me like it went awful smooth in looking back over it. Of course, I'm sure there were lots of problems that I didn't know about.

Marcello: Where would Abner go for a social life? Either to Dallas or over in the black section of Denton?

Moore: I don't know where he went. Well, he had a lot of social life.

He had all he wanted, I think (laughter), as far as being a hero, I'll tell you one I never will forget when we would take him home, One time we went home, and there was two girls sitting on his front porch. He was a hero, really, really, a hero to the black students, and the girls just followed Abner around. He was just really something to them because he was the first black, I guess, that had been out there, plus being the kind of athlete that he was. Boy, he had the girls after him, I'll guarantee you (laughter),

Cummings: I understand that at that time, there was a pretty strong barrier between the black section of Denton and North Texas State, and the fact that Abner kind of crossed that boundary every day didn't sit real well with a lot of people over there in the black part of town.

Moore: You may be right.

Cummings: Did you ever see any of that?

Moore: No, sir, I guess I probably took Abner home more than anyone else, I don't know why I inherited that job, but I guess it was because I knew him, and Robert.,,when we were freshmen, Robert Hines was his cousin, and he lived with Abner over there. Of course, I was the only freshman coming in that Abner and Leon knew, I guess, because I had been associated.,,of course, I went down and stayed in the dorm and went down to all the practices when I was in high school because of Vernon, and they came up here all the time, So I knew them pretty well, and when Robert came

in, I think I was more or less the first one that Abner brought him to and said, "This guy will take care of you," because Robert didn't know anyone else, either. He was bashful; he was quiet. He wasn't like Abner. He was a good football player, but he wasn't outgoing like Abner. Abner never met a stranger. That rascal met...it didn't make any difference who it was. If he didn't know them, they thought he knew them when he met them. That was one of the reasons...I took them home almost every day. I took Abner and Robert and Leon, all, over there.

But I never encountered any problem in taking them over there. I always saw some people, but I don't guess anyone... no one ever said a cross word to me. Of course, it might have been because Abner was with me. I don't know. But I never did go over there at night a whole lot, either. I'm just talking about taking them home after football practice at five o'clock or something like that.

Cummings: Talk about your association with Leon. I know that Abner and Leon went to high school together, and they came up here as a package. From what I understand, Leon was a lot quieter than Abner. He had a lot of potential, and he was a pretty talented football player, but he was just a lot quieter. Eventually, he left the team and just went to school here. Did he ever talk with you much, or what kind of impression of him did you get?

Moore: Well, Leon was a...I think you hit it pretty close when you said

that he wasn't outgoing like Abner. He was quiet. Abner just had that gift of gab; he could talk anybody's arm off. Leon was always just kind of standing behind him and just following him along. Of course, Leon was an end, and he never was really big enough. He was a fine receiver, and he could kick off, boy, like the dickens, but he just didn't have the talent to play end like Abner had the talent to play halfback. If Leon had weighed 230 pounds like some of the ends now, he would have probably been a great player, too. But I think he weighed 180, 185 pounds, and there he was, playing end up against these 230-and 240 pound defensive tackles. That's what made it pretty hard on Leon (chuckle), was his size. He never did get big enough to play that end like he needed to play it.

Cummings: Talking about his personality, was he able to handle the pressures, or could you even tell, of breaking the color line?

Moore: Leon was just kind of behind Abner most of the time. He didn't say a lot. Most of the time, when he opened his mouth...he and Abner used to sing on the plane. I don't know whether he told you that. They used to go back and get on the intercom on the airplane on the team trips and just sing like everything coming back--if we won. Abner could sing pretty good. Now Leon could sing; he was a bass. They could sing great. Things like that, I think, are the things that made them so successful, as far as breaking color line. They was the only two blacks on the plane,

and they would just sing up a storm, They would get the stewardess's little deal, and they would just sing, dance, or whatever, and everybody liked that. They'd entertain. Of course, Abner was always the one that grabbed it and was going to do it, and he made Leon get up there and help him (laughter). That was the kind of relationship that Leon and Abner seemed like they had the whole time.

Cummings: What in your view happened to Leon? Why did he eventually drop football?

Moore: Well, I don't really know, other than the fact that he wasn't getting to play as much as he wanted to play. I think that went back to what I was saying about the size element. He just wasn't big enough to play where he had to play. And I'm sure that there might have been a little more pressure on him than there was on Abner because Abner was a star, and Leon wasn't that much of a star. So I think that it makes a little bit of a difference there, as far as their attitude toward playing the game.

Cummings: Almost like a younger brother having to follow a successful older brother.

Moore: Yes, I think it was. Leon might have been more successful had he been the only one, or if Abner hadn't have been there. I don't know know. Like I said, Abner was such an exceptional athlete that he got all the attention, and that was probably harder on Leon. Leon was a good football player. He was a good

football player, and he was a good person. I thought a whole lot of both of them. But he was quiet and reserved, compared to Abner.

Marcello: He would not have been the type of person to initially integrate North Texas athletics.

Moore: It might have gotten him down. I don't know.

Cummings: Did he and Abner remain pretty close their three years together on the football team?

Moore: I think they were probably real close. After I got hurt, I wasn't as closely associated with them as I was before, as far as Abner and Leon, both. Abner, I still see. He's been up here a couple of times this year. He is kind of at home wherever he is (chuckle). But I haven't seen Leon in a long time. Abner told me what Leon was done doing when he was up here, so I know they are still in contact. I'm sure they're still good friends and see each other every now and then.

Cummings: Talk a little bit about Vernon Cole. You have already quite a bit. I know bits and pieces about his career at North Texas and afterwards and the fact that he died in the early 1970's. After he left North, Texas, what did he do?

Moore: He went to Montreal and played in Canada. He played two years of professional football. He was in the ROTC in college, and had got a two-year deferment to play professional football, and then he had to go into the Air Force. So he went into the Air Force and was in there four years, and when he came back out, he

didn't play anymore football.

Then he went into coaching, and he coached at Wharton County Junior College a year. He might have coached two years, but I think he just coached one year. Then he went to McLennan County Junior College in Waco and set up the athletic department. He was athletic director there, and that was when McLennan was kind of more or less getting started. As a matter of fact, I think McLennan's colors are orange and black, and that's the same as Pilot Point. He was the one that set that up, I think, when he set up their athletic department down there.

Of course, Vernon was one of the finest guys, I guess, in my opinion, that ever lived. He was just an exceptional person. He was one of these guys that just didn't do anything wrong. I was fortunate enough that I grew up right across the creek from him out there, which I still live out there and his dad still lives there. His mother passed away about a year ago. His parents were kind of like my parents in that they just kind of adopted me and mine adopted him, and we spent a lot of time together growing up. From little bitty fellows in grade school to all the way up through high school, we had had all these plans about what we were going to do when we got to college. We were both going to go into the Air Force, fly jets, and all this kind of stuff, you know, when we were in high school. He went ahead and went into the Air Force, but he never did fly because of his eyes. He had eye problems. I was in ROTC for a

year, and then I got out. I wasn't quite as crazy about that as he was, I guess (chuckle).

He was just an exceptional person, and he was an exceptional football player. He was a leader. I think Vernon probably was the one person on the football team that could tell Abner to shut up and sit down and didn't want to hear another word out of him, and Abner never said a word. I think he would have done just exactly anything Vernon told him to do, and not because of any reason than the fact that, I think, he respected him that much. That's kind of the way that Vernon was...that's kind of the way that the football team was--just a low key, "I-respect-you" type of a situation--with that group of people that was there. There just wasn't any room for a big loud-mouth blow-hard, and there wasn't any of them there. Abner wasn't that way. Abner was a comedian; he was funny. But he knew when to be funny, and he knew when not to.

Cummings: He wasn't a bragger?

Moore: No, sir, he wasn't a bragger. I think he felt just like everybody else did. He respected everybody else, and I think everybody respected him. They didn't respect just him; they respected everybody on the team.

I think a lot of the success of that team goes back to Vernon Cole and the kind of leader that Vernon was. The kind of person that you have stand in front of the huddle has got a lot to do with what kind of team you've got. That's just

the way he was,

Marcello: On the basis of what you said, then, what role do you think Vernon Cole played in easing the transition for Abner?

Moore: Well, I can only speak, really, from my standpoint. From my standpoint, he made it perfect because if Vernon said it was all right, it was all right as far as I was concerned. If Vernon said Abner was a good guy, then he was a good guy, and that settled it. That's kind of the way that I felt about Vernon, and I think that's the way a lot of the athletes at North Texas felt. If Vernon Cole was going to take him and take him home with him, then there had to be something okay about the guy.

Marcello: His attitudes toward race seemed to be very similar to what yours were, from what you've said,

Moore: Well, we were raised in the same situation. We were raised up where we spent time with blacks from the time we were little bitty, and no one ever told me that I was better than them or that they were better than me or anything else. He was the same way. We were brought up on the farm working long hours, and we got to work with a lot of blacks in that situation.

Cummings: Vernon was probably Abner's first and maybe closest white teammate or friend, wasn't he?

Moore: I imagine he was. I'll say probably that Vernon was Abner's best friend, period--black or white or anything else--while we were playing football. That would be my opinion. Abner and I

were good friends, but there was a bond, kind of, between Abner and Vernon that had been built during that first year, I think. It is just something that, I guess, just because of the circumstances and all, they were just very, very close. I hadn't seen Abner in a long time until Vernon's funeral. When we went down there, I was a pallbearer, and one of the first people I saw when I got there was Abner. This was in Waco, and I don't even know where Abner was at the time. That was the first time I had seen him in a long time. I didn't even get to talk to him because I had to... I saw him when I was going in the church, and I had to go and sit down. About all I could do was get to shake hands and speak to him when we went by. I don't believe it would have made any difference where Abner was. I think he would have been there. It wasn't a surprise to me that he was there. I expected him to be there because I knew how he felt. Of course, that had been, I guess, about twelve, thirteen, fourteen years then that we had been out of school.

Cummings: When exactly did Vernon die?

Moore: In 1972, I believe. He was thirty-four when he died. He'd be forty-three now. He died of multiple sclerosis.

Marcello: Why do you think that close bond developed between Abner and Vernon as opposed to Abner and somebody else?

Moore: Well, I think it was probably because of Vernon's attitude as much as... I'm sure that when Abner came in, he was looking for someone to accept him first. I wasn't there at that time, but

knowing Vernon, I imagine Vernon was the first one that accepted him. I imagine he walked right out there and said, "I'm Vernon Cole. Let's get together and get after this thing." That's just the kind of person he was, and I would imagine that probably, because of Vernon's actions, a lot of other people fell in right behind him. The first time I ever saw Abner is when Vernon brought him up here.

Marcello: I think that's a really interesting point, and I think we need to follow that up in the rest of these interviews, too.

Cummings: Everybody that I've talked to has told me that the association between Abner and Vernon...it's just kind of funny to hear Abner, a dark-skinned, black person, breaking the color line, and Vernon, a blond-haired, almost white hair...snow-white nearly... ..white kid, and almost instantly they got together, and they stuck together. Talka briefly here about Vernon's athletic ability. I know he was just basically your All-American personality-wise and All-American talent-wise athlete--golf, football, baseball, basketball.

Moore: He could do anything, I guess. He was a supper football player, and, of course, football was always our first love when we were growing up. We played everything, depending on what season it was. Vernon was an exceptional athlete, whether it was football, basketball, running track. He went to the state championships in discus. He was probably the first person from Pilot Point to ever go to the state track meet, and we didn't emphasize track

that much at that time.

But he was just a...I don't even know how to explain it. Of course, he was as good a friend as I ever had, I guess, and he just...if I was going to design some person, I probably could just look at him and say, "That's pretty well what I want it to be," if it's what I wanted my boy to grow up to be or something like that. To me he was just the way you ought to be. He had the guts to stand up against wrong things. We didn't smoke or drink or do any of those things when we were growing up because we wanted to play football. I look back, and I would like to think that I had the guts to stand up against it, but at the same time it wasn't hard for me to stand up against it because I knew he was. That had a big influence on me, too. It is a lot easier to do something when somebody else is doing it, too. It is easier to say "no" when somebody else had already said "no." He had a lot of influence on a lot of us, especially me.

Cummings: Have you ever sat down and looked back at your years at North Texas and on the integration factor? How do you reflect back on those years? Do you feel like those teams and those coaches and those white players and those black players were all pioneers in a social movement that reached the point that it has today, where there is such a high percentage of blacks in athletics?

Moore: Well, you know, I guess I've really never sat down and thought about it that much. At the time, it really didn't phase me,

I don't think, really one way or the other because it just didn't bother me like I guess it bothered some people for integration to come along and take place, But it never did bother me because, like I told you, because of the way that I felt and the way that I was brought up.

The only thing that I look back at, that we faced, I guess, that time and that they don't now, is the thing like going in the restaurant and saying part of your team can't eat here, things like that. I look back on them, and it's kind of hard to believe that things like that really happened, I guess. But at the same time, you can look around, and you can see why things like that happened. There are people that still feel the same way, but I guess they just don't say as much. But it's not just necessarily because they're black; it's maybe because of anything. Maybe it's because you are poor, maybe because you're rich, or maybe for some other reason. I don't think that that's necessarily it. That just happened to be that situation--the first time that a black had come in.

I'm glad that I was there, I guess, but I don't know of any big thing that I did or anybody else did to make it a success or keep it from being more of a success. We just went to school. I went to school, and I went to college. The only reason I went was to play football, I didn't go to learn anything, when I went. Fortunately, after I got there, after awhile I decided I needed to get an education, also.

I think Abner did many things that helped North Texas make the transition that kept them from having the problems that some of these other colleges had. I don't know whether the transition at North Texas would have been smooth if it hadn't have been for Abner Haynes, or not. I don't know whether anybody else could have done it, but I know the way he did it--the way it happened-- he had a lot of support almost immediately from the white athletes. At that time, athletes were looked up to probably more than they are now, on a college campus and maybe on a high school campus.

Marcello: How did that situation or experience during your years at North Texas help you in your later years as a coach? Do you see that as being an experience that you could build upon when you became a coach?

Moore: Well, I think that it helped me a lot. Basically, the reason that it helped me is because I was coaching at Pilot Point when we integrated, when the first blacks came into Pilot Point. Of course, I had a relationship with the black community of Pilot Point from when I was growing up. I knew all of them. I've been in their house drinking coffee. So it wasn't such a big deal for me, and I had as much support from the black folks as I had from anybody. But at the same time, I looked at it from a different angle when I was coaching than I did when I was playing. It goes back,, that is the reason that I mentioned the coaches awhile ago. I think so much of the problems that

happen with black athletes and white athletes could be avoided if the coaches handled it in the right way,

Marcello: How did you handle it?

Moore: Well, the first thing that we did, we had a meeting that summer when Pilot Point integrated,

Cummings: What year was this?

Moore: Nineteen sixty-four was the first year that they played at Pilot Point. We had seven or eight that came in that first year. When it was decided that we were integrating...we were the first school in this area, high school, that integrated, so I was kind of going through a situation similar to what North Texas had been through when I was there,

We had a long talk with the athletes. We had a meeting that summer. The superintendent was Mr. Smith, and myself, and we had a long meeting at the school when we integrated and had all the black kids that were coming to school come in there. We sat down and talked to them and went over everything. Of course, I took all of them that were athletes down, and we sat down with them and talked with them a long time, and we just discussed everything openly: "Now look here, there could be a problem, and you know what it is, and I know what it is, and we just as well should talk about it and get this thing out in the open. You work on it, and I'll work on it, and we'll get it worked out,"

It wasn't an issue that was avoided, but we didn't have a

problem. The only problem...I had more of a problem then than when I was in college. Of course, I was aware of the problem more from the coaching standpoint. We played a neighboring town that first year, and they kept calling us "coons" because we had the black kids playing. We had two or three that were pretty good ball players, and there was about four, probably, on the varsity. That's a long time ago, too, but I think we had about four playing,

I never will forget one of them. We were playing this game, and they was given us a hard time--the other side. They were giving the players a hard time. When the game was over, this guy from the other school ran out on the field to one of our black kids that was playing defensive halfback and said, "You're a coon! You're a black coon." And that ol' kid looked at him and laughed, and he said, "I ain't no coon! I'm a Bearcat!" That ol' boy just stood there and looked at him. That was kind of the way that they handled it, too, and we didn't have any major problems.

We had one little scrap with a town that just hated blacks, and that was the last year we played them. We just got them off our schedule. They'd be embarrassed if I told you who it was. They just cussed the blacks the whole period, and we had one kid finally that...they hurt one of our kids, one of our blacks. They jumped on him and kneed him, and we had to carry him off. His brother was playing, and his brother retaliated there for a little bit. That was the only problem that we ever had, and, of course, the way that we handled that was that ours was wrong for retaliating--period.

We never had anymore problems,

We've had kids, black kids, that have been called a few things (laughter), and it wasn't because of their color, I guess (laughter). There are still schools now that cuss your blacks and call your blacks names, and some of those are pretty close to here. To me that's a reflection right back to their coach and to their school. That could be stopped. This year we didn't have a black on the varsity--the first time in a long time for Pilot Point. I've had a lot of them over the years. That's getting kind of off the subject, as far as Abner is concerned, but Pilot Point was kind of a pioneer, also, in being the first school to integrate and have black kids.

Marcello: I don't think, in a sense, it is off the subject because that early experience probably ties in with your own experiences as a coach,

Moore: I think that it helped. We talked to our kids...just like this boy I was telling you about, he reacted differently, and I can look back at it, and that's just exactly something like Abner would say. Instead of just getting mad and hitting him in the mouth and causing a big fight, he laughed at him--just made a statement that cut him down, really. That's probably the best thing that he could have said,

Cummings: Does one incident during your playing days at North Texas stand out at a game where some of the fans or some of the members of the other team were saying things, doing things? Does one incident

stay in your mind, that you recall happening?

Moore: Well, as far as Abner is concerned, I think the incident that I was talking about when we played in New Mexico was the one, I guess, that I think of immediately because of what took place. I never will forget, I took my helmet off and had my helmet in my hand, which was stupid. I never had been in a fight on the football field. I remember...I think it was Coach McCain or one of them who told me later on that that's the one thing that you don't do, is take your helmet off. The first thing you do is make sure you got your helmet on. But when something like that happens, it's just exciting, You just run out there, You don't run out there thinking, "What am I doing?" You run out there, and you get involved without thinking. Of course, that's when you get in trouble most of the time, I guess, is when you're not thinking (chuckle).

What caused it was really funny at that time--the fact that Abner called this big ol' boy, "nigger," like there was something really bad wrong with him. That was one incident, I guess, for two or three reasons that is one of the first things that I think about when I think about Abner, is him calling the blacks on the other team "niggers."

Cummings: You don't recall any incidents in hotels or restaurants other than that one that you can think of,

Moore: Not anything major, I just don't remember any major problems, I know I'm sure there were some hurdles that had to be cleared,

but at the same time, I think evidently the groundwork had been laid by the coaches and the people that were planning those things. Evidently, they did an awfully good job because I just don't remember any major problems, you know, flare-ups and stuff. There is always some sarcastic remarks here and there, little ones, but you just don't pay any attention to that kind of stuff. There are those whether you have blacks or not, really (chuckle). We had a lot of those this year a time or two, and we didn't have any blacks. It wasn't because of that. I think you can't attribute those little sly remarks all the way to the blacks.

Cummings: Do you remember,,,and here again, it may have been because you were a player and you were kind of isolated from the problems and the worries of the coaches, but did you as a player ever wonder why North Texas didn't recruit more blacks than they did after Abner had gotten there and had proved how good an athlete he was?

Moore: Well, really, I probably didn't think about it that much at the time. As I look back, I think Abner wanted to come to North Texas, and I know Robert Hines wanted to come to North Texas, and, of course, Leon wanted to come, and this may be kind of the way they approached it. I don't know that North Texas was ready at that time for the coaches to go out and bring in a bunch and really actively try to talk them into coming out. Those guys came there because they wanted to come. I don't think they came because they went out and recruited them. As a matter of fact, I'm almost

positive that Abner wasn't on a scholarship. There wasn't any of them on a scholarship when they came to North Texas--they walked on. He could have gone to Colorado and those places on a scholarship, but he walked on at North Texas. If they didn't recruit Abner, I don't see how they could recruit anybody else. I didn't see him play in high school, but he must have been fabulous in high school, also.

Cummings: But they did recruit white players, and if the doors were open to black players, I would think...

Moore: They probably just played that by ear, just by slowly going on in and recruiting them. I don't really know what their thinking was, but I guess they were probably trying to stay in the good graces of the community and of the school. I don't know if they had any referendums as to what they were to do or anything about that because they would have to be the ones to tell you that. But I think that those first blacks that came there came because they wanted to.

Marcello: It will be interesting to see what kind of messages the administration was passing down to the coaching staff during this period.

Moore: It had to be some because they couldn't stay in those dormitories, I know (laughter). It didn't bother me about where these instructions were coming from.

Cummings: The reason I was asking is because I was just thinking it would be kind of curious to a player like yourself, especially since you said you saw a bunch of the games at Fred Moore...that you'd go

to those games. You'd see black athletes out there doing well, going to the play-offs and so forth, and then you go back to your college, and there is only two on the team. I was just thinking that sometimes you might wonder why these good athletes weren't recruited.

Moore: It seems to me like the first one that might have been recruited was Billy Joe Christie. I don't know for sure if that's right, but Billy was a year behind me. He was a freshman when I was a sophomore. But I believe that he came in on a scholarship. I don't know for sure about that. There didn't any come in the year that I came in on scholarship, I don't think, but I believe that the next year is when...it might have taken them two years to get to the point where they could recruit them. They might not have been given the "okay," I don't know. I believe that Billy Joe came in on a scholarship. I'm pretty sure he did. He was a little running back from Port Arthur. Then Bobby Smith came in a year to two later. They were pretty good black athletes.

Cummings: How many black players were on your freshman team?

Moore: Robert Hines, I believe, is the only one.

Cummings: He was was the only one?

Moore: I'm pretty sure he was.

Cummings: Do you remember a player that was probably a year ahead of you by the name of James Bowdre--a receiver,

Moore: Bowdre? I don't guess.

Cummings: The reason I'm asking is because his picture was in the annual.

He was a black player; he was an end on the sophomore team, When Abner and Leon went to the varsity, he was pictured on their team--James Bowdre, a receiver, Nobody can remember him (chuckle).

Moore: I don't remember him, I don't guess, Now we had a lot of athletes come in for fall camp--and I'm not talking necessarily about blacks or whites or whatever--that came in and walked on that wanted to play but didn't stay long. There very possibly could have been some that didn't make too much of an impression, I don't guess, because I don't remember them. I remember Robert because he played with us when we was freshmen, and that was the only year that he played, He had grade problems, I think. The next year, Billy Joe Christie,, I remember him coming in because he was a good player, There may have been two or three more come in, but I wouldn't say, I just don't remember those, because they never did play much, I don't remember James Bowdre, and I would have known him if he played when I was playing.

Cummings: I think he just lasted one year, What about the media coverage of the North Texas team back then? I've gone through a lot of the old Campus Chats and a lot of the old Dallas Morning News, and there was hardly any mention, other than by name, of Abner being on the team. They never picked him out and did a separate story on him or a separate story on the fact that he was playing up here or a story in general that North Texas had integrated.

Moore: I don't remember much, but that probably was planned, if I were

guessing. I would think that the coaches probably controlled that because it was a very low-keyed thing, the fact that Abner was black. He was a player, is the way it was approached from the coaches' standpoint. Very possibly they kept him from getting special write-ups and stuff because they wanted to keep everything working together. I don't know that.

I know the only thing I can really remember is our struggling and trying to get a bowl game and trying to get our ratings up. We wanted to get into the top ten, and I think we got to seventeenth or something like that. It was very similar to what Haden Fry's teams were a couple of years ago when they got rated a little bit, but they couldn't get over the hump. I thought so much about that because our constant thought and goal for North Texas was to get into the top ten, but we didn't make it. We got up to seventeenth, I think, if I'm not mistaken. We did have some good ball clubs, and we thought we could beat anybody, but I don't imagine everybody else thought that (laughter). About the time we got going, we got beat, and that's what messed us up.

Cummings: You seem to look back on those days very positively.

Moore: Well, you know, I learned a lot from there. I wished a lot of times I could go back and go through that again. I think you do that probably in high school or in college or anything else because there's so many things I'd do different. I might want to be a little bit more like Abner. I was quiet. I didn't hang around

the coaches a lot or those kind of things, I can look at it now from the other standpoint, I know that coaches like for you to come around and let them know how you feel and what you want to do and what your goals are, you know, not to "brown-nose" or anything like that but just to spend a little time around, I kind of always thought if you were hanging around there, you were trying to "brown-nose" coaches and this kind of stuff, and I didn't want anybody to think I was trying to do that, which that was just immaturity, really, on my part.

I learned a whole lot from playing football at North Texas. That was the first time that I found out that I couldn't just do anything that I wanted to do on the football field (laughter). A lot of high school players think that they can do anything that there is to do, and I guess I was one of them. You find out that there's people that can run faster than you can, and there's people stronger than you are. Abner found out in a hurry that I couldn't do some of the things that Abner could do. That bothered me a lot, but there wasn't much that I could do about it, really, is what it boiled down to.

Cummings: Do you remember the first time in a workout...you said that you knew Abner from Vernon bringing him up here when you were in high school, but do you remember, when you got down there on that freshman team, your first practice--when you saw him out in a uniform and had to go against him?

Moore: No, that part didn't bother me. The only thing I really remembered

was the first time that I was going to really put it on him-- I thought--and I didn't even touch him. He got my respect, I guess, in a hurry. I knew he was good, but you never know how good someone is, I think, until you actually come up against them sometime, I found out in a hurry. He ran through us and made us look bad. We were freshmen, but we weren't used to looking bad (laughter). It was embarrassing. Really, it was.

Marcello: I have one last question. Without mentioning names, if, in fact, such a thing occurred, were there people on the North Texas team who did not like the fact that Abner Haynes was playing?

Moore: In my mind, I think that there were two or three that were older that probably resented him a little bit or were a little bit jealous. But at the same time, they kept it under control, or the coaches kept it under control--somebody did--because there wasn't any incidents. There may have been something said once or twice in practice, but, like I said, things can be said in practice when you're white. It doesn't necessarily... when you're out there competing, you get mad at people no matter what color they are. But off-hand, I think there were two or three, and that's my own opinion, but, really, the people in my class respected him because he was there when we got there. I think the people in his class respected him because they came in with him and matured with him. The ones that I feel like probably resented him more than anything were the people that were seniors when he was a sophomore. They had gotten there without him, and

they didn't feel like they needed him, But it wasn't a hostile-type thing; it was just a kind of an opinion, maybe, that I have, I could be wrong there.

Marcello: In other words, there may have been some isolated incidents but nothing serious.

Moore: Yes, I think things were kept under control. Now I can see that it is a lot more credit back to those people that were in charge and, I think, too, to a lot of the athletes that were the leaders on those teams. I think they kept things probably under control, probably more than I knew about. I think if there was any incidents of hard feelings or someone having to be talked to, it was probably when Abner was a sophomore. I was a freshman, so I wasn't quite as involved in it because we were separated from the varsity people. But it was handled very smoothly, and I think that a lot of the athletes themselves kept it probably under control, also.

Cummings: Yes, that was a very fortunate mixing of people back then, wasn't it?

Moore: Yes, it was. We had fun playing. I guess some of them have fun now, but to listen to some of these guys talk--that are in college and some of them that's coaching--it seems like they're scared to death from day to day, afraid they are going to get fired or get run off, or somebody's bad-mouthing them--this kind of thing. I don't suppose that the coaches or the team or anybody at that time worried about the media or saying something bad about them. All we was wanting them to do was just say something (chuckle): "They

done good," We just had a lot of fun, Everybody that was there wanted to be there, I think, and felt fortunate that they were there, There wasn't a bunch of people driving new automobiles or this kind of stuff, We didn't have a lot of money, and not that there's anything wrong with money, but at the same time, we was just fortunate that it was who it was, We had a load of fun, and I enjoyed college,

Abner did, too. Abner probably enjoyed it more than I did. But Abner had a lot of fun in classes, and he had a lot of fun in the UB, and he had a lot of fun in football. We had fun in practice, The most solemn time was during a game. We couldn't cut up and say a whole lot then,

But we had a lot of fun, and to me that's what athletics, football, is supposed to be. You're supposed to have some fun. If you're not having fun, you might ought to stop and check on how you are doing things. I'm saying that because all I hear about North Texas now is derogatory and bad remarks about the players or the people they've got playing or the coaches or whatever, and they don't have a relationship like they had when I was there. I don't believe you could have got very many people to say anything bad about the coaches, Even if they was mad at them, they wouldn't have said anything. I don't think you could have gotten many people to say anything about the other players. It was just,,well, there's a lot of times I look back on, and I'm thankful that I was there. I enjoyed them, and I

learned a lot, too,

Someday a lot of people are going to realize how much you learn out there on the football field or from athletics. You learn a lot in the classroom, too, but you also learn a whole lot more out there than people give you credit for. I appreciate it because I went down there to play football and wound up getting an education, and if it hadn't have been for football, I never would have have gone. There's not any doubt about that, I probably would have finished high school because I imagine Mother and Daddy would have made me, but I was one of those guys that went to school to play ball, and I went to college to play ball.

I never will forget how things kind of worked out. I think the Good Lord kind of every once in awhile has to wake us up, and I look back now and say getting my arm broke and knocking football out of my life was kind of the time that I decided, "Well, what am I going to do now? I can't play for a while," I decided I wanted to get an education, I'm just glad I was in the position and already had a couple of years in where I didn't have far to go because if I'd have been starting over, I don't know whether I'd have gone or not. It was some good times, and Abner helped to make it that way, I think,

Marcello: Well, Coach, that's all of our questions, I think. Again, both Randy and I want to thank you so much for giving us your time. I think you have contributed some very valuable things in terms of

the history of North Texas, and I think you've also given Randy some good insights for his future book.

Cummings: Yes, I appreciate you letting us come out here on such short notice.

Moore: Well, it's kind of nice every once in awhile and to sit down and think back about those times because we don't do that enough, I don't think--just sit down and talking about that. When you talk about it, it doesn't seem like it was very long ago, but I graduated twenty years ago. Well, I've been coaching twenty years, so that's twenty-one years ago.

Cummings: I know Abner liked to talk about it. I don't know how often you get to see him, but I see him over there at least once or twice a week, and if we get to talking about it, he can sit there and talk for hours (laughter).

Moore: Yes, he did some crazy things. Of course, this wasn't when he was playing for North Texas. Do you remember when he was playing for Dallas Texans and they got in a playoff game and they sent Abner out there to flip a coin? They had to go into overtime. Do you remember that?

Cummings: He's told me a little bit about it, yes.

Moore: Get him to tell you about it sometime. He won the toss and chose to kick off into the wind (laughter). I thought maybe he'd told you that.

Cummings: The man makes one mistake in his life, and he is reminded of it forever.

Moore: Well, that was on national television (roaring laughter). That was in the American Football League playoff for the championship when the Dallas Texans and Houston played. I don't know what he was thinking, but the funny thing about it is that Dallas won (laughter). If they would have lost, then he would have really been in trouble. He's something else.

Marcello: Well, maybe it's on that note that we really ought to end this interview and keep that for future reference when we talk to him.