

Interview

with

JAMES ARTHUR JONES

November 19, 2003

by Malinda Maynor

Transcribed by Sharon Caughill

The Southern Oral History Program  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

JAMES A. JONES  
November 19, 2003

MALINDA MAYNOR: Are we ready to go? Okay, this is tape number 11.19.03-JJ with James A. Jones in the Prospect Community in Robeson County. The interviewer is Malinda Maynor, and it's November 19, 2003. Okay. So, Mr. Jones, begin by telling us a little bit about teaching at the Veteran's School, what you remember about that experience and its rewards and trials.

JJ: That was one of my great, not the greatest probably, but one of my great moments of teaching veterans who had had the same, similar, experience in the Army as I had. They came back, and they were not highly educated. Most of them were down in the primary level of education, probably seventh and eighth grade. The government made possible for funds that were provided for teachers. They came in, and at that time that program was held right at Prospect School, in the high school room, and the hours were from four until nine, five days a week. The soldiers seemed to enjoy it. I enjoyed it. During that time we would take a break, and we organized one of the finest volleyball teams anywhere in the district or even in the county. We went to other areas. We went down to adjoining counties and played. We were very, very competitive. This was an enlightenment. The fellows would look forward to this. They were there. Had no problem with them. Attendance was good. The relationship was excellent. No discipline problem because they were there for one thing, to increase their education level. It was just a great, enjoyable experience.

MM: What kinds of students did you have?

JJ: All Indian boys. All Indian boys. Well, we had one white who lived in the area, and his name was Dillon Maynor, and he wanted to come and be a member of the class. He was a veteran like the rest of them. The rest of them was all Prospect related individuals.

MM: Maybe we could talk a little bit about Prospect since you were born here, grew up here, and went to school here. How would you describe the community if you were talking to somebody from outside? What would you tell them about it?

JJ: This is predominantly, almost a hundred percent—at one time it was, with the exception of two or three families—a Native American community, a very close knit community. There were a lot of family relations, family connections in this Prospect community. And it's very deep. It goes way back to probably the eighteenth century. The land that's in this area, most of the land in this Prospect community is land that has been inherited from our ancestors. It's just been passed down, passed down, passed down from generation to generation. Not a lot of selling lands, especially to outsiders.

It's kind of clannish if you'll allow me to use that word. We sometimes refer to it facetiously as a little Indian reservation. We like to kind of keep it that way. We've got our prejudice feelings you know, not really deeply imbedded, but we get along. We've gotten along, and we're hard working, dedicated people from the farming aspects and move up the ladder on the educational level. We have no qualms about that, and we feel like the kids, the students, every one has made progress from about as long as I can remember, and I was born here eighty some years ago, right here. Lived in this community. In fact I've lived in this spot where we are talking right now since 19—oh, I

was eight years old probably when I moved here. That was in 1930. I've been living in this same spot since 1930.

I attended church here in this same area. My father and mother taught us. They took us to church religiously. Every Sunday we were in church, and we didn't give excuses. "I feel bad today," or "I'm not feeling so well. I don't want to go." It was understood that Sunday morning we were going to church. It was imbedded in us, and we still have a trickling of that in our community and in our families, and we believe in hard working, fair, honesty. Back then we didn't have to worry about locks on the doors and that kind of thing. If there was a neighbor in need we were ready to come to his rescue.

I remember as a little boy I'd go to the other families. I take maybe a dozen of eggs and bring back some milk or vice versa. We did that. Now we even exchange. We like to go and borrow something or take something and bring back something. This is typical Prospect community as long as I can remember.

MM: What makes education so important to the people in Prospect?

JJ: We feel that's the level of advancement. We feel like that's somewhat part of our livelihood because the greater our education, the more experiences we have, we can share that with our children and motivate them to seek higher grounds. And naturally the bottom line is financial status, upgrading, better homes, better economic conditions, provide the elders with better medicine.

My mother passed away when she was thirty-nine years old with a simple gall bladder. Now today you never hear tell of that. They go in there and remove your gall bladder, do whatever is necessary and that's it. But back then it was a separate thing, and it took her away at only thirty-nine years old. It was sad. So we felt like these are the

kind of things that we need to do. With all the developing technology that we have now, we've got to do something to try to stay up with it.

MM: So education improves your quality of life?

JJ: Exactly right.

MM: It's interesting though because in a lot of other places in the United States people would leave to improve their quality of life.

JJ: Right.

MM: They wouldn't stay. Why do you think so many of the younger generation have stayed in Prospect?

JJ: Because of the general environment. We have a good, strong religious background. We get along well. We communicate well. And these are the things that hold us real close. We're unity. We like to practice this kind of thing. We like to talk it, and we like to practice it, and this causes us—we don't want to leave. We want to stay here, even our kids. Most of them don't want to leave the Prospect community.

This is one of the things that merging of schools, and you've already related to this. We felt that this was not going to be good for Prospect kids, and it's proven that it's not. It's the most detrimental thing. Maybe I shouldn't say that, but I'm being totally honest. It's probably the most detrimental thing that's happened to the Prospect community and the young kids. Our kids were taught hard work. They were disciplined kids. We were strict-discipline kids. And the community here has always gone to school until the administrator, whoever it was that, "Listen, if my child needs discipline, you discipline him. And when he gets home I'm going to give him more discipline because we can't allow it." The school is for education, not to go out there and get in trouble.

We never had any problems at Prospect. Maybe the boy pulled the girl's hair or vice versa, but something like that. Maybe take a sheet of paper from him or chew chewing gum. That was probably the extent of the discipline problems.

And another thing in the school line, one of the things that we strive for from the athletic side, we wanted the sportsman's trophy for our kids. That's the one thing. We wanted to be victorious. We wanted to be the winner, but we also wanted to show sportsmanship, and a number of years our teams got the sportsmanship award. We also stress the fact that we're good citizens. We like to get the citizenship award, too, you know. Like one little thing, helping the neighbor in need. We practice that.

MM: What do you think sets Prospect apart from some of the other Indian communities?

JJ: That's not an easy question to deal with because I really don't know the other Indian sections as well as I do Prospect because I haven't been exposed to them. Maybe because I'm kind of clannish myself and live here, although I visit these other sections, but I didn't mingle in them enough to give you what I would consider a very true, educated evaluation.

MM: Um-hum.

JJ: Maybe that's where I should have spread out a little bit more. I had the opportunities to go out. I was asked to go to the other communities, but I never really had the desire to. I wanted to stay here and felt like it could be more beneficial, more helpful to the kids. The scripture says charity begins at home, so I believe in practicing this, and I wanted these kids to have the best. We strived for that. We strived for that.

MM: What about like last time you were telling me maybe from when you were in school, but then also when you were principal, some of the rivalries between Pembroke and Prospect, for example, you know, Union Chapel and the different types of things. What were those types of rivalries about?

JJ: Sports was the main thing. We wanted to beat Pembroke, and it was reciprocal, vice versa. Pembroke wanted to beat Prospect. They always referred to us as the "Upaheaders." We were "Upaheaders." That was a slogan that was used back then. We didn't really resent that to the extent that it caused any trouble, but our main objective was to beat Pembroke. Prospect School won the first championship game that was played in the university there, in the gymnasium.

MM: What year was that?

JJ: Oh, what year was that? That was in 41.

MM: Nineteen forty-one.

JJ: Nineteen forty-one.

MM: Okay.

JJ: Prospect won. It was a county tournament.

MM: An Indian county tournament?

JJ: An Indian county tournament. Then that's all we played, Indian schools, you see, because each one of the schools were individual. All the towns around had their schools, like Red Springs School, Maxton School District, Rowland School District, Fairmont District, and Lumberton District. We did not intermingle with them in the sports. It was only the Indian schools who were able to compete among themselves.



Now once in a while, we at Prospect School, we went up to Moore County and played up in there some of those schools up there.

MM: Indian schools or white schools?

JJ: No, white schools. We kind of break out of our—. Mr. Carlie Lowry was instrumental in bringing about that. We played Star and Bisco which is up there. Those are the two schools that we played. Once in a while we did go down and play in Bennettsville. We played Bennettsville in South Carolina a couple of times. This was just in sports.

MM: I wonder when you mentioned the volleyball team for the Veteran's School—?

JJ: Um-hum, right.

MM: Who did that team play?

JJ: There was a school down in Bladen County, and they had a Veteran's School down there. They were doing the same thing, and we competed against them.

MM: Were they Indians as well?

JJ: Yeah, they were Indians.

MM: That's interesting. So even in the Veteran's School it was sort of an Indian-only thing.

JJ: Exactly right.

MM: Describe for us a little bit for us when you were in school at Prospect Elementary and High School, what the conditions were like. What was a normal day for you like when you were in school?



JJ: I began school out here in the first grade. We went to school, back then we had our opening ceremonies in our auditorium. All the students came together. We had an assembly, and it was called a chapel program. The scripture was read, prayer was done, and we said the Pledge of Allegiance, and we sang *America the Beautiful*. That was the beginning of our day. We went back to classes, and then in mid-morning we had a fifteen-minute recess. Then at lunchtime, twelve o'clock, we had no cafeterias as we have now. All the kids brought their lunch. At lunchtime we had an hour for lunch, from twelve to one. We'd go outside and play whatever sport time it was. It was either football, or it would be basketball, or baseball, or softball for the girls. Then three o'clock we dismissed to come home. That was a typical school day.

MM: What were the relationships with your teachers like?

JJ: Good, good. The teacher was there all the time. Now, as far as the lunch hour the teachers did not go out and organize. We did it on our own, and we had no problems. The teachers were not demanded to go out. Once in a while some of the teachers who were sports minded, they'd come out and watch, but they really didn't do the kind of coaching that you have going on in the schools now. They were more or less maybe an advisor or something of that nature, an observer, but we had no problems.

MM: So the sports were kind of self-organized? Is that right?

JJ: Self-organized. It was self-organized.

MM: That's interesting. And the tournaments and things like that?

JJ: No, now the tournaments, when we got into that level where we were beginning to compete on the high school level, we did have organized. We did have

coaches, but I was talking primarily now from the K-through—back then from the first through the eighth grade.

MM: Right. Okay. That makes sense.

JJ: In the high school it was organized. We had coaches back then, but it was all Indians. When we'd get ready to play a game, we'd go play a game during the lunch hour, load up the kids in cars, and the teachers would go sometimes to take them to play, and they'd bring them back during the lunch. That's the way we worked. It was all Indian schools. Go down to Fairgrove. Go down to Green Grove. Go down to Magnolia and these schools. We always had the teachers with us there. The teachers would drive their car and carry the kids.

MM: You now, it's interesting that it sounds like a very prosperous community, but I also know that a lot of Indian children have the experience of having to stay out of school to help their parents on the farm and things like that.

JJ: Right.

MM: Could you talk a little bit about some of the economic differences in Prospect. Were there wealthier people and poorer people? Was everybody sort of the same? How did that work?

JJ: We had a few people, and I won't call names in this situation. We had a few people that was considered upper-echelon because they were greater land owners than the others. Then we had some who were tenant farmers. It was difficult for them.

We had a few Indian kids who had to stay out of school until the crops were harvested in the fall of the year. Even at one time school was delayed until the crops could be harvested, or they would do a half a day. Come to school at lunchtime or

dismiss at lunch so they could go home, and especially in harvesting the tobacco in the fall of the year, trying to get the tobacco in. We delayed school until we got the tobacco harvested. We considered that, and I thought at that particular time it was an asset because you were helping the farmers, and their only livelihood and the only help they had then—they didn't have big tractors like we have now, mechanized—it was all hand done. Cotton was picked with hands. With hands, all of it until it was gathered.

Let me share one incident that happened when I was a seventh grade teacher. We needed some shrubbery at our school, and we took the classes, not all the classes, but our particular class. Maybe just two or three classes. We went out in the community and picked cotton, and the farmers paid us for picking, so much per pound. That money was brought back to the school and in turn the principal bought shrubbery, and we brought it to the school, and the kids helped plant the shrubbery around the school. Those are the kind of things that we did. I don't know if any other community did that or not, but we at Prospect did that.

MM: Right. No money was coming from the county?

JJ: No money was coming from the county for shrubbery, beautification. It was all school- related activities.

MM: That helps us transition a little bit then to your experience of the school system and how that worked in let's say the 50s. If you could start then. If you maybe would talk a little bit about the school committees, and what kind of relationship the school and the school committee, and then the county school board had.

JJ: The best I can recall this, the county superintendent made the final decision, but each school had what they called a local committee, and this committee screened the

teachers, and they were somewhat very, very rigid. At one time if a teacher was married, a lady teacher, they were not allowed to teach school. If she got pregnant, that was it, right then and there. She didn't teach any longer. Some of those things were very, very rigorous. Sometimes I think they made a lot of good decisions, but sometimes I wondered about some of the decisions that they made.

MM: Give us an example of a good one and a not so good one.

JJ: Okay. I won't call a name in this situation. I remember one teacher, she was an excellent teacher, and she was married, and she got pregnant during her marriage which is a normal thing. They found out that she was pregnant. They dismissed her immediately from teaching school. If I'd call her name now you would know, and your daddy would know, and it would get back to everybody. We thought this was awful, because she was one of the better teachers in the school system at that time. But that's the way the committee operated. I think that was devastating.

MM: Was there any way, could anybody have appealed that decision?

JJ: Well, it was a ruling, and the committee made the ruling and they abided by it. They may have talked about it, but there was nothing ever put in concrete to eliminate it. Finally, you know, it elevated from that and they did away with the committee, and then the board of education came in and started to take over, and the superintendent, and the principal made recommendations and then the board put the final approval on it and this kind of thing. I think it kind of helped a lot.

MM: It was more fair, maybe?

JJ: Yeah. Yeah.

MM: Why did the school committee have so much power?

JJ: That's a question. I didn't really get into it back then, and I don't know. It looked like the people who were selected were just powerful people from that political standpoint, and they were very domineering. The way they felt, and the way they observed things, and their deep feelings, were so powerful. They were just so powerful that nobody would really revoke any of those situations. Once in a while they would, but most times, "That's the way it is. Okay." And the community knew that, and they kindly abided by those things. If a lady got pregnant she'd keep that concealed as long as she possibly could, because this was of concern back then.

MM: It wasn't like it is now where people can just work all the way through.

JJ: That's right. Work all the way through, that's right. And maybe go and stay out six weeks, something like that, and come right back in.

MM: I wonder, were the members of the school committee connected to the church as well? Was there an interrelationship?

JJ: Not necessarily.

MM: Okay.

JJ: Some of them were. Some were not. But they were widespread. It wasn't like we have now, districts or anything like that, but it was just certain people who were selected to serve.

MM: Go back again and tell us who selected them.

JJ: Well, usually the superintendent had some input and the principal was very instrumental, and said, "I'd like for Mr. Joe," or "I'd like for Sister Mary to be a member," a school committee member.

MM: Okay.

JJ: But most times, believe it or not, most times it was men, very seldom the ladies had any voice. That's the way it operated. That's the way it operated.

MM: What about deciding, in the case of schools, what Indian children were eligible to go to a particular school? Did the school committee have any say-so over that?

JJ: Very little. You know, Ms. Maynor, I really am not sure when the district lines were drawn up. It was just understood that all of the Prospect people, the Indians that were living in this Prospect community went to Prospect School. Usually that [highway] 710 was kind of the dividing line. That was a natural boundary. Then those kids went there. Oxendine which is above us up here, at that time it was called Cherokee, the students and families lived in that area, they went to Cherokee School. And the same thing was so in Magnolia, down in Fairmont, down in Green Grove, Fairgrove, the Magnolia section, the kids who surrounded the school. It was a long time to the best of my knowledge before any real district lines were drawn up like they are now.

MM: Right. Well, it's just interesting to note for people who aren't from here, who aren't familiar with the community, that everybody knew each other well enough to really know.

JJ: Right. To really know.

MM: I know it's hard because you've been in the middle of it, but if you could just tell us a little bit about how people knew. What was the way? How would you, for example, know whether someone belonged to the Prospect community?

JJ: Where he resided in his home. Where he lived. If he lived in that area, I knew he was supposed to go to Pembroke School. If he lived in this area like up here to Red Hill area, all those students we knew they were coming. Over to the Philadelphus



area—and by the way, that's one I didn't even mention. Philadelphus had a little school system over there, and that was white, and we didn't have any operation with them whatsoever. And all the kids around the Buie section, we didn't have any kids out of there. They had their own school over there, and it was all white. We didn't have many kids living out in these outlying areas. Once in a while a family lived there, but they'd have to make their way.

We had the buses go through, and the buses only picked up the Indian children and brought them to the Indiana school. The whites picked up the white kids and took them to the white school. Fortunately, we had one black family as long as I can remember lived less than two miles up the road up here at the old Red Springs road, and the bus came from Red Springs and got those kids, and took them over there as long as I can remember. That's the way it operated.

MM: It's interesting because a lot of what we're trying to figure out with this project is how that segregation system was enforced, because it seems so easy in some ways to be able to cross lines depending on your circumstances, but it sounds like in this community it wasn't an issue.

JJ: No, it wasn't. Now, when we really had an issue was when they drew up the district lines, and that was about the time, maybe '70s. Right there about '70s, when they drew the Maxton line up there, and they came all the way out to Red Hill Road. At Red Hill Road the kids on this side, let's say the east side, they came to Prospect and Oxendine schools. It was Indians, mostly Indians. The kids on the west side of that Red Hill Road, they had to go to Maxton. That's when we really had a little war, a little war so to speak.



The students, their parents resented it. They said, "I went to Prospect School. My children's going to Prospect School." We even had a little conflict with Oxendine students in Prospect—the parents, not the students, but the parents. The parent says, "I went to Prospect School. My children's going." And they were really living in the Oxendine School District. I remember when I became principal the superintendent asked us to go out and talk to these parents, and we did, the principal of Oxendine School and myself. We went out and talked to them. They told us point blank, "We're not going to Oxendine School. I went to Prospect School. My children are going to Prospect School. My grandchildren are going," and that's how dynamic they were. And it happened until eventually it went to court and finally got it established.

Still, just recently, the last couple of years, they've reorganized. Last year, I think, they redistricted. It took effect last year, and it's going to take effect, I understand, this school year even more than it did because you've got an influx especially of Oxendine School. Red Springs School came and got Indian kids within, well, right beside the school. You know the Oxendine School Road? Okay, Red Springs School District went to the school property line, dropped behind the school property line, came back and joined that right above the school property line, and everything from there west that was Red Springs. And they was as close to the school, those kids, as from here to the next house, a quarter of a mile. They had to go to Red Springs. Now that was awful. That was awful.

MM: What was the purpose?

JJ: That's the way the set up the district lines.

MM: Yeah? Why do you reckon they set them up that way?

JJ: I guess they wanted to keep the enrollment of their school up, and that's the way the district lines were drawn. It caused so much hard feelings. The Indians wanting to come—they didn't want to go to Red Springs, but they were just about forced to go to Red Springs. As I was telling you earlier, the same thing was true with Oxendine. They didn't want to go to Oxendine. They wanted to go to Prospect because their parents had. This is the kind of thing—it was not an easy battle. It was not an easy battle, but eventually I think it's somewhat resolved.

But now they've reopened because of the educational levels and federal compliances, and state compliances. If "X" school is not doing as well as "B" school, or "Y" school, then they have given the parents the prerogative, "Well, if you're not satisfied," and that's happened this year I understand, I've been told that, "If you're not satisfied with your child going to "Y" school, and you want to put him in "X" school, come down and we'll arrange it, and put him over there." I don't know whether that's the best thing from an educational standpoint. Maybe some. But then that creates a lot of animosity.

MM: Right. Right.

JJ: It does.

MM: Well I know that there was a time in the 50s, late 50s and early 60s where people were doing that.

JJ: Right.

MM: They were deciding not to go to the schools they had been assigned to. Tell us about that period of time.

JJ: Now, we had that. We had a few. There again, that's where a big law suit came about when that happened. I don't mind telling you. I had a classroom full of kids. Back then we had trailers. We had a classroom of about thirty-some kids that were assigned to Oxendine School. Their parent's says, "We're not going to let them go there. They're going to Prospect School." Now, we couldn't keep them off the bus, and I was principal at this time.

MM: So this was 72?

JJ: Seventy-two.

MM: Okay.

JJ: Okay, the bus picked them up, brought them to school. They went to the cafeteria like all the other students, but I could not enroll those kids in Prospect School. I could not give those kids books. If you want to enroll you're not going to get books. Did not furnish a teacher for them. Those kids sat there one whole year, and the only instruction they got, I took it on my part. I said, "I'm not going to let them stay there a whole year without some kind of guidance." Couldn't get books. I got a letter from the superintendent specifically spelling this out, and I told the parents. I read the letter to the students. It was the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade kids.

I says, "Now, you boys and girls understand this is the letter from the superintendent, and I must abide by what the superintendent says, or otherwise I won't have a job. That's how important this is. Now, you either do this or you get out." So I read it to them, and I told them that they had all the other privileges that any other kid had there. They went out and played. So I brought in a teacher's aide. I assigned a teacher's aide to that classroom. She stayed there the whole year. I said, "Take these kids to the

library. Film projectors. Film strips. Library books. Use them. However you see the interest of these kids, and you keep them moving. Keep them going." I said, "They're not going to run all over the campus. They're going to operate just like another class. You're their teacher, and you've got to carry this out, and I expect you to carry it out. You're the teacher, not on paper as far as the Board, but you're Prospect's teacher, and you're these kids' teacher, so I expect you to carry it out and be the teacher." We got along with it.

MM: How many kids?

JJ: Thirty-some kids.

MM: Okay. And these are parents that lived on the west side of Red Hill Road?

JJ: That's exactly right.

MM: Wow.

JJ: In fact, some of them lived this side, and they were supposed to go to Oxendine School, but they resented it. They're parents said, "I'm not going there."

MM: But Oxendine was an Indian school?

JJ: Oh, definitely, but just because tradition, that they went to Prospect School. Sometimes it's hard to break them. You know, Indian traditions are tough. They were tough. It wasn't always easy to deal with.

MM: How did the situation get resolved?

JJ: They went to the Board of Education and they had a law suit. They had a law suit about it, and finally some of those parents—and I talked with them so much. I said, "You're hurting nobody but your child and your grandchild. You're depriving that child of an education. Go on to Oxendine School because Oxendine School is a feeder school

to Prospect. Let them go there until the seventh grade or eighth grade, they're coming on to Prospect to the high school." I said, "You're not getting any education for them." I said, "You're hurting nobody but you and your child." So, they gradually ( ) in, and it evolved.

MM: So they sort of accepted it over time?

JJ: Yeah, they finally accepted.

MM: To what extent, because I know that this was at the same time that the county board was trying to send Blacks to Prospect, so were those two issues related?

JJ: No, not at that time. They were not. Now, we had at that time, I think I told you this before, that was not an issue because we only had about four black kids that was coming at that time, and about four or five white was coming at that time. That particular issue was not interwoven or related anything to the Blacks or the whites. That didn't really happen until they brought about the greater district areas and began to force the integration. That's when that developed, when they started forcing.

MM: Let's talk about that time period then. About what year then are we talking about?

JJ: That had to be in the seventy—let's see, 64, 65, 66—That was in the 70s when that really evolved.

MM: Okay.

JJ: And the whites didn't want to come. We had some whites from Oxendine. We had some whites from the Philadelphus area over there, in the Buie section there. Those kids, they came to school here because they drew the district lines, and it so happened it went out that way and brought them. But that wasn't near as bad as later

when things really—they began to put all force on, and you've got to adhere to the district lines. That's when the Board of Education really got it, and they said to the schools, "You shall not, you will not enroll a kid outside of your school district." That's when it really came to the surface, and the parents then had to go down to the Board of Education and deal with them, not the principal. ( ). They had guidelines, and parents knew.

Guidelines. "We can't go to the principal now. It's out of his hands. We've got to go to the Board of Education." That's when they had the ruckus with the kids, and the Board of Education had to deal with that, and the individual schools didn't have to do nothing.

MM: Now the last time we were talking about Mr. Danford and the circumstances— Why don't we talk for a minute about your working relationship with him when he was principal during the 60s, and then moving into the circumstances around his resignation and you taking over, mostly that story that you told me last time.

JJ: Oh, yes. This was when really integration began to bloom so to speak. I was assistant principal. Mr. Danford was the principal at that particular time. That was in the 70s. The Indian people of Prospect community resented strongly having any black students to come to Prospect School. Mr. Danford being the principal made a commitment, and that was his decision, and that was even after the Federal Government decision on integrating, '64. He said, "Don't you worry. I'm not going to have any Black kids come to this school. They're not coming."

Well, Mr. Danford and I, our relationship was always superb. He was my superior, and I was loyal to my superior, and he knew that I supported him. But he and I, one-on-one, I said, "Mr. Danford," I said, "This is the Federal Government now. I don't believe that we're going to be able," and he just point blank told me. He said, "Yes,

they're not coming here as long as I'm principal." Well, I still had to be loyal to him. He was the principal. He made decisions, and I had to go along with them, and I didn't resent it. I said, "Okay, that's your decision," but I said, "I'm afraid it might not. You may have some problems coming back." So it really surfaced now. It really surfaced, opened in the fall of '71. They came, the law enforcement, and they had heard what was going to happen. The Black's has got to come. The government says they've got to come. The state says they've got to come. The county says they've got to come. Mr. Danford, the principal, says, "They're not coming."

[BOTH LAUGH.]

JJ: But anyway, it surfaced. That September morning—I believe it was September, but anyway of 71, and the law was here. The troopers was here, and everybody, all waiting, well from James' [Moore's] station all the way back the other way, and the streets were lined.

We got to school that morning, and everybody they came. Some of the Blacks came. They didn't want to come. They didn't want to come, but the law says, 'You gotta come. That's your designated school. You've got to go.' It happened, and it happened to be the time, power, force, but it didn't really get out of hand as far as any fighting, or any cutting, shooting. Nothing like that ever happened, but they were just forcing their way. They says, "We're going to school there. Irregardless we're going to school." The deputies didn't go and pick up anybody and put them in the van and take them back. They never did suffer that.

Mr. Danford, about ten o'clock that morning, he says, "I'm going to the Board of Education. I'm going to resign." I said, "Mr. Danford, please don't do that. Please."



"Oh," he says, "I'm going. I'm leaving this with you. I'm going to resign." I hated it because Mr. Danford was a good administrator. He was very strict. He was very strict. Discipline problems? We had no discipline problems. He was very strict, and the kids knew that, and the teachers. We all knew, and we was loyal to him. He was a good administrator, a good educator, but he went, and he didn't come back.

And I'll call names, Mr. Harbert Moore and Herman Dial, who is deceased. We met with him that afternoon down at Herman Dial's home. That's where Tara is living right now, she and her husband, and we pleaded with Mr. Danford, and he strongly rejected. He says, "Gentlemen, I've resigned. I'm not coming back. Your plea is of no avail." He says, "I'm not coming back now." Well, we stayed with him I know until about maybe three or four, almost sundown on that particular day. We left, and then Mr. Allen told me, "we're going to make you acting." He asked me in the next day. He called me to the Board of Education, and all the board members was there. Malcolm McLeod was Sheriff. He was there, and they asked me—.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE A

BEGINNING OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

MM: Okay, go ahead, acting principal.

JJ: They asked me would I accept the position as acting principal, and I told them, I says, "I have one request," and I would accept it on this, "that you give Mr. Danford two or three weeks to reconsider," because I felt that I could convince Mr. Danford to come back, plus with Mr. Harbert and Mr. Herman and myself dealing with him. Well, I had a relationship, and we all had a good relationship in the community.

And they says, "If that's your request, we'll honor that request, and effective today you will be acting principal of the school."

So I came on back to school, and we started trying to operate as a normal situation. We did. We got along real good. That's when I asked Mr. William C. Chavis. We called him Mr. Can. Everybody knew him as Mr. Can, William C. Chavis. I asked him would he assist me, be my assistant, and he said he would, so we established a good relationship, and it went on like that knowing that his was as temporary as mine was at that particular time and situation there. I said, "We don't know what will happen." Mr. Can was a history teacher at that time. Mr. Chavis, I should say. I'm using everyday terminology.

MM: That's all right.

JJ: I use it so much. But, anyway, he said he would. I said, "We don't know what's going to happen with Mr. Dial," and went on. After Mr. Allen asked me to serve, said, "When's Mr. Dial coming back, Mr. Jones?" I said, "Mr. Allen, we' working on it. Give us another few days on it." So Mr. Allen was very lenient. He went the limit, beyond the limit, because I wasn't pushing because at that particular time I wasn't really anxious about being the principal. I was happy doing what I was doing, and then we were getting along real good, had a good relationship. Everything was just going great as far as I was concerned.

But he refused, and he still refused. He kept refusing, never would accept, so eventually he says we got to do it, so then they made me a principal, certified me as principal. And I told Mr. Chavis, I said, "Well, Mr. Can, it kind of looks like I'm going to be the principal according to the Board of Education, and I want you to be my

assistant.” So I accepted the principal’s position, and Mr. Can accepted the assistant principal’s position.

Then shortly after that, sometime later in the year, Mr. Allen told me, he says, “Mr. Jones, now, you’re going to have to go get your Masters degree.” I didn’t have a Masters degree. That’s a requirement to be a principal, to have a Masters degree. He asked me was I willing to do that. I said, “Well, I’ll give it a shot.” I was fifty years old at that time, to be going to school. I hadn’t been to school for years, to renew my certificate, so I told him I would. So that was my adventure.

So then, spring of 72 I enrolled at East Carolina, and I went there for two sessions that summer, and then went the fall semester and even the spring semester. I’d go at night, drive back and forth on Tuesdays and Thursday nights.

MM: That’s a lot of work.

JJ: Yeah, about a three hour drive each way. That’s the way we did it, and we got along well. That was another great experience for me, especially that summer, spring, summer of 72. I got along great, and I was the only Native American at that campus. That’s right. We had a good time. We got along real good.

MM: During this time how many white and Black students were there at Prospect?

JJ: The most I ever had during my whole tenure there, it was either ten whites—I want to think it was ten whites—maybe it was ten Blacks and eleven whites. To my knowledge we’ve never had any more than that. I don’t know how many’s out there this time, but during my whole tenure, thirteen years I was principal, that was the highest number we ever had.

MM: And about how big was the student body total?

JJ: Almost eleven hundred.

MM: So a lot of ruckus over just a few.

JJ: Oh, yeah. Eleven hundred kids. We had a four hundred-enrollment high school, K-12. All rode the bus together, kindergartners and twelfth graders rode the bus.

MM: Okay. So elementary and high school was about eleven hundred?

JJ: Right.

MM: And out of that you had twenty-one, twenty-two non-Indian students?

JJ: Exactly right.

MM: That's amazing.

[BOTH LAUGH.]

JJ: It is. It is. That's right.

MM: That is amazing.

JJ: And I believe the things, the statements I've made is very factual, because I've tried not to edit nor delete. I've tried to be very factual with the information that I've shared with you.

MM: What was your relationship like with the school board at the time?

JJ: I didn't have a direct relationship with them at that time because being a teacher you had no relationship. But after that, and Mr. Harry West, he was a board member at that time, I got to know them and we established, I think, a very good relationship with the board members. Back then Mr. Harry West was the only Native American we had on the board. That's right.

MM: I had understood that there weren't any before double voting was broken, but that's not true?

JJ: It wasn't widespread. I won't say yes to that or no, but Mr. Harry I believe was the first Indian board. You daddy could probably tell you, verify that. He could tell.

MM: Do you feel like double voting had an impact on your school and on the relationship with the school board?

JJ: Yeah.

MM: How?

JJ: Exactly right. It eliminated some of the feelings that they had, that existed on a county-wide level, because they helped make the decisions for the Indian schools, and yet Red Springs could vote on issues that involved us. Lumberton could vote on issues. Fairmont could vote on issues. Rowland could vote on issues, and Maxton.

I think I shared this with you. Maxton, the whole city school system didn't have but fourteen hundred kids in all three schools. They had a primary, and a middle school, and a high school. They only had fourteen [hundred] kids, and they had superintendent. They had three principals. They had assistant superintendents. I don't know how many staff members. I won't even try to go into that, and all the extra help, and here I was with eleven hundred kids with one principal and one assistant. And one janitor and two aides, ma'am.

MM: My gosh.

JJ: That's the ( ). Exactly right. That's all we had.

MM: Do you feel like that changed after the double voting system changed?

JJ: Yeah, it did change. But at least we could make our vote, and we could get the people made that we felt was best to represent us, and they couldn't vote to have input in it. Yeah, that was good. That was one of the greatest things to happen, eliminated double voting.

MM: What about politics in Prospect, in and around Prospect, in the 1960s. You know Mr. Harbert was telling me some things about the unified club and activities that they would do.

JJ: And that club, the United Club of Prospect, its inception was 1955, and we've kind of got it not political now, but Mr. Lester Bullard was instrumental. He was the master of this, a great politician.

Malcolm McLeod was the sheriff. We tried to get some deputies up in this community, and Mr. Lester asked me to go down and talk to the sheriff. I told him I would, and I went down, and I asked them, I said, "Mr. McLeod, sheriff, we'd like to have a deputy from the Prospect community, an Indian, a Native American Deputy." He told me point blank, he said, "No, no way." And that was it. He just said point blank, and that was it. No ifs, ands, and buts.

MM: What reason did he give?

JJ: No reason. He said, "No, can't do it." He said, "I can't do it," and that was it. And that, you know, naturally began to mushroom. It began to grow because we wanted to do something. We wanted some change here. We're going to do something. We're going to get a deputy up in this area. I feel like each community needs somebody close by, representation, inclusiveness.

MM: Right.

JJ: This is what is good.

MM: Right. That what it seems like what a lot of Indians were fighting for at that time.

JJ: That's exactly right, trying to bring about a greater unity on a county level, not just Prospect. We weren't just trying to uplift Prospect and omit everybody else. We wanted to grow together. That's the important thing, grow together.

MM: Let me see. There was another thing that that reminded me of. What was it? Well, I'll think of it, but I had another question about that time period where Blacks and whites began to come to the school. What was the racial composition of the teachers at Prospect?

JJ: Okay. I'm trying to think. Was there a Black teacher under Mr. Danford's administration? I don't think there was, but shortly after that I got one, two, three, four. I know that during my tenure as principal I hired four Black teachers, and I'm trying to think how many white teachers.

I got Patsy MacArthur, John MacArthur's son's wife. She was one that I wanted to hire, and I asked Mr. Allen. He told me, "Mr. Jones," he says, "you'll probably have trouble with that, hiring her." Because at that time the politics in the Oxendine community, the MacArthurs they were whites, and they were in control and everything. He said, "Do you think that Prospect would accept that?" I said, "Mr. Allen, I believe I can handle that," and I got her, and he said, "Okay, go ahead."

She came in, and she was s jewel. She was a white teacher, but I got her in here in industrial arts. That's where she came in, started teaching industrial arts. The kids loved her. She mingled. She'd mingle with them, and she got along so well. Then I hired two,



I hired a white girl. She's still up there now. I can't even think of her name now. It's been so long. Let's see, how many? I'm trying to think how many. I believe it was only three. I only had about three white teachers in all.

MM: So four Black teachers and three white teachers?

JJ: I think that's right.

MM: And how did the parents respond to those?

JJ: Fine. It made them blend right in. No problem. No problem.

MM: The Black teachers as well?

JJ: Yeah, the Black teachers as well.

MM: That's interesting. Why would there be so many ruffled feathers about students going there but not teachers, you reckon?

JJ: I don't know. I don't know.

MM: Was it Indian only teachers under Mr. Danford?

JJ: Pardon?

MM: Was it only Indian teachers under Mr. Danford?

JJ: I don't believe Mr. Danford had any—. If it was, he didn't have but one Black, maybe one Black. I'm trying to think if there was a white teacher. There may have been. Yes, there was one white teacher. What's that girl's name? Yeah that's right. Now that I recall back I can see. I believe there was three white teachers I had. Three white teachers, yeah.

MM: Okay.

JJ: Three white teachers, but they all came in, hard workers. Got along real well.

MM: So the racial tensions didn't really exist on the teacher level?

JJ: No, on the teacher level out here? No, never.

MM: What about between the students?

JJ: No. No. Sure didn't.

MM: Well, I just wonder, so what do you attribute all of the passion over it? You know what I mean? I'm just thinking about it again, someone listening to this tape who's not familiar with the community, maybe who knows a little bit about this time period, but if there's so few students that we're talking about, there were no teachers, there were not problems with teachers of other races coming into the community. There's this issue of tradition, I guess, but tell us. So you look at it objectively, and it doesn't seem like well, there would be a big deal here, but it was a big deal. Can you sort of tell us a little bit about—?

JJ: You know, some of those things I'm not able. I don't want to try to point out maybe some things that are not really factual issues, but it seemed that we believed in work at Prospect School. I think this was one of the things, and we believed in discipline at Prospect School. That's two things, Miss Maynor, that I think kept us abreast, and kept us motivated, and kept us going, and that eliminated a lot of other frivolous things. When the parents would come I'd say, "Listen, this teacher—."

Yes, there was another teacher that came to my mind. She's down the Berry section way down below Lumberton. She came up there. She's still surviving. I remember her too. These things are coming back. So actually there was four whites. Yeah. Yeah. It might end up at five.

But anyway, there was one thing going back, good hard work and discipline.

Those two things kept Prospect aboard, kept us going, kept us making, if I may say,

progress. That was the main objective. You come to school to get an education. You don't come to school to put on no acts. You come to school to get an education, and if you come you're expected to do your homework. And if you don't do your homework, boy—and the parents knew this. In the PTA I told the parents, I told them. They knew. I lived here all my life, and I taught out there, and they knew if a kid came to my classroom—Miss Maynor, I'm not boasting but any means. I'm just being factual. They knew if a kid came to a classroom and didn't have his homework, he had had a bad day. The paddle was going to go. He knew that. The parents knew that. They knew that. They said, "You'd better not go in his class unless you got your homework." They knew that.

And I instilled that in the teachers. I said, "I expect you to work. I expect you to control your class. You don't send any kids to my office. You discipline. If I have to go to the board," I said, "I'll lead you. If you've got to go to court, I'll go with you, and I'll tell them, 'Listen, this is the policy we have here for education, not no action. If it takes disciplinary action we're going to air it out.'" And I believe this is the thing that kept a lot of parents, and they accepted this, they knew this, and they had no objection as long as their kids was being taught, and as long as their kids was being disciplined.

And most of the parents, I'd say ninety, ninety-five percent of the parents believed in good, strong discipline. And they supported. I think this is one of the things that kept the animosity, the ill-will feeling, or the little frivolous things that surfaced, that's the two things that I figure that was instrumental in making it go smooth. I really do.

MM: It sounds like there's a lot of consistency, and that the expectations were the same for everybody.

JJ: That's right. Exactly right. That's right. And those kids knew it. I don't mind telling you. And the teachers knew it, "Hey, I expect you to work."

MM: Right. There's one other thing I want to ask you about that time period, and then I want to move forward a little bit to the 1980s and your thoughts about the mergers of the high schools and then of the whole system, but I want to ask about the Tuscaroras in the 70s, what your impressions were of that movement? Were they involved in the goings on at Prospect School?

JJ: Yes, right.

MM: How?

JJ: The Tuscaroras over at Maxton in the Red Hill section, that's where they are, and right up here on the Kever Road, but the Red Hill was more active. They were Tuscaroras, and the Tuscaroras were part of the people who were supposed to go to Oxendine School. And they said, "We're not going to Oxendine School. We're not going to Maxton School." They said, "We're not going to Maxton School." Those Tuscaroras, that's when they extended the district lines over to Red Hill. They said, "We're not going to Maxton." And most of them didn't go. They didn't go. Maybe one or two of them. I'm not sure. I won't put the number on it, but they didn't go.

They said, "We won't even go to school. We won't even go to school. We're not sending them to school." We didn't have a truant officer back then to go out and enforce truancy. Maybe because of the situation the Native Americans, if they don't get an education maybe that's all right. They make their own decision. And that's the sad part. If Indians fail to get an education they're hurting nobody but us. We're hurting ourselves

if we don't get an education. That's the thing. That was how Tuscarora were dealing with the situation.

MM: So many of those parents who were holding their kids out of Oxendine then were Tuscarora parents?

JJ: They certainly were.

MM: Do you think that when they took on that identity as Tuscaroras, had that group of folks always had that, or was that part of their, you know what I mean, resistance to the situation?

JJ: I think they kept a low profile until maybe that period of time, and they just spurt up suddenly up here. But they kept it low. They had their little gatherings though, but it wasn't wide spread. It was just a very few. And they didn't. They'd go ahead and go to school somewhat, but they didn't boast out, maybe one or two would say, "I'm a Tuscarora," or something like this. It didn't get out of hand. It didn't raise to that much other than that one time, and when all of that uproar was that opening day, the Tuscaroras was right in the midst of that. They were in the midst of that.

MM: And they were claiming themselves as Tuscaroras?

JJ: Oh they were claiming. That's right.

MM: Did that create some opposition or some conflict?

JJ: Yeah. Um-hum. It did.

MM: What kind of conflict?

JJ: Well, I'd rather not even go into that issue part of it. I just like to omit.

That's one little tiny bit I'd like to omit and not even share that with you.

MM: I can understand that. Okay. Well, let's talk about the 1980s. Were you principal? Let me see, I guess you retired when they merged the high schools?

JJ: No, I retired one year after.

MM: One year after that. Okay. So tell us then about leading up to the merging the high schools. Why was that decision made, and who made it?

JJ: Well, I think the superintendent and some of the board members was instrumental in bringing this about. There had been a study, so I understand, made of the conditions of Pembroke, Prospect, and Maxton. This is the time when we had eliminated all of the city unit. It was all under one big umbrella then, all big umbrella now.

Our superintendent, he was the honcho. So they said, "Well, we're going to see if we can change things." One of the issues was that they claimed the Prospect curriculum was not large enough to equip our students and to get our students to the level that they should be to advance their education, going into college and what have you.

Maxton at that time it was a run down school. Their physical plant was so awful. I never did go inside of Maxton school. Never been inside of one of them. One time I went to the principal's office at the high school there, Mr. Graham, but as far as going in the classrooms, I never visited there. Not that I had anything against them, with the principal, but I just didn't visit the sites.

They claimed that to rebuild that school would be so expensive they couldn't do it from a financial standpoint. They said, "Well, let's put them all together." Let's merge, consolidate, whichever term you feel is appropriate.

They had public hearings on them, and when they came to Prospect, the public hearing, there was opposition, strong opposition, of them doing this. James Moore, he

would be another one if you wanted to interview him sometime, he was against it. I was against it, and there were a few more folks against it. We spoke up that night. We felt like this is not the best thing. And I told you about how Mr. Swett, and how I felt about Prospect. I shared that with you earlier.

MM: Tell us that again because I didn't get that on tape last time. You're talking about Mr. Purnell Swett.

JJ: Mr. Purnell Swett.

MM: The first Indian school superintendent.

JJ: Right. Right. So he came, and he asked me my feelings about it. I was not in favor of it, and I asked him specifically. I said, "Now, Mr. Swett, I want to know how this is going to help Prospect School, individually. Not Pembroke. Not Maxton. How will it help Prospect?" So Mr. Swett, he says, "It won't help Prospect." Well, I said, "Mr. Swett," and we were of good humor, I said, "I'm kind of prejudiced and biased. I want Prospect to come out the best." And he kind of smiled, but he says, "It won't." I said, "You don't want me to support something that's not going to help Prospect." He smiled, and walked away, and that was the end of that.

It finally came, but the big issue, I think, was that Prospect, their curriculum was not enough to justify it, but we had all the goods right there. I said, "Look at the people we've got that's come out of Prospect. We've got the lawyers. We've got the doctors. We've got the plant managers that's come right out of Prospect School with this little curriculum."

And I attribute this to the fact that our teachers, most of the teachers knew every parent. And I'm not boasting again on this, and I hope this won't sound like I'm



boasting. But I could walk in the classrooms, and I could name ninety percent of those kids' parents, because I taught, I taught a lot of their parents. If a problem surfaced, I said, "Do you want me to talk to your mother and daddy about you?" "No, Mr. Jones. No." That eliminated the discipline right there, and they knew what was expected. Those parents knew, the ones that I taught, they knew what I expected. That was the end of it.

This is the thing, but it seemed that the power was to have a big school, big number. And I'm sorry to say, that it hasn't gelled in my opinion. It hasn't gelled. I'm going to die pretty soon, and this would be one of my greatest desires, that it would gel. But I'm afraid, I doubt it. I hope you live to see it. I hope you'll be able to sit down and talk to Jim. He said it wouldn't, but he said it has gone on and it has become a reality. I hope it will. I hope it will, but I doubt seriously. And I think, I don't think I know, it's left some marks from crossing the lines, from racial issues, that's not left Prospect community happy.

MM: So it hasn't benefited Prospect? What do you think has been the impact on the kids that live here and have to go down to Purnell Swett High School?

JJ: Detrimental. They don't feel like they belong. That's right.

MM: Is there something you feel like could be done to change that situation?

JJ: I've been asked that question so many times. I don't know if there is anything that you could put your finger on that would bring an instant change, but I guess if we keep working at it, don't give up, have hope and faith, keep striving.

One of the big issues right now is our kids. And I don't know how Prospect compares to others, but I know we got some of them dropping out. The drop out rate is

something to think about. I understand they lose four hundred kids over there. That's sad. That's sad.

If they could eliminate that, that would be a great asset. And they're doing, I understand, everything literally possible, if I must use this everyday language, to try to eradicate it. They've got after schools, Saturday schools, evening schools, everything to try to motivate them to keep them going. But for some reason they fall by the wayside. That's one of the issues. If they could eliminate that, and I understand they're spending big bucks to try to eradicate it, but to no avail. That one of the things.

And then, I hate to say it, but when they went over there—I don't even want to say that—the races, the Blacks and the girls and the boys band together. That's not being good to our kids. It's not being good. And the parents are upset about it, and this kind of thing. They go with it. What did you expect? And there's animosity just about every day in the halls. The Blacks say the least little thing and it sparks. It's ready to explode instantly from what I've been told. I haven't been over there. I don't know. I guess Mr. Wes [the principal] is doing the best he possibly can, but it's just before happening. A bomb just set to explode. That's sad. That's sad.

MM: It feels like especially like after all the work that's been done.

JJ: That's right, to try to prevent it. But you live under that pressure. And I'm sure those teachers live there expecting that anything could happen—massive fight in the halls. This kind of thing. I hope it don't. Teachers don't have to live every day, every minute of their lives there might be a gun and start shooting in there. This is the kind of thing. But all of what's happened all around, naturally. That's in the back [of their

minds] right there. They think about it. How many more kids will get upset if you dismiss them from school, and come in there, walk in AK47?

MM: I hope not.

JJ: I hope not, too. That's the thing. My, my, my, my. It something we never thought of to think of like that. We didn't have that problem at Prospect. The kids didn't even have weapons. And I told those boys, the first day of school, I'd tell those kids, high school, "If you bring a weapon to school, by mistake," being out on the farm those boys have knives and things, I said, "You go to Mr. Can's office, you give it to him." And I says, "That after noon he'll give it back to you. Just don't bring it." Now I said, "If you bring it, we're going to get it, take it, confiscate it." But I said, "Now, if we catch you during the middle of the day with it, and somebody will tell you've got it, we're going to get it." And I said, "I'll keep it. I love to fish. That will be my fishing knife." And I talked just in that tone. They knew that. That's the way we operated, and we didn't have no major problems. Those kids knew. They knew what to expect, and we pre-warned them. I'm telling you the first day. You can't say, "Well, I didn't know."

I'd meet with the whole high school the first day. Everybody knew what was expected at high school. That's the place you spent more of your time and things could get out of hand. You expected disputes, disruptions and things of that nature, but that's what it all was. And the little mini-fights we had there, most of the time it was two girls fighting over a boy. [JJ laughs.] Maybe I shouldn't have even said that. But that's little things like that. That's it.

MM: It's interesting that some people say, "Well, we'll look at all the ways that children have benefited from greater access and inclusion in the school system," but then

on the other hand there's this side of it where the kids from Prospect feel like they don't belong, they're going to be harmed. Is that your feeling?

JJ: That's exactly right. That's right. We've got some that's going on. Someone has said that the better ones is going to progress in spite of it. That's a statement that's used quite often. Then you've got the upper, the elites. They're going to go. They're going to get it somewhere. But then you've got a group in there that's got to deal with it. Then these ones on the bottom, you've got to do everything you can to keep them in.

Those kids that came from Oxendine School that came to Prospect, this was my greater absentee area. I knew this, and I worked with this. High school attendance, the kids from Oxendine they'd stay out up there for little frivolous things. I had to prod them on, "I expect you to be in school," and this kind of thing.

Okay, over there, these teachers they don't know these parents. They don't know their parents. Well, I knew your parents, and I could tell somebody else in the class, "I expect you to kind of keep him in school," and they'd say, "I'll call their parents." That's the percentage you're losing. That's the percentage that drop out right there.

And then this other, you've got to do what you can with the middle section. These up here, you just keep them motivated, and they're going to go on. They're going to go on. But when you start losing four hundred kids, that's a bunch of kids out of sixteen-plus hundred.

MM: Yeah. Well, just out of curiosity, what was the drop out rate like when Prospect High School existed?

JJ: I daren't say we had a three percent drop out.

MM: And now it's what? Nine or something? Six or nine.

JJ: Probably. Yeah.

MM: It sounds like it makes a big difference. That's about all the questions I have. Now, what else do you feel like you'd want to say that I've left out?

JJ: I think you've covered it from an educational standpoint and a community standpoint. I think you've been very inclusive. I really do.

MM: Okay. Yeah, because I wanted to try to get at the relationship between the school and the community. That seems like something that in some ways makes Indian education, maybe not unique is the right word, but it definitely defines it.

JJ: Right.

MM: It definitely helps you to understand it if you understand that relationship. Okay.

JJ: And I want to think that maybe we're making progress with all the things that's happening now, especially as I look at our little capital now there [Pembroke]. We've got a new town office. We're getting a big Wal-Mart coming in, and another big Kerr Drugs is there. I understand some more new things are supposed to.

It's beginning to look like a university town, and that's what I want to see, exemplify the university image. This is a university town. Been that way since eighteen— something like that. It's been a long time coming, but it looks like we've moving ahead by leaps and bounds, and I'm so happy. I'm so happy for it. I would like to see them eventually get 10,000 students, and maybe one day have a football team. You know, we had a football team when I was there.

MM: Right, right. Well Jesse Oxendine, you know my cousin, was big on the football team, and there was a lot of people.

JJ: Right. Quarterback. He was a quarterback. Curt Locklear played on that team, you know. And big Steven Lowry, I believe he's connected in your family somewhere.

MM: Um-hum.

JJ: Okay, he was on the team. Warren Carter. In fact, I was even on the football team.

MM: Were you?

JJ: Yeah. I like to say I was on the baseball team. Joe Sampson, the coach. We had a pretty good baseball team, too. Tom Oxendine.

MM: Yeah, lots of stories about him.

JJ: That's right. I remember the day he left school. Tried to get me to go with him. The first time he left school going to Lumberton. ( ). He says, "Come and go with me." I said, "I don't believe I will." Sometimes I think about that. He looked at it. He got through, you know. He was one of the ones that came back. So many of them didn't. Wasn't as fortunate. Wasn't as fortunate.

MM: That's the truth.

JJ: A lot of them went down in the Pacific, and Mediterranean, and those places. Pshew. Gosh. But he was fortunate. I guess the good Lord as on his side of the rail. He came from that kind of a home. And I definitely think this is the thing.

MM: Yeah, that makes a big difference.

JJ: It makes a big difference. And I said all the time, I told my wife, and I told my son, prayers from people are the reason they were able to get back.

MM: Um-hum.

JJ: He had a hand up there shielding himself, and did it to all of them for their prayers.

MM: Do you want to talk a little bit, one thing I didn't really ask you about, I didn't really ask you about your parents.

JJ: Okay.

MM: And your household, and their value on education. A lot of people trace it back to their parents.

JJ: This is my mother and my father.

MM: They're cute.

JJ: My mother, you heard of Oakley McMillan?

MM: Yes.

JJ: That's her father.

MM: Okay.

JJ: Her name was Rosie Belle McMillan.

MM: Rosie Belle.

JJ: And she was a big, big lady. And that was my father. He was a Jones, McKinley Jones.

MM: My mother grew up with some of Oakley's children and grandchildren.

JJ: I know that. That's right. My mother came from a two family. She was the only daughter, and Lofty McMillan was her brother. That was the size of the family. And my grand daddy, he was one of the big land owners in the area. In fact this land that we're residing on now was his. He had farms over in the Red Banks area over there. And my father, his father Elijah Jones, believe it or not, my mother and father, the only



thing that separated them when they were little boys and girls was a fence just like you see right out there. Their lands joined. Their houses was close together, a hundred yards apart. That's how close their land was. My grandfather and my grandmother on both sides had their lands joined right there on Red Banks, at this edge of Red Banks.

And my dad—see, my mother died at thirty-nine and passed away, and I was just finishing high school, but my dad wanted me to go to school, and when I came back [from the war] my dad remarried. He married Zelma Sampson. I came back, and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but she came back, and she says, "I want you to go to finish your education." And she ( ) my dad too ( ), and I went.

And that's where I picked up right there, and I got involved in education. I've enjoyed it. I have no regrets about my education and career. It's been really good. I've enjoyed it. I worked, but I enjoyed. I worked, and I enjoyed it, and I farmed the whole time this little farm here.

That lady that you see around there, while I was gone she'd take over. I went to East Carolina that summer, she ran that tractor and plowed this farm. That's right. And she's been my life's support from day one. We got married after I came back from service. In fact, we were married when I started back to college, and she's stuck with me through thick and thin. Yes, she's been a great supporter. A great supporter. But my dad really, and Mamma Zel, and your daddy ( ), and she encouraged me. Highly encouraged me. "Go back to school. Go back to school." And chances are if they hadn't kept perking, I probably wouldn't have gone back in there.

MM: Yeah. Well, you need that influence.

JJ: Definitely. Definitely, and I've tried to instill that in our kids. "Go on, get your education." All three of them finished at Pembroke, and I'm proud of that. And I told you, we've got a son at Purnell Swett.

MM: No. He's a teacher there?

JJ: He's a teacher. He's teaching in the science department.

MM: Okay.

JJ: James Jones. Jimmy, we call him Jimmy. He and Jimmy Goins—who's that tribal chief right now? Three musketeers they were always called in school.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

TRANSCRIBED BY SHARON CAUGHILL, DECEMBER, 2003.