

Interview

with

ROBERT LEE MANGUM

November 18, 2003

by Malinda Maynor

Transcribed by Sharon Caughill

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

Index and tape on deposit at
The Southern Historical Collection
Louis Round Wilson Library

Citation of this interview should be as follows:
"Southern Oral History Program,
in the Southern Historical Collection Manuscripts Department,
Wilson Library,
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill"

Copyright © 2005 The University of North Carolina

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

ROBERT LEE MANGUM
November 18, 2003

MALINDA MAYNOR: This is tape 11.18.03-BM. The interviewee is Reverend Bob Mangum. The interviewer is Malinda Maynor. We are near Pembroke, North Carolina. I'll ask you to begin in 1958 when you arrived here. What were the impressions that you had, and what were some of the first experiences you had working with Indian people?

ROBERT LEE MANGUM: Well, as perhaps you know, I came in 1958 as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Pembroke, and then also as pastoral counselor to the Methodist student movement and thereby got to work with not only Methodist-related students from our denomination but students that related to the Lumber River Methodist Holiness Conference which included James Woods. Then also because of summer activity that brought about a planning council for the spiritual emphasis on campus, brought together the Baptist Student Union leadership as well as the Methodist leadership in a retreat each summer. So immediately I was able to begin to related to students in coming to Pembroke as well as to adults.

Then very quickly I became involved, because of the leadership of Bishop James Lowry who was then bishop of the Lumber River Holiness Conference and was committed to prison ministry at the Lumberton unit, and invited me to become involved in prison ministry, volunteer prison ministry there with him and with other volunteers. So just about as soon as I got to Pembroke I became involved in prison ministry. At that time he then became ill and passed away shortly after. He probably died in '59, but a Mr. Oxendine, whose first name he went by initials. He was a minister in the Lumber River

Holiness Conference, and Miss Mary Livermore was working with Bishop Lowry. He then, Mr. Oxendine, became the chair and the leader of the efforts for ministry there, volunteer ministries, and Miss Livermore continued to work with whomever was in leadership at that time and until her having to give up her volunteer services and no longer be able to participate.

So, I immediately became involved with prison ministry, and the challenge was that we form an organization to perpetuate the prison ministry, and we did called the Prisoners' Friends Society. The Reverend James Woods is now the chair, has been for many years, of that organization. James became a bishop of the Lumber River Holiness Conference and was for a number of years. In the development of that organization and the input of native people, that was a Native American prison camp at that time as you recall, there was a great deal of input and commitment on the part of the Native American community, on the part of Miss Livermore, and Miss Grace Garthwaite who came to be Children's Bible Mission leader in the community, to teach bible in the schools and to have camping programs in the summer for young people. She was very much involved in prison ministry also. Mr. Josephus Locklear, there were a number of people that were involved, Mrs. Caldwell from Lumberton. That organization then, the Prisoners' Friends Society, was organized and essentially all the leadership in that group was Native American to serve that Native American camp.

As a part of that ministry there came surfacing the strong desire to have a chapel. That chapel was to provide for religious services for the inmates, and an effort began back in the early '60s, about '60, '61 to build that chapel. I was the chair, I think, of that committee to build a chapel. Judge Lacy Maynor became the leader in fund raising, and

he worked to raise funds from throughout our Native American community. Most of the money, and practically all of the money, that was raised to build that chapel came from Native American people, from individuals, from churches. And finally we were able to get the state. We helped the state in designing the chapel, and then got the state to agree to build it with their labor, and we supplied simply the money for the materials.

So that was the first chapel built on any prison camp in the state of North Carolina, to our knowledge, that was built by the volunteer efforts, fund raising, of the local community. That was a first as far as we knew in the state of North Carolina. After that there were other chapels built, but the one built by the Lumbee Indian, to our knowledge, was the first. That was dedicated in 1964, that chapel. It has a placard on the building now that relates to that.

So, I came here from Asbury Theological Seminary where I'd graduated from being a pastor of three churches in the southern part of Kentucky near Somerset, Kentucky. And out of rural pastorate for two years while in seminary, and then having been reared in a rural community, I came to rural North Carolina and lived in Pembroke at the parsonage in 1958 when Neila and I came here. We had one child, Phyllis. Then after that we had the two other children. We remained there for five years, and then the Lord opened doors for us to remain in the Native American community and pastor a four-point charge, Sandy Plains, a new work that was meeting in a garage in Lumberton, and then Hickory Grove in Marlboro County, and Fairview where the notable Mr. James K. Brayboy, *Look Magazine* teacher of the year, where he was the lay leader of the church. Then his friend Mr. Luke Hunt was one of the primary leaders also with him. But that was the four-point charge that I had beginning in '63.

So during that time I became involved in those five years immediately with a concern for prison ministry and the needs of the inmates. I became also very much aware of and concerned about the total social needs of the community, realizing the political disenfranchisement of Native people, of African-Americans, of the poor in Robeson County. And began to be concerned about how as a Christian who was working hard to get people prepared to find and discover personal salvation through faith in Christ, how in the world I could help people to find a better life here and get delivered from some of the torment that was here. Not what may be hereafter, but the torment of being denied and being discriminated against, being exploited, the kinds of systems that we had that did not give equal opportunities, did not provide for the self development of all peoples according to their potential. So I became quite concerned about various problems in the county.

In the early '60s Miss Mary Livermore asked to bring together Native American people, Blacks, and whites to start a forum talking about improving our county, about justice, and about equal opportunities. So Dr. E. B. Turner who was an African-American leader, and I, and others gathered with her in her house in Pembroke back in the early '60s. This little gathering began to converse and deal with concerns for our county. It was the beginning of some bridge-building and some reconciliation.

That grew into what was called the Community Forum, and that Forum moved to Lumberton at First Baptist Church. That Community Forum issued a welcome and an invitation to the Friends Service Committee out of Greensboro to come and be involved in social ministry. Well, later the Forum wasn't sure they wanted to own what they had invited, but they came, and they continued their ministry for a number of years during the

'60s. They became involved in voter registration, became involved, I think, in literacy, but they were here essentially to try to empower the people for self-determination. This came out of a very conservative kind of Christian community gathering, and it was great that it happened as it did. But anyway, they were initiated by this community, this Christian Forum, called the Community Forum, and they were brought into the community by that means.

MM: What do you think—?

RLM: Mr. Thadis Oxendine worked in cooperation with them for voter registration, and worked in different communities, our Native communities, to bring about an awareness of a need for voter registration.

In the meantime during those '60s, mid-60s, Dr. Martin Brooks, who had come also in '58, began to talk about double voting and about inequities in the educational system. He continued to call attention to the inequities, and the disparities, and to the injustice of the multiple school administrative units and the way that they were set up to have sanctuary from the vote of the people of the county and from the other charter units, and yet the county was subject not only to the vote of the people of the county who were eighty percent Native American and African-American, the students, sixty percent were Native American, twenty percent of the students were African-American, and only twenty percent of the students were Caucasian, and yet every one of those five charter units, every one of those towns was able to vote for the county system as well as for their own systems. Their own systems were sanctuary, the county without sanctuary was always subject to this strong white population in those cities that outvoted them.

So Dr. Brooks in his desire to see justice ran for the county board. He and the Reverend Harvey Lowry. They both lost, and it was because of this kind of double voting that denied the right of the people in the county to determine their own educational leadership.

MM: Do you remember anything about the campaign and what kinds of issues they tried to exert?

RLM: Well, what I remember was that there was in the election, my understanding was, and Dr. Brooks can clarify this, that the top vote-getter or top vote-getters would be put on the board of elections, would be put to the board of elections. Well, and of course, if you won the vote you would anyway. But anyway, there was some kind of understanding that there would be additional persons put on the, excuse me, the board of education, as an outcome of that election. Well, it didn't happen, and the board of elections put persons, excuse me, the board of education had persons on that board that were not representative of the vote of the county. We'll put it that way. They were representative of the full vote, and therefore won, but the people of the county, as I recall, had really elected Harvey Lowry and Dr. Brooks, but because of double voting their votes were canceled out, their winning, and the vote went to another person, an African-American and a Native American.

So then somewhere along there, about in there, Sim Oxendine had also run, and maybe it was before then or right after then, and he was defeated. So Sim, and I, and Hughes Oxendine went to Governor Morgan's office, excuse me, to Attorney General Morgan's office. That was about 1970, along in there. We just talked to him earnestly about the injustice of double voting. At that time, I don't know, Sim might have initiated

at his defeat—probably Dr. Brooks' defeat came in '68—and it's probably '70 when Sim was defeated. I'm not sure. But anyway, there was perhaps a suit that may have been initiated then. I'm not certain. Perhaps not. It may be in the document that I've written.

Anyway, the Attorney General got a reading and a response, and it was declared that double voting was legal and was just. That was the legal opinion of the state. Then we went to the federal district court in Raleigh, and that was the opinion of the federal court. So then, of course, an appeal was made and it was taken to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Well, during all of this time, during the early '70s, a lot was happening to fortify this whole commitment to empower the people. We wrote a grant for a Lumbee Caucus to the United Methodist Church, the Commission on Religion and Race, and then helped the Black community, urged them to do the same, and provided the proposal that had been written, the application for the Indian Caucus, so the Black Caucus could be formed. Then the Reverend Dr. Jimmy Cummings wrote the grant for the Black Caucus, and there was formed a Black Caucus and a Lumbee Caucus, both of United Methodist funding, and essentially made up of United Methodist leadership: Adolph Dial, Herman Dial, and in the Lumbee Caucus, and Mr. Willie Locklear from the Ashpole community, Hilton Oxendine from the Lumberton community, and there were others that were a part of it, myself and Mr. Harbert Moore out of the Prospect community as well as Adolph. So that was the Indian Caucus. Then the Black Caucus, Jimmy Cummings, and Oscar Graham, and Robert Fairly, and Preston Jones, and others made up the Black Caucus.

So the direction of the Indian Caucus and somewhat also of the Black Caucus was voter registration, political empowerment. That funding came in '71, and from '71 until

'96 we received grants in succession, and we received a total, the two entities received a total of \$97,000 from the Methodist Church to do voter registration. During that time we registered 11,400 Native Americans and Blacks. Now, the majority of that number was Native American, and I don't remember the breakdown but it was more like a 65/55 or something like that, or a seven and forty-four, more like 7,000 and 4,400 probably. But anyway, there were quite a few more Native Americans registered than there were Blacks. We also registered a number of whites during that time, but the significant fact was we feel like we empowered the people to bring about change that was necessary and had not been brought about by the empowerment of the vote.

Now during this time of '70 to '76, along in there, there was the strong input of Mr. Harbert Moore, and Harbert was an Indigenous Community Developer of the United Methodist Church. He was the first Indigenous Community Developer, Native American Community Developer, in the United Methodist Church, I believe. This came through the Women's Division of our United Methodist Church. He worked hard for the breaking of double voting and for voter registration.

Then we had other very strong players in this whole process and that was Judge Dexter Brooks. Dexter was a law student during that time at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. One of his professors was Barry Nakell. Barry then became involved as an act of gratis and love for justice, he became involved in the whole issue of breaking double voting. He became the attorney for the procedure, and to my knowledge he got no money for what he did, nor did Dexter. So they kept us abreast of the Voting Rights Act. They worked for the redistricting and all that had to be done there to work for improved districting for better representation of ethnic people. And then worked with

us to gain voting registrars, roving registrars, being sure that we had persons who could register people at schools and elsewhere beyond their own precinct. That was a quite a concern, seeing all that happen.

One day we were asking, there was Herman, and Adolph, and Harbert, and different ones of us there, and we were before the board of elections. They had us there with a transcriber as if we were before the court, a transcriber there for our being there that day. We were appealing for this roving registrar just so we could get more people registered. Well, we were denied that day, but as we came back, one of the persons, I won't give you his name, we stopped at the Old Foundry Restaurant, and this person said, "I can understand now why people riot and why there are fires." He was so frustrated that we had done the legal thing, the right thing, and we had appealed for something that was just and fair, and we were denied.

Well, you perhaps know the history, that most of the registrars throughout the county at that time and during the early '60s, and into the '60s, were the dominant race, were Caucasian. Often they were farm owners, and the people that worked for them often were Native American or Black, and people often felt intimidated to go even to the house. Well, they had to go to the house to get registered. As well as that, for a while there was the literacy test. There are all of these ways of denying and discouraging people from participating in the political system. So these were revolutionary days because the system was being opened, wide open.

Brenda Brooks, Howard Brooks' late wife, she was one of our key registrars. She worked with a passion. She became a roving registrar. She wanted to see her people

empowered, wanted to see Black people empowered also, but particularly her Indian people.

Then we had Mrs. Lady Strickland. That's Brother Homer, attorney Homer's mother, and mother of W. D. Strickland. She was a registrar. These are people that, oh, they registered with a passion. They would go to church events. They would go to any kind of event they could to get people registered to vote.

So over this period of time all of these things were happening, and as I said, in the double voting finally, after working our socks off in the legislative caucus rooms in Raleigh, going there time after time, pleading for them to break double voting legislatively, we finally decided we'd do a march.

So about 1974, along in there, it's in the document, we marched on Raleigh. Got a permit. Brenda, I think, went up and got the permit for us. We got our permit. There were policemen up on the roof, and here we came.

That morning we had a prayer meeting. We met at Stan Jones' skating rink there across from the old town hall of Pembroke. That morning we had prayer, Blind Cleve Jacobs was there to march, and James Woods, and others. Mr. Early Maynor met us up there. He was the Executive Director of the Indian Commission, I think, at that time. Well, anyway, Mr. Foster Jacobs, a saint of God from the Sandy Plains Church. We had some wonderful people up there. Oh my, I forget the gentleman's name. Brother Isaiah. I think preacher Isaiah. I think he was there that day. Isaiah. What's his last name, preacher Isaiah?

MM: Locklear.

RLM: Yeah, Locklear. Preacher Isaiah. I think he was there that day. So we went to Raleigh, and after all this time in the caucus we marched seven times around the legislative building believing it would count for something, something good would happen. We had the Emanuels, Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel from up at Bethel Hill Baptist Church. They were part of it up in Saddletree. So we had quite a gathering of people from across the county.

But that morning we had prayer, and Mr. Peter Brooks, the father of Martin, and Howard, and Bernice and Joyce, Mr. Peter Brooks came to the meeting, and he was ready to march, and he got a call that his sister had become ill and that they needed him. Well, rather than march that day he left us, all the glory and the joy of this climactic moment of challenging the system, bringing about change, and he left and went to his sick sister. Now that was integrity. That was sacrifice. He could have gone up there and gotten into the glory and the fun of it all, but he and to miss it all because he loved his family and she was more important than sharing the glory of a group of people who were going up there to march.

MM: Tell us a little about it.

RLM: I'll never forget that. So we went up there. We marched. Legislators came out on the street, met us out there in front of the legislative building. They said, "We'll do so-and-so." They said, "We'll give you two Blacks and two Indians on the School Board right away." And they did. Harbert went on then, Harbert Moore, and I forget who the others were, but we got four ethnic people on the School Board as a consequence of that march that day. It was a great victory.

So, anyway, during those early 70s not only did these things happen, and then finally we went to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, as you know, we continued to press. We didn't stop there until we got stricken the double voting so that no longer could persons in these charter city units vote for the county school system. That was sent down from the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia, remanded back to the legislature of North Carolina, and that issue was resolved.

During all this time we also had in about '74, we had a referendum on merger. Herman Dial told me, he said, "If you'll come to the commissioners, and you'll make this appeal," I think that's the way it was, so we urged that they authorize a referendum. So a referendum was authorized, and we lost, 10,000 to 5,000. But it got before the people, the issue of our coming together as a county, as whites, and Blacks, and Indians and working together for the good of this county was far better than being separated in five or six different systems. Then, of course, back in the '60s, you know, there were also the Smilings, and the poor Smilings were in another little school system. There was actually four-way segregation in '58 when I came to Robeson County.

So, I've just rambled, but wow, what a story of Godly people, many of them prayer meeting people, who understood at that time that the call of God was to stand up for what was right and fair, and to challenge the systems of denial. And to cry out, and to believe that they could have their rights as Americans and they could be whatever they wanted to be like any other American, and that they could break the systems that were denying them.

MM: Tell me a little bit about the merger effort in '74 because it seems like you all were way ahead of your time to conceive of that. Who worked for that, and what was the inspiration of it, I mean, especially so soon off of the double voting?

RLM: Well, that was concurrent with the double voting time.

MM: Yeah.

RLM: I may have to look back and see, but I think it was '74 when we did that. Well, we were working to alter and to correct an injustice of double voting. That was always wrong, always would be, and you can imagine the kinds of feelings that came out of the community that was resisting and all kinds of foolish things about, "We pay taxes, etc., etc." It was so unfortunate. So many people thought that it was right, it was actually right and just to have double voting.

Anyway, probably, I don't remember the origin except that anybody knew that five or six administrative units was duplicating expenses, duplicating administration, reducing the effect of a dollar for the student. It wasn't sensible, and it was divisive. It continued to give community division, racial division. It fostered division. So I guess it was just a part of the understanding that ultimately breaking double voting wasn't what was needed. It was to bring the whole system together as one system, and that was what was needed for this county.

So I guess you shoot for the highest goals as well as work hard for a lower goal, and you accomplish what you can at what level you can and continue to move toward what is ultimate. And so it was timely to get this ultimate concern before us because that's where we needed to go. I think it was just a part of the whole thinking and concept

that if we are really the people we need to be in Robeson County we need to work together.

MM: Um-hum. Right.

RLM: And as a Christian you want to break down barriers. You want people to respect each other, and you want people to related to each other based on respect for the rights, and the dignity, and the power, and the resources of each other, not on accommodation. Accommodation is paternalism, and so to empower people is to give reconciliation, is to provide community based on respect for the rights, and for the contributions, and for the potential of each other. And so a unified, merged system was ultimately the way to do that.

MM: Right. It fit in with that vision. What were some of the reactions of some of the Indian and African-American communities to that proposal at that time?

RLM: Of merger?

MM: Um-hum.

RLM: Well, I think that there were probably Native Americans that felt it was unnecessary, that the main thing was to get the monkey off our backs so that we could determine our own election system. I mean our own Board of Education, and have authority to rule and to lead our own Board of Education. So I think there were some of our native people that probably felt that it was not timely or unnecessary. But I don't remember right now the different aspects of resistance. As you see, by a 10,000 to 5,000 vote we got a lot of Indian and a lot of Black votes to make that vote possible.

But I would say we had few if any real resistance from native people or from Black people. I would say our major resistance came from those in authority, those in

power. But I don't remember now the arguments that were used against merger. But I was thrilled when finally in about '88 we did have complete merger of the systems and have the first Native American superintendent of schools in the history of the state of North Carolina of a multi-cultural system, so that was a great plus.

During that time, '74, I ran for the school board and became a member of the school board for about four years. Then when I went to Prospect Church as pastor I felt it was too close a relationship from the school board to the church to the local school there that I felt for me to be the most effective pastor that I could be I didn't need to remain on the school board and serve that local church, so I resigned from the school board when I became pastor of that church.

MM: So your priority was ministering.

RLM: Ministering to that local community and to that church which is a large church, as you know, the largest Native American church in the nation in our Methodist connection.

MM: Right. Describe that tension a little bit, what you saw as the kind of conflicts you would have come up against, and how that was playing out.

RLM: Well, I'll not mention any names, but we had teachers and leadership in that local school that were part of the church, and we had tensions in that community over the school and the community. It would have just made it difficult for me as a school board member who has to make decisions that aren't always middle of the road, but sometimes fall to the right or to the left of an issue.

It put me in a position where I could have part of the congregation cheering and celebrating, and part of them angry as fire because I may have voted the way they didn't

want me to vote. I just felt that before it wasn't a major issue because we didn't have a school right next to the church. We didn't have people who were in the church that belonged to that school either as teachers, or employees of some sort, or administrators.

I just felt that to fulfill my calling first as a pastor of the church, we had others on that board now, we had Native Americans on that board, African-Americans on that board. It was a new day. That board was beginning to open up because of the voter registration, because of open elections now, and because of the process of breaking double voting.

I went there because I thought I was needed and I could give a voice for the Native American, and for the African-American, and for the white community in the county. I felt for the county system that it was important to go on that board, and to take my voice to the board in '74. By '78 that was not that necessary, and so I didn't feel like I was backing off from any major justice concern at the school level that was more important than being an effective pastor at a church. That church had its tensions and its problems, and my staying on the school board I felt would just contribute to tension and division.

MM: Um-hum. Talk about Prospect a little bit more generally, because as you know it's an important area for Indian people as a whole, politically, socially, religiously. A lot of us sort of kinship-wise emerge from there, and a lot of us have that community as part of our family backgrounds or as part of our spiritual, religious backgrounds. So many people have worked or attended that school. The mood of Prospect seemed to—I don't know if it was typical. I guess I'm asking, was the mood of Prospect in the 1970s typical or atypical, do you think, of the Indian community as a whole, and could you talk a little bit about what it was like to work there as someone who was working on behalf of

Native people, but also had the kind of responsibilities you had to be fair, to make those decisions?

RLM: Prospect, I admired the church and the people in the church because many of the people had a strong sense of commitment to social justice, and they wanted to see change in the county, because they owned land, because they had relationships to each other and numbers are important. There was a lot of confidence in that community, a lot of optimism that we can make a difference. I enjoyed being there because I could see a lot of energy in that community for change and for improvement in the county, and I worked very closely with Adolph Dial, as you know, and with Harbert, and others in that church that were social justice and empowerment-oriented.

There were some, of course, in that church as in other churches and other communities that were more status quo-oriented. Don't push too far. Don't go too far. There were others that felt like those who were pushing for the total empowerment of people were going too slow, and there was reaction to those folks that were felt not to go fast enough in change. So there was a lot of energy in that community.

There's some that were sort of status quo in their attitude. There were some that were, "let's go for the long haul, and let's alter and empower people, and change the systems." And then there were others that, "let's have it our way as quickly as possible." "Let's get it done, and others of you are too slow, and you're not doing what you ought to be doing." So in terms of the life of the community, it had all facets of energy.

But there was that energy that would produce a tremendous volunteer fire department, whether they related to the church or not they were related in helping a little church in South Carolina called Hickory Grove. You had a school that was producing

professionals, doctors, lawyers with a strong emphasis on excellence. And whatever you say about Mr. James Arthur Jones, he worked his socks off to have his teachers and have his students believe that they were somebody, and that they could produce, and that they could contribute. And that it didn't matter whether they were from Prospect or where they were from, they were responsible to be the best they could be. So you had a lot that excelled. Mr. Danford Dial, he caused students to believe that they could be the best. So there were these strong leaders in the school that challenged the kids to be all that they could be.

And then, of course, there were people that would not do that and would somehow discourage students because of their families and so forth, would say disparaging things. "Well, you're a this, or that, or the other, from this family or that. You're daddy wasn't anything. You're not going to be anything." Those things happen, too, in our communities.

But I liked the fact that there were pushers there in that school in leadership that were continuing to say in the way they operated, "You're somebody. You can be the best, and I'm challenging you to be all that you can be." So that was good in the school.

That kind of strong, directive leadership caused people who wanted perhaps some concessions, didn't like to abide by tough rules about how to use the school property, etc., and that caused tension in the community, but the school system produced. You've got to admit that. They produced kids that wanted to be all they could be and to achieve. And to come out of very moderate economic circumstances of many Prospect kids, there probably isn't a better story of achievement, of student achievement, than that school. I

was not speaking disparagingly of any other community. I was impressed with the community.

They wanted me to come there. They got criticized because they asked a non-Indian to come be their pastor, but that was their decision, and at that time I didn't feel I was being paternalistic to respond to that. I felt I was being a partner in ministry and in the whole social calling of that time to bring about change and empowerment of people. I felt it was right.

MM: Why do you think they chose you?

RLM: Well, I think they chose me because I had proven that I could be trusted. The Indian people knew that I was their friend, and that I wasn't a big daddy, that I was willing to walk with people through their struggles, not telling people what to do but trying to be a part of leading people to something better. Whatever I asked or expected of others, I was willing to demonstrate myself. I'd been there to preach, and they knew something about me, and they trusted me, so they felt that I could be their friend in ministry and their friend in struggle.

MM: Would you want to talk a little bit about the emergence of the Tuscarora organization at that time. I know some of their activity centered on Prospect School in the early '70s before you would have been pastor there.

RLM: Before I was there Mr. Danford Dial was principal, and those were painful days. Of course, some of that leadership was also participating in the life of Prospect, too. That's what I'm saying, that there were energies for immediate change and for not understanding some of the directions that were taking place that were good and were

lasting. I was not in the community then, but those were times of real tension, as you know.

Whenever you get emotions enflamed it's very difficult to reason, so those were times when people have been denied, and people have been overlooked, and people have not been treated with dignity and respect. Often rather than engendering positive emotions of gathering together and being all that we can be together to make the changes, we just become very angry and lose our sense, sometimes, of direction. And fail to think through what we're doing and the consequences of what we're doing, and what effect it will have on the changes we really want. So out of frustration I think people who have felt denied through poverty as well as through ethnicity, through various aspects of denial they just sort of exploded for a while. As you know there were fires back then, and we never did know just exactly where they came from. AIM came here for awhile.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE A

BEGINNING OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

MM: Here we go. Explosive and dangerous times.

RLM: Dangerous times. But I want to commend people for, no matter what mistakes may have been made in confrontation during that time, commend people for getting excited about what they believed would be better, and then to respect and be thankful for people that had to defend the system, or had to defend the institution when it wasn't understood that you don't make these changes over night, that there have to be certain rules that you abide by. So here we had the Indians fighting Indians in a sense in those confrontations. That was very unfortunate.

I also commend the restraint of whites in authority during some of those tense times. Had there been less restraint and more authoritarian resistance and reaction to some of those days of tension it would have been horrible what may have happened. So we have to commend, even though we felt that there was such denial of Native people through the systems of that day, there are people that were in power that we have to appreciate because of their restraint in trying to deal with, and reconcile, and negotiate with resistance, strong resistance efforts, and strong aggressive efforts during those days that were often what we would call civil injustice or civil disobedience is what we would call it.

There were some felonies, as you know. The burnings of Old Main. The Old Main situation, that was a great rally point for Native Americans, Janie Maynor, Mr. Dial, whose name I mentioned, Danford, and others who were part of Save Old Main Movement. It was a proud moment for Natives to stand up for their tradition, for their background, for their history, and to insist on something being done. It was Holshouser, I believe, the governor who was sympathetic and caring at that time. It was just good. Bad that it burned, but it was good that so many rallied around that issue.

As they began to bring some closure and some commitments that something would be done, then what I personally did was seize upon Janie Maynor, who used to be my parishioner, Janie Maynor Locklear and Brenda Brooks. I said, "Look, let's come together and work together to break double voting." So those two ladies and myself, we brought together a group at Janie Maynor Locklear's dad's home, Mr. Maynor.

MM: Theodore.

RLM: Theodore. Mr. Theodore and Miss Elizabeth's home, and now Janie lived there, I guess, with her husband, Jackie. Jackie?

MM: Nicky.

RLM: Nicky. I forget. Nicky.

MM: Nicky, yeah.

RLM: I think that was their home then, not her dad's home. They were living there then. So we brought together in her living room a group of people, Herman Dial, who was now county commissioner, Bobby Dean Locklear. That was back in the early seventies and said, "Let's go for it. Let's develop a strategy to break double voting." During this time voter registration was going on. People were getting empowered. So that was the beginning of the initial organized movement to break double voting, there in the living room.

MM: After the success of saving Old Main.

RLM: Yeah. After Old Main had been saved, essentially, and brought their energies then into this new direction.

MM: If we could go back a minute. Part of what we're trying to get at in this process of doing these interviews is understanding the nature of divisions within ethnic groups. So when you said a minute ago, "Indians fighting Indians," it struck me as an important, sensitive for sure, and an important point to kind of try to characterize a little bit what those disputes were about. To what extent were they personal? To what extent were they class oriented? To what extent did they have to do with different visions of the future or different versions of the past? Do you sort of understand what I'm asking?

RLM: Not exactly.

MM: It kind of sounds like from what you've described so far there was this period of tension that came to a resolution where people were somewhat coming together around double voting, but before that, I mean people came together to a certain extent in Save Old Main and to a certain extent in double voting, before that though there was somewhat of a—I'm just sort of wondering.

RLM: The late '60s.

MM: Yeah, the late '60s.

MM: Since you were here at that time, to the extent that you can recollect, tell us what those divisions were about.

RLM: And as you can tell, I was busy. I was pastoring all the time. In fact, from '69 on I pastored a local church and also directed the [Robeson County] Church and Community Center. So from '69 on until '76 I was doing both. I was deeply engrossed in the commitment of getting moneys and empowering people through voter registration, dealing with the double voting issue, dealing with the merger issues and getting that vote before the people.

Then dealing with employment issues. In '70 I was a member of the North Carolina Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Brenda, Adolph Dial, and I. Brenda Brewington Brooks, and Adolph Dial, and Bob Mangum were members of the commission advisory committee.

Then we brought in about '72 a hearing on political and employment practices in Robeson County. At that time in Robeson County seventy-four percent of the employment in Robeson County, the county government, was white. There was not one Native American or Black who was a supervisor of any department, and there were

fourteen percent Blacks and twelve percent Indians in county employment, back in about '72. From that came Ben Floyd who took on a secretary in his office of the Clerk of the Court, and then finally the commissioners voted a split vote and put Pete Jacobs in as the director of the tax department of the county. He was the first non-white supervisor, to my knowledge, in the history of Robeson County in county government. Now all this was happening also during that period from '70 to '76 along in there.

Interesting aside. A good friend of ours, Howard Cooper, was chairman of the Board of Commissioners, county commissioners, and for Pete Jacobs to become the director of the tax division, whatever the title was of that department, the vote was split. Howard Cooper broke the tie in favor of Pete Jacobs. Howard Cooper lost the next election. There was a price to pay for being courageous and doing what was right.

But the thing that I think was wonderful during those days of change is that there were people that could have stopped a lot of things that were happening. In my Methodist circles they could have had me moved. There were complaints that were taken to a former district superintendent. He had no power over me at that time because he was former. He was not current. They didn't go to the current one and say, "Move Bob."

It was interesting that they vented. They let it be known. They were not supposed to like what was going on. They told this gentleman. He met me at an annual conference and said, "What are you and the Indians doing in Robeson County?" What I learned was that there were people that down deep in their hearts they knew things were wrong, that it needed to change.

A leader of another denomination said, "Its true, finally," he said, "our heel has been on their necks, but we don't want their heel on our necks. Our heel has been on

their necks, but we don't want their heel on our necks." This was one of the religious leaders in the Caucasian church.

There were these folks though who knew what needed to happen, and instead of really fighting to stop it they backed off and let it happen. Even though you say, "That isn't very courageous," that's better than fighting and denying a process that they could have deferred for months and maybe years. But things began to happen because there were some people that knew that it was right.

But in terms of what you're saying, why were people in opposition to each other? Well, as you know, the identity issue, the Lumbee identity issue is long standing. From the very time of the naming of the Native American people of Robeson Lumbees back in '54 or so, along in there, it's been controversial as you know. Many Native Americans say, "No. No. That's just a given name." So Tuscarora was a historic name. I don't know the history of the Tuscarora movement, but I do know that there has been a lack of unanimity in the support of the Lumbee name over the years. That much I know.

As there begins to come energy for change there are people that perhaps were feeling that the Lumbee community was more accommodating than challenging the systems. Accommodating to rather than altering and challenging the system. As authentic Indian people with an authentic Indian name, maybe we can make a difference that nobody else has made. Then with that identification and with national movement and relationships to national energies—and I don't know, I'm just speculating, such as AIM—there came this feeling that we can make a difference that the others are not making, and that we can get it done since they're not getting it done. These late '60s were times when people were having their hopes raised because of the Civil Rights

Movement and all that was happening for ethnic people. And perhaps many of the people in the Tuscarora movement felt like, "We're the ones that are going to deliver the change, and we'll do it our way," and, "We can't wait on these other guys." I don't know.

You see, I'm at a loss because I was not dealing integrally with the Tuscarora movement, but just dealing with the symptoms of the consequences at times of the Tuscarora movement, but one of my best friends identifies with the Tuscarora movement right now here in the county. He's very sincere. He's a wonderful Christian gentleman, and wonderful man. And there are others, but this one I particularly know about.

MM: That's helpful. That definitely helps because it's the past and the present sort of wrapping up together to try to figure out how to solve the problems that everyone was facing. That seems important. The other level of conflict and agreement that people are going to be interested in, I think, is the extent to which the Native and African-American communities unified to accomplish things during this time period. From your observations, what did they work on together? What did they not work on together? What were some of the tensions and agreements?

RLM: There came, pragmatically I think, different aspects of cooperation. For instance, in our caucuses, we had the Methodist caucus, Indian caucus, and we had the Black caucus, and they were working for political empowerment of people. We worked hard in our program from the Native American caucus.

Let me tell you what happened. After a couple years of these two caucuses operating separately they came together, the Black and the Indian caucus, to work together under the aegis of the Church and Community Center. They came together to do voter registration, and the Reverend Charles McDowell, an African-American who is now

bishop of a denomination that he has founded, and Reverend Dufrene Cummings, those two became the employees for voter registration. They just worked their socks off registering folks. So there they were sitting in the same office, side by side.

Then we worked in the Fairmont community with Joy Johnson and got a lot accomplishment of voter registration. So there was a lot of helping, Blacks and Indians helping each other to empower the people. It was beautiful. That was very beautiful.

And then there were good relationships on the school board as we began to get Blacks and Indians that were elected by the populace and not by the injustice of double voting. For a number of years Major Greene was the chairman of the Board of Education. The majority of the students and the majority of the representatives probably on the board at that time were Native American. I mean the plurality. It showed a lot of good relationships. There were efforts always being made to work together, Native people and African-American people. There are always differences, and divisions, and separations.

One of the big things that happened in recent years that saw native people and people of all races actually working together was the development and the establishment of the public defender program. That came out of cooperative efforts. We established, and you'll see in these writings that I have here, we established in about 1980, '4, '5, or '6, along in there, we established a justice project for Robeson County. Harbert and I were the initiators for that along with folks that came out of New England that were helping. Out of that there came the strong cry for a more just court system and the public defender became a consequence of that. We rallied. We labored for that. We caucused for that in Raleigh, but it wasn't until the death of Julian [Pierce] that it was finally given to the community.

MM: Is that right? So when did you start?

RLM: After his death.

MM: When did you start working on it?

RLM: The public defender was (). We started working on it about '84.

MM: Eighty-four. And Julian was killed in '89?

RLM: Eighty-six? I don't know when he was killed, but we worked on it for a number of years, and kept working at the legislative level, too, and finally after his death this was one of the big issues to have a public defender, and that's one of the things that was made available to the county. Then we worked with the Indian Commission in those late '80s and established the Dispute Resolution Center. Out of bad came some very good things, too, out of that horrible situation.

I think in the Tuscarora movement, as you know, they're relatives. Tuscaroras who were cousins, or brothers, or sisters to Lumbees. I think it's out of the sense of identity and what gives me more authenticity as an Indian. Then the conflict perhaps came out of the fact of some feeling that others were too slow and that they had a better way to get moving on things that needed to be changed.

Then in the early '70s the Methodist Church had Vera Maynor. Her husband was a Mr. Lowry, E. T. Lowry. Miss Vera was the first executive director of LRDA, and for a while she had no money and so the program for Methodists volunteers, we supplied money for her office. There was some travel. She didn't get a salary, but she got a little money for her office for travel and for office expenses. For about six months she was a Methodist volunteer. It was the executive director of LRDA. That was about '71 or somewhere along in there.

MM: Do you want to talk a little bit about the founding of LRDA, what you remember about that happening and how it came about?

RLM: I was invited to be a part of the conversations in the initiating energies, but because I was not Native American I was not invited to be a part of the board, but I got a chance to participate in the beginnings, Bruce Jones, and Robert Jones, and Miss Vera, Brother Simeon Cummings. He was on the first board, Reverend Simeon Cummings, and different ones. I hate to mention, I mean, the names will get you in trouble because you leave out so many. But there were so many good people that got involved back then in this vision that we could empower ourselves in social programming, particularly. Do things for ourselves in education. We were very much a part of encouraging that and doing what we could, and as I said, supporting Miss Vera and having her on staff with us. The Robeson County Church and Community Center was spun off. That got started in '69. She was actually a part of our adjunct staff in the early '70s because of being a Methodist volunteer.

It was exciting. Helen Scheirbeck, and there were others involved in LRDA, but it was exciting to see this new opportunity for Native Americans to have monies for programming. One of the greatest things was the talent search.

One of my heroes is James Harold Woods. James is a minister of the gospel. He's so unselfish. Here they were getting jobs for people. James was a school teacher, and then he became a community outreach worker with the schools up at Magnolia. Eventually he resigned and just became full-time pastor. His church paid just a very small salary for full-time pastor, but that's the kind of commitment. He's been a

volunteer minister at the prison for these years. James was treasure, and to my knowledge was without a dime all of those early years of LRDA.

One of his passions, and others, was the talent search, to get these doctors, to get these lawyers, to get these engineers, these professionals. That was one of the greatest things that ever happened to our community. Probably we have a higher percentage of doctors, lawyers, and other professionals of any Indian community in the United States. It was fantastic, the birth of professions.

Then there came economic self-determination. Adolph began to buy up land and to make a shopping center. Then he, and Dr. Brooks, and Robert Jones and others building a bank, first Indian bank. This was all early '70s, just the explosion of empowerment. Whatever my dream was, I can climb the mountain, and I can get there if I work at it, and I trust God to help me, and give people an opportunity. We'll get there. It's amazing what happened in just a few years.

MM: That's right. It really is.

RLM: I'm proud of this community. We've still got our warts. It pains me when we cancel out each other when we could do so much better than we do at times. It pains me when Indians act like the dominant race and treat each other like they have been treated. That pains me, but that's the nature of humanity.

When we're given power and privilege we either act in altruistic ways to see that justice and rights are bestowed on others, or we act selfishly. That always brings about injustice, and discrimination, and denial. Indian people are no better than anyone else. They, too, have to guard against injustice, and often it's perpetrated against each other. But I'm proud of Indian people. I'm proud of this county.

I came back. I was in the mountains, and I was asked to serve a church as a retired pastor, to serve the First Methodist Church there. I haven't told everybody about this, but I was asked to be the associate pastor in the biggest church in the county, the Methodist Church. That would have been a great middle class retirement opportunity, but I wanted to come home. This is home. This is where my kids grew up, and I have Lumbee grandchildren, as you know. I had to come home, and my wife agreed. We had to come home because we felt that we still could make a contribution. And we've tried since I've been back. I've tried to make a contribution.

I'm proud of all of our people in this county. Now we have a Hispanic community that's growing. We have to prove as Indians, and Blacks, and whites who've been here all these years, and we're working out our differences, we're trying to eliminate the racism, and the bigotry, and the denial. Now we have another ethnic group, and we have to show compassion and a commitment to the empowerment of these people so that they can have as much dignity and pride in being a Robesonian as anybody else.

We can never take for granted. There's always the struggle, and we must always be on guard to challenge racism, and bigotry, and denial, whenever it appears, regardless of what color it is. If Native Americans are mistreating other races and mistreating each other, that's just as wrong as white people or Black people mistreating other people. So we always have to remind ourselves of our need to follow the Master, and to understand that He cared about everyone, and He came to help us understand that His life, and death, and resurrection was so that there would be neither Greek nor Jew, male or female, bond or freed, but all could be one in Christ. That was his calling, and that's my calling. That's

our calling, and that's the calling of our Native American community, and all of our communities.

We've got a lot of problems in the county. Education is affected. Everything's affected by the drug traffic. Everything's affected by loss of jobs through NAFTA, and the terrible loss of 12,000 or so jobs that were in garment manufacturing, shoe manufacturing, textiles. It's just so painful.

I and others worked so hard to see people empowered, to see equal opportunities, and all of this, and then now to see that people have no jobs and have little hope of jobs in so many instances. That's painful.

MM: Are we coming to a point now like we were in the '50s and '60s where things have got to change and we need a social movement to make it change, or can you even compare the two moments of crisis?

RLM: Well, I think now we're learning to work together. We're pragmatic. It isn't whether we learn or not. We are working together. We're all in this together. Our economics are affected by this circumstance. It doesn't matter what color you are. All of us are dealing with the economics of the community. We're all affected by what is happening right now.

I feel that it's a different day. Back in the '60s people were denied because of the color of their skin, because of their culture. People have always been denied when they're poor and don't have friends regardless of their color, but we're in a more common circumstance now that affects everybody in a similar way. We're sharing power, and I know we still have to work at it. We're sharing opportunities, but now our economic resources and opportunities have diminished to a great extent. Now we're having to

rebuild an economic system that will provide for the people of our county, and provide the jobs, and provide the pride that we can all have because we can work and we can have the things that are necessary to life.

There won't be an out migration like there used to be, I don't think. There may be some, but there's a reason to live here in Robeson now, you know. I can be that nurse. I can be that doctor. I can go to school. Like Adolph had to go to Boston, to Boston College, to get his masters degree because he couldn't go to a school in North Carolina and get a masters degree. As a Native American the system wouldn't allow it. These doors are all open. Instead of having a flight I think, hopefully, we're going to have more and more energy spent in trying to provide the jobs and provide the opportunities we need for all the people in the county.

Secondly, I think eventually we're going to come to a point where we're going to work together like we've never worked to snuff out as much as possible this drug traffic. Because money is so powerful, and the traffic is so predominant, that we're all suffering regardless of our color in our culture. We're all suffering from this. All of our families are suffering. It's insidious. It's eroding at our fiber as a community. So I think that rather than fighting each other there's more joining of hands, and hearts, and commitments to work together to make this the best county it can be. I'm an optimist.

MM: You have to be to be a Christian.

RLM: I believe in the resurrection, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." I rambled all around. You've been patient with me.

MM: You've done a great job. We've covered a lot, actually, in a very short period of time.

RLM: Yes, and I jump back and forth.

MM: It's good though. It's very good. I know there's some things in this outline that may be worth addressing or not, such as the Rural Advancement Fund Justice Project.

RLM: Yeah.

MM: We didn't talk much about this. We didn't talk a lot about the '80s. We talked some about the '80s. I don't know if you—?

RLM: Well that was, in the '80s now you're beginning in that situation to deal with the court system. You're dealing with the system that allowed calendaring to cause people to lose their jobs because they were calendared to come day after day, and the court still wouldn't receive them. And a seeming disregard for a person's dignity to come and sit, and sit, and waste a day and not be received into the court, their hearing not to be held or their trial, and people losing their jobs because of it. People pleading guilty just to get out of losing their job.

Court-appointed attorneys, some working for very little, did a wonderful job of course, but others spending little or no time with their clients for whatever reason, encouraging them to plead guilty just to get it over with. No money to do investigation. Poverty breeds injustice. I don't care what color you are. In the legal system with the public defender there was a chance that with a staff they could do investigation, they could do their homework to prove the person was not as guilty as they would have been otherwise, or they were innocent rather than guilty. That was so important.

That was some of what was beginning to happen in the '80s, a dispute resolution center where people could get together before they had a court issue they would opt, and

elect, and accept the dispute resolution process rather than litigation in the court. That would save our courts a lot of time, and it would bring about an attempt for some kind of reconciliation. That was good. I don't think it still exists. It was here when I left, but when I came back, I was away for nine years, I think at some point it dissipated. But anyway, that was important. Birth was given to that during the '80s.

Then there was the election of Julian running for office to challenge what he felt was a part of the reason for the injustices in the way the court was administered prosecutorially. That was a part of the reason he ran, I'm sure.

In the '80s it was a look at the new empowerment so that the people who were often the victims and the denied were now the people who were gaining power to challenge the system to work for people that weren't their color, to be the justice promoters, and to be able to work for systems that would be fair so that a poor white man would get as good a break as the rich white man, as the Indian or the Black. There were Indians and Blacks that were making this possible for whites or for other races so no longer was it the paternalism of one race having all the power, and being able to call all the shots whether they had the office or not, they dictated what happened. That was gone, and there was new emerging of power of the people.

MM: Would you say that Indians and Blacks being empowered generally did apportion justice more equally?

RLM: Oh, yeah. In my opinion, yes. Blacks got involved at the Parkview Housing Authority back in, I guess, the early '70s. Housing coming out of the church community. The Blacks were much more directed by then. In this little thing I wrote, they were more directed in their challenging of political systems. The Native American

community, if you're a Christian you sort of let things ride and let other people take care of the politics, and you worked for the personal spiritual salvation and personal nurturing and development.

Like one religious leader told me. He said, "You can't change city hall." Well, I'm here to tell you Christian people changed city hall in Robeson County. It was Godly people. It wasn't just people who didn't care about the church or didn't care about the things of faith. It was people of faith that were committed, across all the races of the county, that were committed to change in the county. So, yes, I think the empowerment has produced positive effects for the whole county. Of course it has.

MM: Well, one more question. Well, it seems it's different even from when I was—I mean I didn't grow up here—but visiting here in the '70s and the early '80s, it's a different place in many ways, many, many ways.

RLM: Sure it is.

MM: I was interested in what you said about some of the differences between the Indian and Black church, or Indian Christians and African-American Christians. I think there's the perception of the Black church's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement has been very directive and very assertive politically. Would you say that was true here in Robeson County as well?

RLM: Of Blacks being—yeah. Very much so. There were some Black leaders that were milking the system as much as possible without overly challenging the system, and pragmatism. There were others that were challenging the system with more risk, but Blacks essentially have been able to exploit the system for good, or to challenge and try to change the system for good.

Our Native American people have been doing that too over the '60s, '70s, and '80s like I'm saying, but the church often has allowed it to happen among Christians coalescing in caucuses rather than a local church being committed. Now we're coming to the stage with the Healing Lodge where we are at the point where we're trying to get the whole church to be open, committed, and aggressively engaged in the whole life of the community from the drug issue, to addiction, to STDs, abuse, and all of this, as a part of the Christian conscience and Christian holistic ministry. That's beginning to happen.

In past years one of our major Indian denominations had a vote opposing the unionization of Converse [shoe factory], I think it was, years ago. Well, no matter what you believed, if you knew the labor movement you knew it came out of Christian vision, that people who are exploited at the workplace needed opportunities. As a church you should always want that to happen, and if unions would help make it happen rather than non-union bargaining with your employers then a union becomes necessary. It may not be the best thing in the world, but it may be better than exploitation that's being perpetrated.

Unions can help a just cause. In this county where there were no unions at least as a church you don't want to say, "We oppose the union," because that was an opportunity for people to get a better opportunity to be treated with greater dignity, get better wages, etc., better benefits. There are a lot of efforts that have been made in this county that have proven well without unions. My concern is the worker, that the worker get the best opportunity possible to work with dignity and to make as much money as possible related to the type of job that they're in compared to the cost of living and compared to the nation.

Typically in the South we've been denied, and our wages have been lower because we haven't had unions, and you know that. I do, too. Unions can be corrupt. They can be as sinful as a snake, and I know that and you do too. But it was disappointing that one of our Indian denominations had a vote apparently in their official meeting that they opposed the unionization of Converse. That was my understanding.

MM: You see some movement in a slightly different direction there with the Healing Lodge?

RLM: Yeah, yeah. One of our leaders of a major denomination, a Native leader, said, "Folks, this is the church's problem," when little April Locklear Oxendine and Commander Craig Wilkins came to share with us. They came to us at our co-op, and we helped bring together over at the Baptist building an ecumenical group of people to hear what this terrible problem was in Robeson County, this STD problem two or three years ago. One of our Baptist leaders said, "Folks, this isn't someone else's problem. This is our problem, and as a church we must deal with our problem." Boy, that's a powerful statement.

The church is beginning to deal with life as it is, and the ways we can put our love into action to bringing about change for others. Not just treating the symptoms, but dealing with root causes. Why are people in this problem and in this trouble, and what can we do to empower people to get out of it?

I believe in a church that promotes Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and promotes personal salvation and personal spiritual growth, but I believe in a church that understands that God expects his people to be a people of justice, and of love, and of mercy. What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love mercy, and to

walk humbly with your God? To do justice. Love, as John points out in his letter, "See people in need and say, 'I'll pray for you,' or 'God bless you.'" He said, "How can you expect that you're loving people when it's just in tongue and in word?" He said, "Love must show itself in action, in word. It must show itself in deeds, in action."

So I believe wherever the church is being the church it not only is bringing people to a personal knowledge of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, it's empowering people to care about each other and to care about the systems that affect people's lives, and to work to bring about change in those systems, and to bring about redress to people's circumstances, and to bring service to people wherever possible. Love must show itself in action.

I have a little saying that probably I borrowed and then adjusted it. But anyway, love is drawn by opportunity, not driven by obligation, and I think that's where the church is. We have to respond to opportunity.

MM: Well, you've been a living example of it.

RLM: I've tried to be faithful, and I've been a team member. I'm no big daddy. I've been fortunate to be able to align myself with people who care, and people who want to see something happen, and who are task oriented like I am, and who believe it's Christian, that this is God's work, and that we must do all we can do while we live to bring about the change. That's the way I've tried to act. There are times when I've had to be up front and pulling. As leader there's times when I've tried to push. There are times when I've walked along side, but I've tried never to be a paternalist. I've tried to be a partner in the struggle, and I continue to try to be a partner.

MM: Thank you. I appreciate it.

RLM: Thank you.

MM: I hope you write your book.

[TAPE IS TURNED OFF AND THEN BACK ON.]

MM: Okay.

RLM: I just thought it might be well to tell you a little incident. During the time of working for the breaking of double voting and bringing about a change in the county on one occasion we were in a restaurant. It was a snow day so the teachers had gotten out early I think that day. It was there in Pembroke. Herman Dial, Bobby Dean Locklear, and I were together, and we were going to Lumberton for some purpose. Some of the teachers there said to us rather quietly, "We appreciate what's going on and what's happening. We can't get involved." The essence of what they were saying, "We can't get involved. You know how it is, but we're for you, and we appreciate what's going on." I think one of my friends that was involved over the years in social change had a teacher come to his back door and say, "I appreciate what's going on. I can't get involved, but I thank you for what you're doing."

So here was a system that had people afraid for their jobs to speak what they believed was right and just. We're Americans. We believe in freedom of speech, and here this racism, this denial of people in the county had caused people to be afraid to talk about what they felt was wrong in this county because they as professionals would have no opportunity to work in this county if they went too far in identifying their concerns. They knew that there as no other way to make a living as a teacher but to move and go to another county, another state probably more than another county. That was a very poignant moment when you have people of integrity and of power who are contributing to

the life of their students, but who live in fear that they can't say what they believe and can't share what they feel needs to be done to bring about change because they may lose their job.

Then we had this cruel system in Robeson for years called the School Committee. That allowed Indian people, Black people on these school committees where there were Black schools, where there were Indian schools, it allowed those committees to deal with the lives of professionals, and to deal with their lives in terms of what they felt a teacher's job should be awarded because your family does not have as much as that—.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

END OF INTERVIEW

TRANSCRIBED BY SHARON CAUGHILL, JANUARY, 2004