

TRANSCRIPT—FRANCESINA JACKSON AND CHARLINE REGISTER

Interviewees: FRANCESINA JACKSON AND CHARLINE REGISTER
Interviewer: Bob Gilgor
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[NOTE: TAPES ARE MISLABELED!!!! THE RIGHT LABEL IS ON THE WRONG TAPE]

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

BOB GILGOR: This is Bob Gilgor and I'm interviewing Mrs. Francine Jackson at her home at 627 Brookview Drive in Chapel Hill on December the 13th in the year 2000.

Good evening, Fran, how are you?

FRANCESINA JACKSON: I'm fine.

BG: I'm used to doing these in the mornings so this is a twist for me to say good evening. I'd like to start the interview by asking you a broad question. You can take off with it and go where you will for as long as you want to go. What I would like to know is what it was like for you growing up in Chapel Hill.

FJ: That is a broad question. My early years in Chapel Hill, I felt a sense of security. I grew up on Graham Street, both South Graham and North Graham. My parents live on North Graham. They lived on North Graham when I was young and they still do. I have an aunt and uncle who live on South Graham. So between the two houses, I grew up in that neighborhood.

As I said I felt a sense of security. My world revolved around the black community. We had black churches. There were some black businesses, small and very few but--. We also traveled to Durham quite a bit and there were quite a few African-American businesses there.

And to be honest with you I knew very little about white people until about age thirteen, when we actually integrated the schools. I mean I saw white people, and people talked about white people, but I never paid much attention. I never thought that there was much difference. I just don't recall ever thinking

about racial differences until about age thirteen. And at that time I was aware that there were a couple of people, African-American students, who integrated the high school.

BG: Can I stop you and go back to your family? We'll get into integration in a bit. I'd like to learn more about what your mother and father were like and whether you had a lot of family interaction, strong family circle, or whether your family was not with a lot of aunts and uncles and ().

FJ: Well in terms of numbers our family is fairly small, especially the family here in Chapel Hill. But in spite of the small numbers, we were a very - family. What can I say but that I knew all my relatives? We were often together a lot. We all belonged to the same church. We go to the church.

BG: Saint ()?

FJ: No. My family went to Second Baptist at that time. My aunt played the piano. She was the church pianist. My father sang in the choir. And of my extended aunts and uncles—they were actually great aunts and uncles—all attended the church. They were ushers and fairly active in the church. That was pretty much our existence. We went to Northside elementary school.

BG: Your brothers and sisters?

FJ: I have two sisters, two younger sisters: Alethia, who is about two years younger than I am, and Charlie, who is five years younger than I am. We were fairly inventive kids. Fortunately, I think, we were not reared on television a whole lot so we invented a lot of games and we created our own toys a lot. I never thought that we were poor [laughs]. Comparatively speaking, we were ok, we were relatively all right within our own community. My uncle worked at the post office. My aunt worked at North Carolina Mutual, so in some respects that was considered middle class. My mother and father—my mom, she worked for whites here in this neighborhood () and my father is a construction worker. "Was"—they're both retired now. In spite of, I still felt that comparatively speaking we were—[doorbell rings; tape stops].

BG: Excuse me but we have a second person here to interview, and that's Charleen Register, the younger sister of Fran. And she's going to join in with the interview.

FJ: As I was saying, growing up I felt safe. We had a small-knit community. Very little interaction with whites—actually with any other cultural group that I can think of. I do recall there being African-American businesses in Chapel Hill, and just a fairly tight-knit community. The churches were very active,

and people in my community were very involved in the churches. So those were just some of the main things that I can recall. Can you recall anything from your childhood?

CHARLENE REGISTER: I don't really have anything to add to that. We had the Christmas program every year. We had little bags of () and candy every year. And we had an Easter program every year.

BG: So your life revolved around Northside, around the black community. What about your shopping? Did you shop at white stores, black stores, both?

FJ: Well, actually, for shopping, we did shop at a white store for groceries, Colonial Grocery Store, on the corner of what is now Graham and Franklin. But for clothing we went to Durham. But we still shopped in white stores when we went to Durham.

BG: You have a funny look on your face when you say that. And I just wonder, did you feel that you weren't treated fairly?

FJ: I honestly cannot recall. I just remember that being a big treat, to drive to Durham and to shop at some of the stores there. I think we did not shop here in Chapel Hill because typically and even today I think Chapel Hill just does not have good shopping. Maybe they're catering to a different group of people. But I do recall that we handled a lot of business in Durham. I can't remember banking. But I know that we had a lot of –North Carolina Mutual, we had our insurance at Mutual.

CR: Most blacks did.

FJ: And dad had friends in Durham. So with my parents, we'd travel back and forth. So Durham was really also an extension of our neighborhood to an extent.

BG: You had started to talk about going to school at Northside. Can you tell me what the school was like?

FJ: Oh, Northside. By the time I got to Northside, it was a fairly old building in terms of the building. We had all African-American teachers. We had a black principal, who recently died, James Peace. And Miss Frances Hargraves, whom you should have heard of. She's a legend. She's a legend in this town. She did teach the special ed kids. I just recall school as being a very pleasant experience for the most part.

We did have tracking even in a segregated environment. We had tracking. Tracking means that you group students based on perceived ability levels. For the most part, for most of my elementary years I was in—we did not sugar coat it, we had A Group, B Group, C Group—I was in the A Group. But I had a problem with my leg. And I was out of school for six months. And so when I returned to school—that's the one thing I recall about elementary school as being very traumatic—I was placed in the B Group. And I was really upset about that, for a long time. But one positive outcome of that experience is that I made friends with some people that I am friends with today. That was one positive outcome. That's one thing I remember about Northside.

I remember that we had plays at Northside. We—we also had fights after school [laughs].

BG: Girls, or was it just the boys?

FJ: Oh, girls.

CR: What I think is interesting about some of what you said—and I was reflecting on my own experience—is that some of the friends that I have today were people that were in first and second grade with me. Even after college and jobs and everything else, some of my remaining friends are friends that I had from first and second grade. Either because of close proximity, we kept in contact, or because of those long-term relationships that you have over the years. Or the families, you grew up together. I'm not sure what it is, but I think that's interesting.

BG: Tell me about the teachers. What did you think of the teachers? Were they part of the community? Were they friends with your parents?

FJ: Well the teachers were part of the community, but we also had a social hierarchy. The teachers for the most part were not necessarily friends with my parents. We did have teachers who lived on our street. Mr. and Mrs. McDougle lived on our street. I don't think it was a matter that they did not mingle socially, but I know that they were friendly with my parents. My parent respected them.

The main thing that I can recall when I think about the teachers is a level of respect. I mean I really respected those teachers. I thought that they were just remarkable people. And when I was growing up, because of my problems with my leg, two doors down there was a teacher who roomed with a family. And she would take me to school everyday—Miss Joyner (). So I had an opportunity to see a real live teacher up close. I saw her as a human being. And I'll never forget: she would play the radio, going to

school, and she would play some jazz and rock 'n' roll, and I kind of thought, "Now this is the coolest thing in the world." You're really making me think about some things from a long time ago!

And also, when we were growing up, there were teachers and librarians who roomed with my grandmother. And so we had a chance to interact—Miss Turner, the librarian. This is a bit long ago.

There was a bit of tough love. They were stern people some times. But they demanded and expected us to do well. Those are the main things that I can remember about teachers. I think there was a certain level of aloofness, but I think for the most part—you almost felt like family. I felt secure. I felt that they were not going to do me any harm. And even if they were a little bit stern with me, even if they chastised me for whatever reason, I never felt, "This person just does not like me." I felt that this person had my best interest at heart. And I saw those teachers, particularly those from Chapel Hill—I mean Lincoln—they literally seemed to work around the clock. They really, really worked with those students.

And I just felt—well I did not go to Lincoln. On Christmas they had those community parades. Lincoln High had the reputation of having one of the best football teams in the State. And the best band. And I just remember the band and the—and all the excitement and the pride—just the good feelings about all that. I never experienced that at Chapel Hill High.

But anyway let's see—anything else about the teachers? I just remember them for the most part being concerned with my well being. Some were warmer than others. Some were very aloof. For the most part I did not feel that they were not concerned with me doing well and doing what I should do and what they thought I should do.

BG: You mentioned a hierarchy. I didn't understand what you meant by that.

FJ: A social hierarchy. In any community, people who were well educated or—well, mostly it was education that was a dividing line. I think sometimes they felt because they had to interact with people on a professional level, they may not have wanted to socialize. The teachers, I think, to some extent. Because my parents were good friends with teachers in Durham. Howard McAllister and Johnny Butler and others. And I don't think that that was it. I think it was more the fact that here, because they knew they would have to teach us-- It could have been a combination of things.

CR: I got the impression that a lot of the black teachers didn't actually live in Chapel Hill. I got the impression that they lived in outlying areas and that they commuted here. There were only one or two

that we knew that lived in the community. But I would say a majority didn't even live in Chapel Hill.

Would you agree with that?

FJ: I would, and as I said, Mrs. Joiner, who was my fifth grade teacher, she roomed with Mr. Winstad. And then we had two or three who roomed with my dad. Now that was a little bit before your time.

CR: I was thinking about my teachers and I don't think they lived in Chapel Hill.

BG: Is that true of the high school also?

CR: There weren't many black teachers when we got to high school.

BG: No, I mean Lincoln High School.

FJ: Now the ones that stand out in my mind: Mr. Smith, he was here in Chapel Hill; Mr. Peerman was here in Chapel Hill; the McDougles were here in Chapel Hill.

CR: But there were other people like Miss Pope. I don't think she lived in Chapel Hill. Miss McMillan.

FJ: Oh, and by the way, there were some who roomed with people. Like Miss [Lantley?]. And she was a former teacher. So, you're right. But I think you did have people who roomed for a while.

BG: What would happen if you were not well behaved in class?

FJ: They did spank.

CR: But you only got a spanking if it was pretty serious. Usually you got some kind of formal punishment. You would stay late after school, or rewrite your homework, or have to write on the board a hundred times "I will not behave in a particular manner." But I don't ever remember a teacher spanking other than the principal. And even then I remember it being mild. I don't remember it being as severe as some of the () we got at home [all laugh].

FJ: ().

BG: Sounds like they were bad enough that you wouldn't want more.

CR: At school, you got a ruler, but at home, they were more—stiffer form of punishment, such as a belt. And a lot of threats! [laughs].

BG: The belt came off? [laughs].

CR: One thing I did want to say, which I thought was interesting. The notion of class. Even though there were class dynamics in the black community, I saw them as evolving very differently than in the larger integrated community, particularly among the blacks living here in Chapel Hill, which is supposed to be the Mecca of "white middle class" and blacks were disproportionately represented in the underclass. So when you talk about some of the tensions and some of the struggles, we also have to interject this notion of class and how did class play a part in terms of the racial segregation or racial integration that occurred and developed. Certainly in the black community during segregation, even though class was very much an issue, it seemed that the dividing line between classes was less visible and that people were more able to move along this spectrum. And there seemed more embracing of the underclass or trying to elevate people to get out of the underclass, unlike what occurred when integration came about in my opinion. Even today I think you don't see the same spectrum of being able to move very easily across class lines. Whereas before, particularly under segregation, it was very easy to do this. Because you might have the title of being a principal, but your income might only be a \$2,000 difference.

BG: So there wasn't the economic class difference? You could be a laborer or a teacher and there wasn't--?

CR: Much difference in terms of income. And I saw some statistics which said, I believe, that in 1969 the median income for white Americans was around \$7,000 and the African Americans' was \$4,000. And I was thinking, "Ok, that's really not all that long ago."

BG: It would be interesting to compare that to what it is today.

FJ: I think when you compare them, the disparity is the same. One of the interesting statistics that I used in my class is the whole issue of net worth, which is the difference between what you owe and what you own. For white Americans, the average is about \$47,000, and for African Americans it's about \$3,000. This is net worth, average net worth. And when you compare that with any time in history, the differences have not changed significantly.

CR: Somebody did something in the newspaper recently on Chapel Hill and the disparity among whites and blacks. I think—and I could be wrong about this—in Chapel Hill, the average white American makes about \$50,000 a year compared to about \$30,000 for the average black family. I believe they were looking at households.

BG: So you're right, it's not far off from what it was in '69. How far along did Northside go?
Sixth grade, seventh grade?

FJ: Northside went through sixth grade. And for me, after sixth grade, my parents felt that we should go to an integrated school. They believed so strongly in that notion. Bus services were not provided to African-American children, so they paid for a taxi to take us to school every day.

BG: Wow.

FJ: So () and I, and I think there were a couple other black families. I can't remember—I think the ().

CR: Probably. Ronald Weaver.

FJ: Ronald Weaver, or somebody like that. About four of us, we rode a taxi to school every day. I don't know if I would do that today.

BG: That's quite a commitment.

FJ: That was a real commitment. And when I think about it, at the time I didn't pay much attention to it. But when I think about it in retrospect, that was quite a task for my folks to undertake.

BG: Did your parents ever explain to you why they felt so strongly about you going to an integrated school after you finished Northside?

FJ: No. It was not like, "Let's sit down and talk about it." But I think in passing—. They had the impression that we would just get a better education, and I think that everybody had that impression. Well, clearly the facilities were better.

CR: The resources were better.

FJ: There were more resources. But if that translated into a better quality education I'm not really sure.

CR: And a well rounded education.

BG: Can you go over those things that you mentioned: facilities, resources, a support system, and describe examples of what you mean? And what the differences were that you saw?

FJ: When I say facilities I just meant the building. Guy B. Phillips was brand new, first year, brand new building. So naturally a brand new building looked better than Lincoln High School did.

CR: They had science labs, that were well equipped. They had a playground.

BG: You had no playground at Northside?

CR: We had a playground at Northside. But for some reason the perception was—and not only the perception but the reality—here's Guy B. Phillips in a white neighborhood. It was state of the art in 1965. So naturally it was a much better building than at Northside.

BG: Now, would you have been at Lincoln if you didn't go to--?

CR: Right. I would've gone to Lincoln.

BG: So Lincoln started at seventh grade and went to eleventh, twelfth?

FJ: Twelfth (). As I told you on the phone, I never really attended Lincoln High School. So in seventh grade, I went to Guy B. Phillips. I went to Guy B. Phillips seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. And then the tenth grade, I went to Chapel Hill High, which was located on what is currently University Square, on Franklin Street. And Demetrius and I—who was my cousin who would walk by my house—we would walk to Chapel Hill High. That was tenth grade. And eleventh grade and twelfth grade, we were out at the new Chapel Hill High. And at that point the system was moving from a voluntary integration to a legal integration.

BG: You mentioned you walked to school. Did you have sidewalks? Were the streets paved? Did you have sewer and water at Northside?

CR: Northside has always has sewers, or at least in my lifetime.

BG: So why would I have heard that a lot of the streets there weren't paved until Howard Lee got to be mayor? Is that not the case?

FJ: That is probably true. Now when I went to Northside, a lot of the streets were not paved. But the street where my parents lived was paved.

BG: But some areas in Northside were not paved? And they did not have running water and sewer?

CR: Is the running water and sewer part right?

FJ: I think that's probably true. But I don't recall.

CR: I don't recall that, because they had running water, sewer. They had paved streets because we had school buses, at least when I came along. And there were only a few roads that I can remember that we late to be paved—Merritt Mill Road seems like that was a late street to be paved. But Franklin Street has

always been paved. And Rosemary—but even Rosemary today doesn't have sidewalks all the way down. So sidewalks is a new phenomenon to an extent. Even Cameron Avenue, they just began to install sidewalks on Cameron Avenue, on parts of it, today.

BG: So were you in the first class at Guy B. Phillips that was integrated?

FJ: I was in the first class, that's right.

BG: And how many other blacks were in the school?

FJ: That's a good question. I believe Keith was in that first class. There may have been twelve to fifteen of us. (), my sister, was there.

BG: Was there a bus the first day you went to Guy B. Phillips? Was there any hostility? Was there a reaction that you remember?

FJ: What I remember—keep in mind you're talking about my memory, which is [laughs] far from perfect—but I don't recall, the first years that I was at Phillips, there being any kind of overt reaction. Most of what we felt was subtle. It was more, "Let's ignore this problem." I recall we would always huddle together at the playground and sidewalks. None of us actually participated in many extracurricular activities. I think about our language—we would use words to talk about what the situation was. We had our own code [laughs]. That's kind of fresh in my memory.

I felt for the most part that the teachers basically ignored us.

BG: They didn't call on you?

FJ: I don't recall then saying much. They just kind of wanted us to be there and keep our mouths closed. But in terms of being actively involved, I don't recall very much of anything. I just remember struggling, trying to keep up.

CR: Trying to keep from feeling inadequate that they were more advanced or more exposed--.

FJ: And I just remember kind of experiencing shock that first year. Because I had never been around whites. And I never knew that there was such a wide difference, a big gap, between them.

BG: What was the gap?

FJ: The gap was much more socioeconomic. We differentiated even among the whites. There were some poor whites. But they ignored us, we ignored them as well. There was very little interaction. And the wealthier whites, the more educated whites, there was very little interaction. I don't think I can recall--.

CR: I can recall. My experience is a little bit different. I came up at a later period. And definitely when I went to high school, I saw the system as being sort of (). There were some white teachers, who either out of guilt, or out of commitment, or out of genuine concern, really did take an interest in some black kids, particularly those who were well behaved, those who were smart, those who had some degree of talent. But, collectively, as a body, I experienced the same kind of alienation and isolation and ostracization that she was referring to.

But there were a few who stood out, who did take an interest, who did try to get us involved, who did make a concerted effort. And I remember I had a teacher who came home, came into my house, came into my mother's house. I don't know if he was curious about how black people lived, or if he was trying to show his genuine interest. I'm not sure why he came. After all these years he has called me on a couple of occasions. I thought that was very unique and interesting, for whatever reason. So there were some whites who were genuinely trying to help us in a lot of different ways. And they were aware of the struggles that we were confronting. And for me, I never had that many difficulties in terms of the academic competition.

But I think what disturbed me most was the attitude--this notion that every time you go into class you have to prove yourself. If you think and if people turn around they're surprised that you are black and you can think or that you can talk or that you can read or that you're intelligent and bright. For many of us, a lot of people internalized that. A lot of kids gave up. A lot of people displayed discipline problems. Some people internalized it in a different way.

BG: So you were supposed to be a poor performer? You were supposed to be idiotic for both the students and the teachers?

FJ: Right. I think so. I think the white students, not the black students.

CR: Oh no, not the black students. When I was in school I was in advanced placement classes.

BG: So they had tracking there as well.

CR: They had tracking there as well. Even there you were the only one. There's nothing great about being the only one.

BG: It's a little lonely.

CR: It's very lonely. And you're constantly struggling to assert yourself. Should you have that kind of pressure at that age? I don't know. My high school experience was not a happy one. When I left I

did not go back and get my diploma. I told them to send it to me in the mail. And I graduate high in my class, but I just told them I wanted to cut those ties. And I have not been back since.

BG: When did you graduate?

CR: I graduated in '73. There were a lot of political issues when I was there. We were constantly pulling, constantly tugging. We had a student organization and we were fighting even to protect many of the black teachers, who were being mistreated or ignored or not recognized in the way that she should have been. We were fighting for them, and fighting for ourselves. I guess I was just tired of fighting. I was very despondent when I left. I've never been back to the classroom and I don't feel--.

BG: Allegiance to the school.

CR: Right. Not at all.

BG: How many black teachers were there when you were there?

CR: There were a few. The Peermans were there. Miss Vivian Ingrams was our counselor. Miss Clemens was there. Miss Clayton was there. There were about maybe ten I guess.

BG: Peerman, Clayton, Ingrams--.

CR: Clemens. () Yes.

FJ: I too share Charleen's description of her feelings about the high school years. In fact, I did march—I'm just like that—I was just so happy to get out and leave that place. And I vowed that when I left, I was going to a historically black institution. And I did. I went to Johnson C. Smith up in Charlotte. And that was the best decision I ever made. I felt such a sense of acceptance. I made lifelong friends at Smith. I was actively involved. I was just an entirely different person. I performed well academically. I just did well.

And it was funny because when I finished high school, I was in a program—Upward Bound Program—and there was a recruiter from Lewis and Clark in Oregon. And he came around and said, "We're looking to diversify our campus." And I said, "You'll have to find somebody else, because I'm not going." But I had a first cousin who did go to Lewis and Clark, and she doesn't feel that her college years were that remarkable. But I felt we had a good time [laughs]. We had the kind of experience you're supposed to have.

BG: What about you, Charleen?

CR: My experience was totally different, totally different. I went to Carolina, here in Chapel Hill, which was a big school, a big school by the population. And I can't remember the total number of blacks that entered when I entered, but we were really a small number relative to the total population. Unless you could find your own niche, you still felt much of the same alienation and isolation, in part because it's such a large school and you had to contend with that. But it was kind of the same struggle. We were playing several games simultaneously. We were trying to play catch-up for whatever we didn't get, either because of socio-economic status or lack of exposure. So we were playing catch-up. And also keep-up. And you drop people into that kind of environment, and that's what you're having to contend with in order to survive. So that was my experience.

BG: That's a lot of work—catch-up and keep-up.

CR: That's what most of us were doing. There were a few who might have attended private school. But you're competing with people from all over the world, people who did attend private school, so the competition is definitely much greater, much stiffer. I had work-study jobs, so I always worked and then had to go to school. It was the ().

BG: Let's go back to junior high school, Guy B. Phillips. Was there any physical intimidation when you were there?

FJ: Not that I can recall. Mostly it was just simply being ignored. Either we felt for whatever reason that we should not try out for cheerleading or for extracurricular activities. But for the most part it was just not being involved. I do know that there were a couple of people, African Americans, who did reach out and who did get a little involved with the white community. In fact, there was one guy, Herman Holman, for whatever reason I think a lot of the white kids liked him. He is a very nice, likable guy. He invited me to go—they had a dance at the Carolina Inn, which was a big mall. And for whatever reason they invited Herman, and he asked me to go as his date and I went. It must have been high school. I know I did not really want to go, because I knew I would not have a good time—wrong music, wrong crowd. But I went. And it was pleasant, but it was not a rip-roaring good time.

One other thing about junior high in particular that stands out in my mind is Mrs. Rashkiss, who's still alive, must be in her 90s. You might know her—she lives in this neighborhood. She taught me ninth-grade Language Arts. She was an excellent teacher. She made it come alive. And I felt she was not

patronizing, she really made us feel welcome. She had a potluck dinner at her home. To this day when I think about that potluck dinner, I only remember seeing the black kids. But I'm sure she invited the entire class. But I just remember us being there. But I thought that was just such a great experience. And she was so well traveled, she was so articulate. She was just kind of a real role model. I had the privilege of teaching with Zora Rashkiss when I got my teaching credentials and came back to Chapel Hill to teach. We team-taught for a couple of years. So that was a real treat for me. Of all the teachers, if I could mention one white teacher, she stands out in my mind as one I think was genuine. She made an effort. But you needed a hundred Zoras in that school. Other than Zora I cannot recall the name of any teacher.

BG: Was she like the teachers at Northside?

FJ: No. She had a different approach. And I think she was different too because of a different age and a different subject. For whatever reasons she sure did make the Odyssey come alive. I can still remember Augustus and Penelope. I have taught it myself. But I just remember her talking about the metaphors and all of that stuff. And also very dramatic. She was a very dramatic person. I think that's what it was. She would come in and she would read out of the book and--. Did you have her?

CR: No. She was retired by the time I came along. My only recollection of her is from you all. I don't remember her at all.

FJ: Ok. She was very dramatic.

CR: There are some people that have been retired ever since I've known. Like Mrs. McDougle, she was not in the system when I came along.

BG: Can I say she was like the teachers at North--[tape stops].

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

FJ: --feature that made Zora different from those other teachers is that she just kind of opened up a whole new world. And I was saying, "Gee, there are other things out there." I remember her talking about words and language. She would use these big words and we would have to look them up to figure out what she was talking about [laughs]. So she did think like that. I think it was just the drama thought. The other

teachers, I viewed them as being just more steadfast. And I viewed them as being people that if I felt I needed to, if I had a problem or I had an issue that I had to discuss, if I—I felt comfortable.

BG: At Northside?

FJ: At Northside, yes. Zora was just an entirely different person, but a memorable person. And I think very positive in her own way. But beyond Zora I could not think of anyone who I felt really went out of their way to say, "Let's make these kids feel at home. Let's bring them on the inside. Let's do anything other than treat them like diseased folk that you just don't want to have around."

BG: You felt ignored.

FJ: Ignored. Just isolated, and ostracized as Charleen said. I knew when I left Chapel Hill High, this is it for me. I did not even consider Carolina. I knew I did not even want to struggle [laughs].

CR: I struggled. Financially, I was the youngest. My uncle () started out at (). She came back to Carolina. So the money was really () [laughs]. So I had to go where financial resources were available to me. Because I actually wanted to go to Spellman, or at least I applied to Spellman. But they were like, "You can't afford to go to Spellman, and you're definitely not the black bourgeoisie, and you () really bad if you go down there [laughs]." So that was why I went to Carolina.

FJ: But Smith, it was just right. In terms of the socio-economic background of most of the students, we were all about on par. And in terms of just the activities, the environment--.

CR: And I believe Mr. Renwick was coach when I was at Guy B. Phillips.

FJ: Ok. He later became a dean or some top administrator at Carolina, recruiting black students.

BG: Mr. Renwick was black. Was he the only black at Guy B. Phillips?

FJ: He was not there when I was there.

CR: He wasn't the only black.

BG: Were there any blacks when you went there when they were first integrated?

FJ: No. This was sixty--yes it was '63.

BG: How long did it take to get black teachers?

FJ: I have no idea.

BG: You went there in '68?

CR: I guess so. There were some blacks. Miss Butler. Miss Butler was there.

FJ: Thomas Hammond, who teaches at NCCU. I was talking to him one day and he said, "I taught at Phillips." And he said he remembered you. He said he had just started out teaching. So there were a few blacks by the time she was there. But when we were there, no, I don't recall any black teachers.

BG: So you went to Guy B. Phillips to Chapel Hill High on Franklin Street for about--?

FJ: Two years.

BG: Until what? Tenth grade?

FJ: Tenth grade and eleventh grade. Wait. I think it was only tenth grade. Ninth grade was at Phillips. I think it was only tenth grade at Franklin Street because in 1967 was the first combined integrated class to graduate and I graduated in '68. So the school must have been built in '67 and I was there in eleventh and twelfth grade.

BG: So you graduated in '69?

FJ: I graduated in '68.

BG: So you went there in '67 and '68?

FJ: Yes.

BG: Maybe that's a good---you want to hear Gore's--.

FJ: Yes, concession speech.

BG: Why don't we---is Sunday still a good time for you?

FJ: Yes. What time Sunday?

CR: I'll see if I can make it. I'll just come on. [tape stops]

SECOND INTERVIEW. STILL TAPE 1, SIDE B

BG: This is Bob Gilgor, and I'm interviewing Francesina Jackson at her home, 627 Brookview, on December 17th in the year 2000. Good afternoon, Fran.

FJ: Good afternoon.

BG: What I wanted to talk about this afternoon was your experience at Chapel Hill High School when it was on Franklin Street. And I understand you went there for a year of two and then you went to the new high school, Chapel Hill High School, for two years, and what that experience was like. And just leave it as a broad question.

FJ: Ok. Keep in mind we're talking about thirty-some-odd years. I'll just try to share what I do recall about that period. It's interesting: I remember walking to school because I lived on South Graham Street. And I would walk to school with my cousin. And we walked to Franklin Street. I think that the high school, particularly when it was located on Franklin Street, was very much influenced by the university because the university was just two blocks away. I never even thought at that time that I would ever even want to go to the university. It was just not something that was in my realm of thinking. In fact, at that time, I'm not sure if they were admitting black students. If I recall, the first cohort of African-American students to come to Carolina, they came maybe in my junior year. And that's when I really began to think, "Gee, African Americans could go here," and so forth.

The other things that I recall about that experience were, I did not feel—I cannot honestly remember any one teacher establishing any kind of relationship with me. I do not recall having a black teacher at all on Franklin Street. Although I do believe there might have been one, either a counselor or a teacher, but for whatever reason I never really established any type of relationship with that person. And the white teachers, it was more or less that I was merely ignored.

I do remember a couple of people—I know there was one lady and I cannot remember her name but she was definitely near retirement age and she taught AP History. I took AP History with her. But I don't remember, I don't ever recall her looking at me or talking directly to me about anything. I know there were some teachers that people said, "Try to avoid," because they were really hard. I'm not sure if that was function of race or—I think it was just the fact that these people were just very rigorous.

Let's see, what else? I do recall that the girls and the guys, there were different cliques within the school, and I did not fit in with any of those. I did have a good relationship with my cousin. I of course maintained my friendship with friends that I had gone with through elementary school. So that was my social outlet. But as far as establishing any type of close relationship or friendship with anyone at the school, I don't think so. I think there may have been a couple of people that I talked to, but I don't recall us having a deep friendship.

Now my sister, Alethia, she had a very good relationship with a white girl named Charity. It's funny, I remember her name. I'm sure she hasn't talked with Charity in years. But they had a good relationship, and I think they did visit one another a little bit. But for me, no, I didn't establish-- And I

don't think it's solely because of race. I think it's a function that I just didn't establish any kind of relationship with them.

And in terms of what the teachers did, there was nothing blatant. But the nonverbal behavior, the subtle things, really were very loud and clear. "You're just another problem for us to have to deal with." I do recall that the curriculum—I don't think there was anything in the curriculum that referred to African-American people. I can't think of anything that I learned in school.

In fact, I felt really ignorant. When I went to Johnson C. Smith my first year, we were required to attend convocation or some type of service. And I recall that we always sang the Negro National Anthem. And I honestly did not know it. In fact, I don't even know if I knew that was the Negro National Anthem. We did not sing it in church, for whatever reason, and I sure didn't learn it from school. So my first knowledge about African-American culture, particularly when we think in terms of academic—started when I went to school. And it was kind of interesting because what I did learn, I taught my sisters, and particularly what I learned about Malcolm X. It was kind of funny because they were far more outgoing and vocal. Both are very much leaders, probably more so than I am. And I remember being a little resentful when I went to school because a lot of the other students did know that--.

BG: When you went to Johnson C. Smith.

FJ: When I went to Johnson C. Smith. A lot of the other students did know that was the National Negro Anthem. Because I thought I was pretty knowledgeable about things, I thought I was. Kind of sophisticated and worldly and so forth. But no, I did not know that. I was kind of resentful, like why didn't I know this. I should have known this. So the school did absolutely nothing to teach us anything about our rich culture and heritage.

In terms of teaching, I think that—certainly tracking was used. Tracking is the idea of grouping students based on perceived ability. It was clear that this happened at the high school as well.

But I felt much more stigmatized by it at the high school than I did when I was at Northside or other places because I just—I almost felt that I had to prove myself all the time. And it was the function of, "You're the first." And I kept thinking that we were the Little Rock Nine. It was at a time when there was a lot of publicity around the first African-American () to do certain kinds of things. And so I internalized a

lot of the pressure on myself to say, "Ok, you're one of the first here, so whatever you do should be exemplary and so forth."

And I did find myself in the mindset, very much so, of wanting to assimilate. I wanted to be part of the group at the high school. I wanted to imitate them in terms of the way they dressed. I tried to do a lot of the things that they were doing. After a while I realized, "This is not me. I don't think I can compete with all of this." But I really made an effort particularly in the tenth grade. I remember. It's funny the things that I do remember—maybe this is a function of being shallow—but I remember begging my aunt. I needed to get—there was a brand of shoe called Papa Gaylo's. I may not be pronouncing it correctly but that's what I remember. They were really well known for making dance shoes. I remember all the white girls had them. So I remember begging my aunt to get me a pair of those shoes. And I remember just making sure I had the right kind of skirt and sweater and all that little stuff [sighs]. That was a really big thing. It didn't make any difference. The way I wore my hair, you may have seen the pictures in my yearbook. I wanted it to be white! I did! It was kind of curled under and I had bangs.

BG: So you had it straightened?

FJ: Oh yes. It (). It was that kind of thing. In my mind probably too much of an emphasis on trying to assimilate and trying to be a part of it. And when I was at Chapel Hill High I did not participate in any clubs. I did not participate in any extracurricular activities. I was just kind of, kind of a semi-loner.

But when I did go to Johnson C. Smith, I was very active. I was secretary of student government. I was in the United Negro College Fund Club. I was () club. Very likely I was involved in it in some way. So I knew in my heart that I could be involved. But that climate was just not conducive for making me involved.

And it's not to suggest that what the schools do today in the name of multiculturalism is very effective either. I can recall we had Black History Day or Black History Month and bringing all the students in for assembly.

BG: This is in high school?

FJ: No. This is when I taught school. This was not—no, when I was in high school, nothing was ever said about blacks. In fact, people wanted to ignore, wanted to say, "Well you just happen to be black. But you share the same values, you share the same history. We don't have to teach--." And they did not

teach. And the only time there was any mention of blacks or the whole issue of this racial apartheid that we had here in North Carolina, their attempt to address our infused African-American—was in our literature classes. We read “To Kill a Mockingbird.” In retrospect, I think that was a real hoot. Because when you read “To Kill a Mockingbird,” the real hero is this little girl who isn’t afraid of the crazy man, and Atticus Finch, the white lawyer. And again, even in that book, the African-American presence was just a backdrop for the white folk to show how brilliant they were. And my point is that was the only attempt that I can recall in high school that was ever made to address heritage. And if you read the book you know that the African-American community was portrayed as being powerless and at the mercy of hoping that this lawyer would help Tom Robinson. And the reason that’s so fresh in my mind is because, when I taught school, that was the book that they recommended. They taught that book again! And I just thought, “Gee, we really haven’t made much progress here.” In fact, to be honest with you, I think my daughters had to read that book.

BG: ().

FJ: No. And if you really look and examine the curriculum, you will see that they really haven’t. That chapter you all have, because it prides itself on being such an academic community, and there’s nothing wrong with being the best school in the State. There’s nothing wrong with that, I think that’s great. But it is so steeped in the traditional curriculum that they were unwilling to make very much of an effort to look and examine and think, “Maybe we should go beyond what we’ve done all the time.”

But when I do think about my teachers, things that I remember the most are just kind of funny. Many of them I felt were very well prepared academically. Many of the them—the women in particular—were married to professors at the university and they would always talk about things that were going on at the university in the course of the class.

BG: At the university, the black students at that time could not get into it?

FJ: Exactly. So those were the kinds of things that I can recall.

BG: Did you get African-American history and culture at Northside?

FJ: I think we did. And I’m just trying to think about the curriculum there. And I do believe, to be honest with you—I’m sure we sang the Negro National Anthem. But when I got to the other school we did not sing it. And we did not sing it at church. So that’s why I forgot about it. But at Northside we always got

these yearly plays. And we prepared for those plays. I don't recall specifically what we were taught about African-American history. But I feel certain that we were taught some things about African-American history. And you have to remember too: the African-American community was not so—did not embrace a lot of things as we do today. We did not embrace our heritage. We were very much in an assimilationist mode. I think we're still in an assimilationist mode even today, but I think that we are not willing to deny who we are, our heritage.

BG: Did you feel a pride then, as you think you feel now, in your heritage?

FJ: When I was that age? When I was in elementary school, I know I felt pride in who I was, but the point is I was very isolated, so that was all that I knew. And as I said within the community I felt that my family was well respected and so I just felt pride in being who I was.

I don't think race was very much of an issue. It did not become an issue for me until age thirteen when we did first integrate Guy B. Phillips. And then it was a culture shock to realize that there were many different people and people who didn't automatically accept you—or accept us—just because we were who we were. So I went through a period through about Guy B. Phillips up through the high school years where, for me personally, it was function of, "Let me assimilate, let me figure out what's going on, and let me be successful in this endeavor." But I knew by senior year that I was out of there. I was out.

BG: You didn't feel that you assimilated?

FJ: No. I did not feel that I had been accepted. And I knew that I was getting away. I think also—it was a function of the social climate and so forth—but it was also a function of adolescence. At the age of seventeen or eighteen most kids are ready to leave home and explore the world on their own. So I know that that was part of it as well. But I knew in my own mind how I wanted to define my world. My world was a world—that I felt I would be comfortable in—was to go to Johnson C. Smith. Now, as you heard, my two sisters—Charleen went to Carolina, Alethia went to Carolina for a year, then she graduated from FSU, Florida State—so, you know.

BG: Can we go back to your feeling of being ignored? Can you explore that a little more? Are there any other things that you can think of that made you feel that way?

FJ: I can recall the teachers asking questions in class. I was always very reluctant to speak out regardless of what environment I might have been in. But I never recall any of them making an effort to

encourage me to speak up. And then on the few occasions when I did, I always felt that I did not say the appropriate thing. They would either nod their heads or restate the information, and so I never felt that I was “getting the point.” I don’t know why. But that’s just kind of the way I felt.

BG: Did anyone talk to you or say that? That you’re missing the point, or you need to try harder, or you need to do something a little differently? Any of the teachers?

FJ: Let’s see. I think I went to a teacher because I wasn’t making a good grade. And tried to ask what’s the problem, how can I improve. And I don’t recall her saying anything substantive about how I can improve. And I just had the feeling, to be honest with you, that the white kids knew the material. Now I didn’t know why they knew the material, or how they knew the material, but I felt they knew it and I didn’t. But I felt [laughs] that there was something out there. I didn’t know how it was that we could both sit in the same class and they seemed to know it and I wasn’t--.

BG: This is coming from someone who has a Ph.D. now?

FJ: [laughs.] Right. From Carolina.

Well all I can say is that the experience of continuing and being in classes and so forth—there isn’t a magic bullet—but I think that our schools do reflect very much middle class values. And if you’ve lived in a middle class environment, there’s just some things that you’ve been immersed in. And there’s just a match between your home environment, the way you talk, the way you respond, your expectations, the way you organize information and so forth. If your environment is not necessarily middle class and especially if you have another—interacting with that—a layer of cultural difference, there are just some unwritten things that, as a youngster, you would never be able to explain. Why is this happening?

And I don’t entirely blame the teachers. They were sort of thrown into a situation that they also didn’t know how to handle. And I think that’s true for many teachers today.

BG: Did you feel as though you had any preparation? Did anyone come talk to you about how you should behave or what it was going to be like going to a white school? You minister, your parents, others?

FJ: Not formally. But one of the things that occurred in my family was the fact that we always ate dinner together. During dinnertime we would always discuss current events, issues, the whole gamut. And so informally, my family certainly said, “These are some things you need to think about as you go to Chapel Hill High.” And I would come home with all these stories and by senior high school I was very

militant. And I think they were a little bit concerned. My talk was more than any action. Nevertheless, they tried to give me guidance, my family did, more than anyone else. I don't recall any teachers or ministers saying very much to me.

Now, my sisters had different experiences. Charleen was telling me just the other day that whenever there were issues going on at the high school, there were certain people in the community that they called. Among them was reverend Manley; a lady named Gloria Williams who is now deceased; and several others. She can tell you those names. But we were the first group to come through. We didn't vocalize our issues. Things became a little bit heavy our senior year. But by senior year, all of us, I think both black and white students, were ready to leave. And we were not going to do anything that would jeopardize our not graduating and not being able to move ahead.

So I know that many of the African-American students were kind of in culture shock. And I do know that some changed the way they talked. I think it's the way you enunciate words. There's a difference. And underneath it all I was feeling, [laughs] "I'm not so sure I want to do this." I just found that we were very much assimilationist. And we were willing to do, as a group—if I'm representative in any way of that group—I just think we would have done almost anything to feel that we were accepted within that community. From my perspective, I never felt that I was ever accepted in that community.

BG: What would it have taken for you to feel accepted?

FJ: Well, I think there's several things. First, I think the curriculum would have been more reflective—for the teachers to have said something about African-American presence in the classroom. I don't even recall teachers saying anything about Martin Luther King in the classroom. If they had talked to us individually. Just little things, look us in the eye when they're talking to us. I don't recall them doing much of anything to--.

BG: Teachers wouldn't look you in the eye?

FJ: I don't recall them engaging nonverbal communication to say, "I'm really accepting you." What I felt was mostly, "You're just kind of a little impediment here. We really do hope that you'll get on your merry way." I was not a troublemaker. I was usually very compliant, rather passive, would accept whatever was said and try my best to feel as if I was a part of it. It would have been nice if at that time they had invited some of the students to go out for cheerleading. I know that once the schools merged in '67, a

lot of the males were athletes and they joined—now they seemed to get along in the school a whole lot better, maybe because of athletics—and they played with other guys on the team and they seemed to establishe a bond. But for those of us who were not athletically inclined, there should have been some other ways to help us feel more a part of the school, and also definitely to help feeling that we were competent academically.

BG: Did you feel that the white students were encouraged by the white teachers but the black students were not? Could you see this happening?

FJ: Absolutely. And there were some students who people felt were just kind of the stars. And I imagine that's true of any school. It just happened that at Chapel Hill High all the "stars" were white. I saw teachers who had really warm, relaxed relationships. I've seen them have their arms around the students—not in an affectionate, well it was affectionate, but it was not sexual or anything like that—and I felt that they just seemed to share jokes together. They was some common things that they shared and understood. That's what I'm talking about.

BG: That didn't exist for the black students?

FJ: I was not aware of it. Now, you've got to keep in mind I'm talking only from my perspective. From what I saw, and what I experienced, that was not the case. As I mentioned to you, Herman Holman, who was a young man, however he did it, he seemed to be a little more accepted within the community. In fact at that time males were generally more accepted.

There was a couple of African-American females who were well accepted. But the interesting thing, I've talked with both of them since graduation, and I said, "Well it appeared that people accepted you and you seemed to be so much at ease and to be a part of things." And they said, "Oh I hated every minute of it." And I'm talking about one who was queen. She was the first black queen. We were in high school together and she was very smart and very attractive, the whole thing. We'd see each other occasionally, and we see each other now, and so I talked to her and I said, "Tell me about Chapel Hill and what you thought about it." She said, "I hated every minute of it." I said, "You were my idol. I admired you because you seemed to fit in. I just knew I didn't fit, so I gave up." She said, "I managed, but I don't know."

And I think, to be honest with you, it has had life long implications with people. A lot of my friends who decided to go to college, many of them--this was the first time the colleges were opening up,

and so many of them decided to go to historically white institutions--and of that number, the majority did not finish. I can name five people I know that went to East Carolina--none of them went to Carolina; some may have gone to N.C. State--and none of them finished.

BG: Why is that?

FJ: I think, to be honest, they were going to an institution that was a mirror of what happened in high school. And they became frustrated. And I'm talking about people who were really very bright. These were people I looked up to as being just really very bright people. It was also at a time, as I mentioned, where colleges were attempting to diversify their student population so they were heavily recruiting their students. As I said, my student went to Lewis & Clark and she was one of four black students on campus. And, I said, "Lucky for you. I'm not doing it. I'm not going to do it for them [laughs]. To pacify somebody else." But my cousin did finish Lewis & Clark. But the cousin that I walked to school with every day went to East Carolina, he did not finish. And he is a very smart person.

BG: Let's revisit assimilation. What you described to me was the feeling that you never assimilated with the teachers. What about assimilating with the students?

FJ: Absolutely not. It just did not happen. I think partly because--I was going to say partly because we integrated late in life; usually people are able to overcome racial differences if they interact with each other at a younger age. I don't know how to account for it, but I never felt that I established any relationship with any of the people that I went to high school with.

And it's funny because some of those white students are here in Chapel Hill and I may run into them occasionally and our interaction is pretty much the same. It's "How are you?" and "Bye" [laughs]. As an adult, partly it's my fault. I've not made an effort. But I have. I have tried to go beyond that but--. It's almost like, well, we didn't have a relationship then and we're not likely to have one now, so there's not much to it.

I did talk with a young lady who was trying to do a documentary on the integration of Chapel Hill schools. I did work with her briefly. She was asking me all these questions about what it was like to be African American and the first student and so forth. So I just turned the tables and asked her, and she said, "You know, to be honest with you, I did not even think about it." In fact, she really did not know me. She

just looked in the yearbook and tried to find out if any of these African-American students still remained in Chapel Hill and so she was able to contact me.

It's almost like, if you are in a position of power, or you represent "the norm," then you're less likely to be concerned about those who don't fit in. And we were few in numbers, too. At that time. Especially when we were at the old Chapel Hill High on Franklin Street. I don't know if there were more than ten African-American students. So we were just the outliers at that time. Now when we went to Chapel Hill High School, it was a whole different thing. Because by '67, when both schools merged, you had very definite groups.

BG: You just took the words right out of my mouth. I was going to ask you the difference between schooling at Chapel Hill High School on Franklin and schooling at the new integrated high school that I thought had ().

FJ: Well that was the big difference, the fact that we were larger in number. And so we definitely began to have our own cliques. I found that there were some African Americans who wanted to definitely assimilate and be part of the white crowd. But I do not recall any of those students just completely cutting ties with the black students. We re-formed group enclaves. Black students would stand in certain parts of the school. That was just our part. During lunch we would all hang together. It was more out of comfort.

And there wasn't much crossover. Like I said, athletes probably were better able to interact with others much more than we were. And it was at that time where students were--you had a few kids who were getting into trouble, that kind of thing. For the most part we sought each other for comfort, for just being able to relate.

BG: Was there name calling, or were there fights, either at the Franklin Street Chapel Hill High or the new Chapel Hill High?

FJ: I do not recall hearing any name calling. We, within our group, used to call each other names, and I think it mostly because we had internalized a lot of the negative views that society in general-- [tape stops].

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

BG: Continuation of the second tape or second interview with Fran Jackson. So, where were we?

FJ: We were comparing the experience at the old high school on Franklin Street with the newly integrated high school on Umstead Road. The point I was trying to make is that you had a difference in numbers, and that made a difference, both positively and negatively. We had far more students who were getting into trouble, more students who experienced academic difficulties, and all kinds of issues. For the most part the school was not responsive.

There was another question you asked earlier, to what degree did the African-American teachers offer support. I think that they did offer support, but they could not do it openly. Because to be honest with you, it was almost open season on African-American teachers. The perception was that they were not as challenging, they were not as good, et cetera et cetera. As a result, they were threatened, being in this newly integrated situation.

BG: How many of them were there?

FJ: I don't know the numbers. There are some documents at the high school where they can give you the numbers. But I can recall teachers who were considered our very best. They taught the upper-level courses at Lincoln. When they went to Chapel Hill High they were teaching almost remedial-type courses.

BG: What did you think about that?

FJ: It really began to form my views--I don't know if I said it was racist, but I thought it was very definitely racist. For example, our principal at Lincoln High School, Mr. Charles McDougle, when he went to the newly integrated school, he was the assistant principal. And the fact that Lincoln High School itself was no longer a school. It was a perfectly fine building. They could have used it as a school. Why not put the white kids and the black kids at Lincoln? No. They closed the school.

My point, though, is that the African-American teachers could not be as supportive, or at least as outwardly supportive, as they may have wanted to be, because they too were under threat. I felt that people wanted to challenge them, challenge their knowledge. It was just a systemic kind of thing that anything that was African-American was "less than." I can recall some teachers saying, "She may have gotten her degree from Central." As if that was "less than" if you got your degree from Elon, or Chapel Hill of course.

BG: Let me ask you then, what was your perception of the quality of teaching you got from black teachers versus the white teachers?

FJ: Well, I can't equate them. The only reason I can't is because the majority of my African-American teachers were in the early grades, and I thought they were very good and very strong and they taught us the basic skills. By the time I go to high school the majority of my teachers were white. And I think there was definitely a different teaching style. The style was one more of a--it was not as directed--it was more of a, "Let me give you some opening questions and you'll respond to them." It was more like what you would find at a college level, and I think they prided themselves on doing that.

BG: At Chapel Hill High School, the new school?

FJ: At Chapel Hill High School. Right. From the white teachers. But it's not to suggest that that style of teaching is all that much better. It's just that for years, they had had students who were acclimated toward college. And they were accustomed to that kind of teaching style. But to be a really good teacher is to take a student who may not have that acclimation or orientation and to teach that person the underlying skills. I can recall people saying, "Write a paper," and not giving a lot of specific directions about what to do. Now if your father is an English professor you can go home and say, "Proof this and tell me how I should approach this." Then naturally you're going to get an A. But if your family does not have college professors at home, then we were definitely at a disadvantage. And the teachers did not have to work as hard. Because the work was being done at home. The college professor parent was telling that kid, "Here, you have a five-paragraph essay. You have an introduction." Whereas the teacher here--even if they just kind of glossed over it, those of us who needed them most for that kind of direction--did not provide it. So I don't think that they were--I think they were a little more arrogant. They were a little bit more haughty about, "Well I know this and I know that." But in terms of the quality and the ability to train people who did not come from advantaged background--no, they did not have the skill to do that.

BG: So their skill was in getting the academically gifted students educated, but--and I don't want to put words in your mouth--but my interpretation of what you're saying is, they didn't have the ability to teach the middle and the lower end of the academically gifted or non-gifted students.

FJ: I think that's exactly the case. Also, their style of teaching was much more lecture-oriented. As opposed to giving experiential kinds of activities, hands-on activities, for all kids to be a part of it. Now

Charleen can tell you--I think she had a different type of experience--Charleen was also on the school newspaper. So she definitely has a very different kind of experience. I can't remember about Alethia. I know Alethia was involved in some things, and Alethia was a cheerleader. So they were a little bit more active.

BG: So what I hear you saying again is that, at the new high school, that African-American students did join the clubs and were active not just in athletics but in other areas as well. Is that fair to say?

FJ: I think to a limited degree. And partly it's because of the increased numbers. But I don't think there was an active effort to make sure that each one of our other clubs out there had an African-American presence.

And the other point, too, is that I was there at the time when it first integrated. My sisters came along a couple of years later. And so they had an opportunity to make a few changes. But even in the changes that they made, from my observation, they were still cultivating relationships and training those kids who were better able. And those kids who, for whatever reason, did not have those skills, the knowledge that they needed in order to succeed, they were not going to give them that.

And you've been in school long enough to know that there are some unwritten rules. Some unwritten kinds of expectations that kids from disadvantaged backgrounds--we were just not aware of them. And I include myself in that. I felt that within my community, I did not view myself as being disadvantaged. But coming in to Chapel Hill High School, I was treated almost as being disadvantaged. I think that was the other unwritten thing, that we were all treated as a group as really not having much to offer the school.

Oh, and I remember too when I was growing up, Lincoln High had one of the best bands in the State. And they would play of course traditional music, but they also played some good old rock 'n' roll. And they would get in the street, and they would just break it down. I remember going to Chapel Hill High, and I don't recall any of those students joining the band. I remember the band being literally all white, and it was the worst. It was the worse music I had ever heard [laughs]. I remember just being horrified. They were very stiff. They would march in, and play these little tunes, and march out. And I just felt that, there is nothing here. It's just [shudders]. So--.

BG: Did you look at it as sort of white music?

FJ: Yes. I sure did. I just felt they were very stiff. And they didn't offer much. There wasn't a show to it. There was no pizzazz.

BG: Did they have, at the new high school, black history, black culture?

FJ: I know the last couple of years that I was there, they did not. It was either Alethia's class or Charleen's class, where through some of their protests, they just demanded that they offer black history. And they were sort of mimicking the college students. You've got to remember, at that time, at colleges across the country, there was an eruption of protests either about Vietnam or a greater emphasis or attention to African-American history. And it was not unique to the white colleges. The biggest protest was at Howard University. And they were protesting for more black history. And I think what happened at Chapel Hill High was really a reflection of sort of a national trend.

BG: I understand that there was an uprising at Chapel Hill High School. Were you there when it occurred?

FJ: No. It happened after I left. I think my sisters were very much involved in it. And we often talk about that. I think they were threatening to suspend one or both at one time.

BG: What are the things that you heard, the reasons for the uprising?

FJ: I think there were a number of issues. One, they felt that the teachers were being insensitive. And in a couple of instances there might have been some type of incident to spark widespread protests among the African-American students. Oh, I know one thing: they were going to demote one of the black teachers or coaches, I'm not sure what the specifics are. But I do know that that sparked a reaction.

BG: Was it coach Peerman?

FJ: I think so, yes. I mean he's just considered an icon in our society here in Chapel Hill. I just don't recall the details. Keep in mind I was away in Charlotte at the time when the protests occurred. I know that they did want a black history course. And they got a black teacher from North Carolina Central to teach that course. That was just part of it. I don't recall much else.

But I'll tell you a difference. And one thing that I can say is I've had the dubious honor of having gone through the school system, having observed my children go through the school system, and having taught in the school system. I've been able to reflect on current issue with some understanding of the past.

BG: What are your reflections?

FJ: What are my reflections? Well they are that we've got a long way to go. The problems have not been resolved. The kids today are dealing with some of the same issues. I do think that across the board there's greater interaction among the kids. But sometimes I don't know how really honest that is. What I mean by that is I find that it's much more acceptable for inter-racial dating. But if you'll observe, much of that relationship is occurring between black males and white females. And when that happens, very often black females are left out of the loop. And I see that as a trend that my generation, we did not have to deal with as much. It's clearly much more of an issue today.

Another point of reflection is the fact that one thing that hasn't changed, if you would look at teaching assignments, you will find that it's still quite segregated. In other words, there are still too few African American teaching upper-level courses. So I think that's something that clearly has not changed.

On of the things that I've observed is--of course I haven't taught in the public schools for a long time--but there were still a lot of kids going through that assimilationist--. What you have to keep in mind is that, by middle school, all children are experiencing adolescence and they are undergoing some kind of ethnic identity. As teenagers, a natural question you have is, Who am I? And they want to know it from multiple perspectives. I think that for white children, who they are is affirmed each and every day. It's implied, it's taught, it's just known. And not only in the schools but in the media. Everywhere around them. They know, "Maybe one day I can become president." All these things. Whereas for the African-American child, that is not the case. When they ask Who am I? the response is often more negative than positive. I found that, when we have those African-American programs, Black History Day or something, that a lot of teachers were concerned because the African-American students would misbehave, and so they'd naturally run to the African-American (). "I ain't misbehavin'. Whey they acting the fool up there?" And my response was, well I think sometimes they are embarrassed. They may not be able to articulate it but they resent the fact that we've taken a day out to celebrate their heritage when in fact it should be a natural course of things. You're marginalizing a group that's already marginalized. And they're still doing it. They're now calling it Multicultural Day--and you all bring in your bean pie or your tacos or whatever. And it's not getting at the heart of (). And the kids, particularly by the time they reach high school, they realize if you appoint an African-American teacher to something, if this person really has power or if it's just a token position. And that's part of what the kids in the sixties were protesting against because they felt

they had seen from others that protest was going to make a difference. I think the kids today are pretty complacent. I don't see them protesting. And they're dropping out like crazy. They're flunking out like crazy. As a parent I'm really, really concerned. And I'm really concerned about the African-American males. Because, as a group, African-American males are just not making it in mainstream America.

Those are my reflections [laughs].

BG: I'd like to go back to one other point. And then I hope to just let you express anything you feel you'd like to say that I haven't asked you. You had mentioned Charles McDougale was not chosen as the principal. I wish you would go back and revisit that and tell me your thinking about why you felt he should have been the principal instead of the person who was appointed principal.

FJ: Well, the person who was appointed principal was a white female, Marshbanks. I can't remember Miss Marshbanks's first name.

BG: [May?]?

FJ: Yes, that was it. When I think about Miss Marshbanks now, Miss Marshbanks was a real masculine person [laughs]. When I think about her, there wasn't a fair thing about her. But nevertheless, I don't remember anything about her, just her name. In high school, I never thought about her. Other than, She's the principal. Like a policeman. If you see a policeman, you're likely to slow down or think about "Am I applying all the rules?" That's kind of how I viewed her. But as an adult I remember, I can see her face and think about her, and really she was [laughs]. And I'm thinking now, as a reflection of the women's movement, that she probably had to behave in that way to get that job. Because I'm sure it was unusual for a woman to be a principal of a high school, particularly one of the best high schools in the State. That was quite remarkable. I have to give her credit for that.

And I'm wondering if she became principal because they had a choice between her and Mr. McDougale. She was principal of the high school on Franklin Street. I don't know how long she was principal there. But Mr. McDougale, I think, was quite capable of being principal at Chapel Hill High. I kind of resented the fact that--it was really a culmination of things. We did not have the () for the other mascot. What's the mascot now, Tigers? Yes, but it was the Wildcats when we were on--. I think they changed that. I don't think when we first started that we had the Tigers. No. I thought we had the--. It was like, they say, "Ok, you all come over here," and there was nothing that I can recall.

BG: School song, colors, trophies were all from Chapel Hill High School?

FJ: Yes.

BG: Was there any heritage from Lincoln?

FJ: Not that I can recall. There was nothing.

BG: And how was your principal? Was your principal an icon also the way Mr. Peerman was?

FJ: I think there was a lot more respect--they were respected equally. But I think coach Peerman, because he was coach--a great coach too: Lincoln high was ranked tops in the State, I mean among black schools, for football. I think they did well for basketball. I know the band was considered great. For a small school, Lincoln High had a lot. They did a lot.

BG: So there was no identity there. Is that fair to say?

FJ: That's fair to say. And then you're thinking about a population that knew what it was like. In other words, when we merged in '67, a large group of the African-American students knew Lincoln High School. It was forced. I don't think that they were as happy to go there as people wanted us to be there. I mean I say them only because we're talking about the students from Lincoln. I had already gone to the old Chapel Hill High. But, again, that whole idea of "Well, let's ignore them, they don't exist." I think the merger really helped accentuate that point. And sometimes things were happening so fast we couldn't articulate it. And a lot of us, by junior, senior year, we're thinking about new directions. A lot of us are thinking about, "Let's get out of here. Let's get out of Dodge." So that was part of what was going on as well. I don't know when they changed it to the Tigers.

BG: Maybe after the uprising.

FJ: Maybe so.

BG: Was there an element that wanted separate but equal in the black community? It sounds like you had such an interesting high school at Lincoln High. Your teachers were your role models and your advocates. I can certainly understand if there would have been a group that wanted separate but equal.

FJ: Not that I'm aware of. I can tell you this, though. You have to keep in mind the context. Chapel Hill is a town that has always been predominantly white. The African-American community has always been small. And always been the dogs: we've always had to work at some menial capacity at the university. We, more so than say some African Americans in Durham, we were more brainwashed to think

that what was white, was right. Because in Durham, you had a lot of really much more prosperous black businesses. You had a much more prominent middle class. And so they were fighting tooth and nail--you had North Carolina Central University, which was a beacon for the black middle class there. So you have a very different circumstance. I think, initially, people readily agreed that the new facility on Umstead Road was state of the art. It really was at that time, and even today. Just to let you know just how much state of the art, thirty years later, that is a very nice school. And Lincoln High School could not compete. I do feel that a lot of African Americans in the community felt, "Yes that's a better building, but are our students really getting a quality education? Are they getting the time and attention and the nurturing needed to succeed?" And I'm not sure about that. [phone rings; tape stops].

BG: I've asked you about an element with the Afro-American community that wanted separate but equal. You're saying no you didn't perceive that.

FJ: No, not at that time. Although I think today, nationwide, particularly when you look at the educational system, there's a growing interest in separate but equal, with an emphasis on equal. It's obvious, nationally, that the schools are not responsive to the needs of African-American children.

BG: Is there anything else that I haven't covered that you'd like to talk about?

FJ: I hope one outcome of this study and this documentary will be to heighten educators' sensitivity to the need of responding to students regardless of the students' ethnic, or gender, or whatever makes them different. And just trying to ensure that all students experience success. We cannot afford to just have the same few of the same type of people become successful. We've got to have a much wider representation. And (). And when I say responsive to the needs, I mean all teachers, being responsive, regardless of their race or ethnicity. And trying to think at a higher level, and not allow stereotypes to dominate their thinking about people.

BG: Thanks. I really appreciate it.

FJ: You're welcome.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

END OF INTERVIEW