Interview with John "Blackfeather" Jeffries

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Interviewee:

Jeffries, John "Blackfeather"

Contributor:

Bill, Susie (surnames unknown)

Interviewer:

Singleton, Lisa

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Subjects:

Native Americans; American Indians; Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation; Native American identity; State Recognition for Indian tribes; American Indian History; North Carolina Commission on Indian Affairs; Native American Traditions; Native American excavations; racial stereotypes; Occaneechi Indian Village

Abstract:

John "Blackfeather" Jeffries describes the background and history of his tribe, the Occaneechi, as well as his own personal history up to the date of the interview. Jeffries also discusses the Occaneechi's struggle to attain recognition as a state-recognized Indian nation (which succeeded in 2002), and issues surrounding Occaneechi identity and Indian identity as a whole. Jeffries frequently brings up historical anecdotes and figures, even when discussing present day issues regarding the Occaneechi-Saponi tribe and North Carolinian Indians as a whole. Jeffries pays particular attention to archaeological excavations of a tribal village at Hillsborough by the Archaeology Department of UNC Chapel Hill, and his mixed feelings towards this endeavor which disturbs the land, but also expands historic knowledge of the Occaneechi.

Coverage:

Northeastern N.C. and southern Virginia; 1600s - 1900s

Interview Setting:

Traditional Occaneechi-Saponi hut in Hillsborough, North Carolina.

Collection:

Native Carolinians and Indian Elders Collection

More About This Interviewee

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Transcript:

JJ: You're going to ask questions, right?

LS: Right.

JJ: OK, go ahead.

LS: OK, I'd like for you to first tell me about your background.

JJ: My background is Native American; my background is John Jeffries. Which one?

LS: Where are you from?

JJ: I was born about a thousand yards from here down at my grandmother's house. I've lived on this hill here, and I was born in 1939, and I've lived here since 1940, up to the present day, barring my four years in the Marine Corp.

LS: How far back can you trace your ancestry?

JJ: Right now we can go to 1701, and we're going back farther than that now with our genealogy, information on our people from the village site in Clarksville, VIrginia that was inhabited by our people before the contact period in the 1600s.

LS: What is your involvement and experience as a tribal leader for the Occaneechis?

JJ: I am a past vice-president of the Association of the tribe. I was vice-chief, for about seven years. And at this point, I am recognized as a tribal council member, and an elder.

LS: Please tell me about the history of the Occaneechis, both of Hillsborough and elsewhere.

JJ: OK, the Occaneechi people were contacted by the Europeans in the mid-1600s. There was a large island in the middle of the Roanoke River in Clarksville, Virginia. At that time, it was not known as Clarksville, it was Occaneechi Town. They were very proficient in the preservation of deerskin, all kinds of dried foods and a lot of foods in their catches. And, later on, they became the central point in the gun trade -- Europeans and other tribes. Iroquois from the north, coming far south. And the Seminoles, in the West. They weren't known as the Seminoles, at that time, they were Creek. And some Choctows, and far west, the Cherokees come in to trade with them. And, they had five other tribes, living in the vicinity of the island that they lived on. The island was 750 acres. They inhabited allied tribes, such as your Saponi, Tupelo, you know, and some Catawbas. And in 1676, Nathaniel Bacon-- Bacon in /The Way Westward/-- from Williamsburg, Virginia, a guest of the governor -- against the wishes of the governor, Bacon came in right in the middle of a confrontation between the Occaneechi and Susquehanna Tribe, and some Susquehanna's were allies of the Occaneechi, but they had killed some of Bacon's relatives that were settlers in that area. Through all of the confrontations, the Occaneechi men had to punish the Susquehannas because they were in the area of the Roshishi domain. So after the Occaneechi punished the Susquehanna, the Susquehanna went north, the allies went with the Iroquois. The Iroquois were allies of the colonists. They came in and had a big feast at the Occaneechi camp. After several days of feasting and drinking, the Occaneechis were pretty well inebriated, and that's when Bacon attacked the village, annihilating the Occaneechi and other tribes, breaking their strength. Once the strength of the Occaneechi broke, the Occaneechi fled. With the Occaneechi were the other five tribes in the area that were captured by the Iroquois, went north. Some of them went west and lived with the Cherokee in Macon County. My ancestors came south, to live with the Eno Indians on the Eno River -- they were allies. In 1701, John Lawson came by way of the Eno River and he met the Occaneechi, lived with them for a while and wrote quite a bit in his journal on his voyage in the Carolinas. His book is here on paperback, and it's called /Lawson's Journey of North Carolina./ [he grabs the book from one of his many shelves] And he met the Occaneechi, along with the Enos. The Occaneechis stayed in this area, in the Hillsborough area, until about 1713-1714. For some reason, they abandoned the village and went back to an area they were in, they were known as Fort Christiana. Fort Christiana was established to teach the "savages" as they were referred, English, in the way of the white man, so they could use them as interpreters, as they traveled west. The Occaneechi people stayed in that area and back and forth, into that area. Before, the boundary was set it was not known as Virginia and North Carolina, but the County of Orange, given by the governor and the hierarchy of England claimed this land. In 1713, they entered back into Virginia, to find out their reservation had been taken, and they had no reservation. And so they began to wander in and around the area, and were absorbed into the local cultures. Sometime between 17-- see, Hillsborough was established in 1757, 1756 -- and that's when the colonists came in and took over the area which the natives were, and they built their churches. Sometime between 1756 and 1757-- I have the correct chronology, but it's not, it's a little bit lengthy -- the Occaneechi people came into an area called -- north of Alamance County -- and this area was known as "Little Texas," for reasons of these people living in this area, and their complexion and their genealogical features. They said they looked like "Texicans." These were the Occaneechi descendants, and the people up there came in the late 17--early 1800s. They initiated churches and schools there for their people. They lived there for many years as native people, and then through the stroke of the pen, in ink, they were all wiped out, and reclassified. In other words, they were eradicated with a pen, and not by death. They're still there today. That's where my father was born, and my grandfather was born. My great-grandfather was there also, in Alamance County. And they were Indian people, until the audit government said they were "people of color", and the classification started to change over the years, from one classification to another.

LS: What decade was this?

JJ: It was the 40s or 30s. My dad was born in 1913, and from 1913, as he grew up, they were in a sort of an isolated area where they had their own churches and their own schools, and the churches were established in the 1800s as Indian churches. The last Indian school my Dad attended, and he was born in 1913, so he was a young boy, so in the 20s and 30s, the school was discontinued, and then they were consolidated and they went to school with the colored kids, children. They were called "Negro" and "colored" at that time. Not being strong enough to oppose, we had a couple of our relatives to oppose the classification of "Negro", so they went to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., and they questioned that someone come down to -- check with our people, they wanted to be classified as Indians. A Jeffries was the initiator of that. And so, as the years passed, they just elected to be left alone in that area. And they're still there today. In 1984, they organized the Eno Occaneechi Indian Association. And from the Eno Occaneechi Indian Association, started to develop Native American cultural events: pow-wows and distant other Indian communities are accepted today in Indian communities of Indian people, which we are Indian people. The culture's been -- moving rapidly, is very strong. I became interested in the Native Movement -- I've been, my grandmother, as a small child living here on the farm in summertime, instilled in me that I was Indian, but not knowing what tribe, what Indian people. So, the strength of the culture, and knowing, has always been there, but not taught to me as quote, "This is the way Indian people did it." But my grandfather, and I watched him as he did many things, not knowing why these things are done. Passed down to him, probably as he was a small boy not explained to him, passed on to me and my dad, not explained to my dad, -- or either one. And as I went to the culture, and I know why these things are done. And I know it was intended for me to pick it up. For instance, the tobacco hanging in here: -- is a way my grandfather, and his father before him, hung the tobacco in the barns to dry. And, before it went to market, a lot of our people would take it and mix it with a sweet substance and would make tobacco twists for their own personal use. And it's not in any way, shape or form or fashion as poisonous as the tobacco they use is today. And in the ninety-nine additives that they use to make your cigarettes. This tobacco here is as close to pure tobacco as we can get, because there's no chemicals in this tobacco unless it's sprayed to control the bugs. But we do have tobacco that is untouched by any chemical. That's what we call "sacred tobacco," and it is used in a lot of sacred ceremonies. This is used in ceremonies, [he shows LS bundles of dried tobacco, hanging from the ceiling] but when we use the very sacred ceremonies, we use the tobacco from the seed of 300 years. It's still growing today. We have different people who grow this tobacco just for sacred ceremonies. No chemicals, unless the chemical is in the soil, it's the only kind of chemical that's put on this tobacco. It's kind of hard to find untouched soil now, the way this planet has been annihilated.

LS: I'm interested in the Occaneechi court battle for recognition. Do you have two weeks? Do you have two weeks? [both laugh]

JJ: OK, the --

LS: Please tell me about the politics involved.

JJ: OK, our plight for recognition starts about 1990, when we submitted our petition for state recognition to the Commission on Indian Affairs. We submitted our petition, in, of course, having read the petition of the Meherrins in which the Commission -- let me back up just a minute. We have six tribes in the state of North Carolina in which one is the Cherokee, and they have been recognized by the federal government. They're also members of the North Carolina bands. Then we have the Lumbee Indians, the Coharie Indians, the Waccamaw-Siouan, an the Haliwa-Saponi, that were given [pause] state recognition through state legislation. After they were recognized by the state, from whatever [pause] documentation they needed/required to become Indians in the state, then the legislature granted them the power to examine the material necessary for other Indians. So, they established a criteria which were eight -- to become Indians in North Carolina, that you had to satisfy. You have to satisfy five of those eight criteria to meet the requirements for state recognition. The Meherrin Indian, down in Ohoskie, in Winton, were the first tribe to apply under these present guidelines. And for ten years they struggled to satisfy the criteria necessary for state recognition. Finally, they satisfied the criteria, and they became the sixth Native American tribe -- but, only the first tribe to be recognized under the present criteria. We submitted our petition in 1990. The petition that we sent in, the petition that the Meherrins sent in was studied by the individual or individuals in the Commission. They studied it, and they made their decision, but it took the Meherrins ten years of fighting to -- let's not say fighting -- ten years to satisfy what the Commission -- well, we don't fight the Commission. And, in 1990, the Eno Occaneechi Indian Association, which is now clarified to be the Occaneechi Band of the Saponis Nation, submitted the petition in 1990. It was two volumes -- two volumes, which was about this thick, which is about two inches. When it hit the Commission, then the responsible people, to hear this petition, stated that they were not qualified to study such voluminous work. And so, they asked a member of the state government -- his name was Steve Claggent -- from the Department of Archaeology -- in Raleigh, to look at the petition. So Steve Claggent's report [LS interrupts in the background] was that, historically, he thought that we met six of the eight criteria, and possibly seven. However, he would appreciate another opinion. And so, the Commission then hired and paid Dr. Bob Daniels - Robert Daniels, from the Department of Archaeology, Genealogy, and Anthropology with the University of North Carolina. I think he's anthropology, but anyway, he worked with the Department of Archaeology, also. Dr. Robert Daniel's report was presented to the Commission I think it was in 1994, or 95. Personally, with our presence also, being the Occaneechi presence, with we were there, to the Commission at the meeting, the lady primarily responsible for studying the petition -- Janet McLamb -- was hired by the Commission. She was the -- vice-president -- assistant to the director. Bruce Jones was the director. She made the statement that Dr. Daniel's report was not sufficient. He said we met seven of the eight criteria for state recognition and he supported it. Mrs. McLamb was one of the people that were not qualified to study the petition in the first beginning -- had hired one Ph.D. to study it, the second Ph.D. had a seventeen-page report on how he supported it, and then she denied his findings. Which tells me something was not right there! So, other interested people became involved in the Occaneechi petition. There was another individual who studied it individually, on his own, and it was Dr. Stanley Nick. He is professor of Indian Studies at Pembroke State University. In a [pause] conversation between us before he had written his letter of support, we went into quite a discussion about -- proper etiquette, and the presentation of the petition. And my statement to him was that I am a Native American, this is where we belong, and personal opinion had nothing to do with how we presented it. It was the content, the satisfaction of the criteria, that was important, not our internal affairs. Because, whatever we were doing internally had nothing to do with the requirements for the criteria. Our internal problems were our internal problems, and that the petition had no bearing on our [pause] structure, as officers in our tribe. So then, Dr. Stanley Nick wrote a strong [pause] letter for the chairman of the Commission in which we have, gave support to our people as a professional and very learned scholar on the Indians of North Carolina. He said that it was beyond he why we were not recognized, and he agreed with the other two people that we satisfied seven of the eight criteria required for state recognition, and we are only required five. We had two additional that we satisfied. One of which we satisfied, very strongly, is the second, which was the seventh we made. We were very strong in that -- we were as qualified for that as far as you could be concerned. Then, Dr. Traywick Ward, and Dr. Steve Davis, with the North Carolina Department of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had been in the process of excavating the village site in Hillsborough, and they both wrote letters of support for our people. December of this year, we went with the Commission to turn in our final documentation. We had over fourteen inches of documentation that we turned in to the Commission, or more. Fourteen inches is just a guess. But we had enough that three people had to carry this documentation in to present it. December the 6th, Dr. Traywick Ward -- and I have a copy of the tape, and I'd like you to look at it -- said we present the strongest case that he'd ever seen, for recognition in the state, of any Indian tribe he knows. And he said that they strongly support us, and in one of the letters, it's mentioned about the National Geographic Society, National Science Foundation, which we're involved with the dig down here. They supported us. So we have one professional Ph.D. that studied it because the Commission asked them. We have a second Ph.D. who was paid by the Commission. We have Dr. Stanley Nick, the third professional Ph.D. that said they support us. We have two UNC Department of Archaeology professors, doing a dig. So we have five supporters. I am not criticizing the Commission on their educational background, but as far as we know, there is not one of those people that is qualified in the area of anthropology, archaeology, or genealogy, that has studied the our application for the Commission. Now, it was brought to my attention, that Indian people are the ones who make the decisions, that we are supposed to be state recognized. Now just because these PhDs are professional people, it was up to the Indian people to say who is Indian. Now, we have been told by the Commission in a meeting at the last meeting: "We do not deny that you are Indian people, but, we do not believe that you are Occaneechi. Now, I'm wondering how they would have felt if the state legislators told them the same thing, and they did not have to submit documentation, and we have to submit. And I would challenge each one of those tribes to submit this kind of documentation -- excluding the Meherrin, because they have. We're the only tribe in North Carolina that has a village site excavated. The Meherrins know where their cemetery is. It hasn't been excavated, but they know. The Haliwa-Saponi, the Waccamaw-Siouan, the Lumbee -- they don't know. Each one of those names are names from the area in which they lived. Lumbee, people "of the Lumber River"; Coharie, means "driftwood"; Waccamaw-Siouan-- Siouan is the nation, Waccamaw is the territory where the Waccamaw Indians lived in South Carolina and North Carolina. That's how they chose their name. And I'm not saying they're not Waccamaw, I'm just saying that's how their name was chosen. Haliwa Saponi-- Haliwa, taken from the counties of Halifax and Warren County, Saponi is where the Saponi Indians were supposed to have lived. Now, they say the Saponi Indians are descendants, are remnants of the Nansemond Indians, from Virginia. I can back up that, with the documentation that I have with me now. So, Occaneechi Saponi-- how can we identify? I am the sixth great-grandson of the first John Jeffries of the Occaneechi people -- it's recorded. It was given, up in Clarksville, Virginia, in the 1700s. We can genealogically trace that man to my granddaughter, here today. My father, me, my son, and her. And so I am the sixth great-grandson, genealogical records have shown. We have John and we have Jeffries and Simon have fought in the Revolutionary War, and spouses received pensions. We have that in our petition. So, we know that we were a combination of several tribes. We know that we are kin to the Catawba, are kin to the Tupelo, and along about the late 1700s, William Byrd -- I have an excerpt from his journal -- that says that the band of people, Indians that met them, were remnants of small tribes, who could not defend themselves, and so they all banded themselves under the name Saponi. These were the first, were the Occaneechi, Stukenos, Tupelos, and the Saponi people. It was along with several other tribes. And we believe that the word Stukeno derived from "Eno;" they dropped the "Stu" and kept the "Eno." But the Siouan people, when they went west, dropped the word "uan," and they became the "Sioux." The language is very close to the same. We, the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, as we are known today, have revised the language, and the language is being spoken and taught at this time. So, we have the language of the Saponi and the Tupelo and the Occaneechi. Now, where it stands now, is that in December, the 7th I believe, because the 6th is when we presented it, we presented a [pause] complaint to the administration here in the Office of Administration, administrative hearing, in Raleigh. It's a discrimination complaint against the Commission. And we presented it to the Commission, it was televised. And also, we hand-carried a copy of that to Mr. Greg Richardson, who is Director of the Commission of Indian Affairs. And, I received a letter that [pause] the hearing will be the week of May 27th.

LS: Has Janet McLamb responded to this? Or anyone else on the Commission?

JJ: They've made public statements, but we hoped to get depositions from those.

LS: What do you think is the root of this denial of recognition? What could possibly be the reason for -- I mean, you've got --

JJ: There are several things -- in which I think -- one of the things that I think is-- we are very strong. We are very strong. They did not expect us to go as far as we did. And now, up in Washington, D.C. and in Illinois, we are finding stuff right in Alamance County, additional information [pause] we're finding newspaper articles now that's popping up, where in 1938, that as you know, in 1938 and 1939, there were no Indians in this country, according to a lot of people. In 1938 and 1939, newspaper articles, when the South was really segregated, they referred to our people out there as "Negros of Indian descent." Well, they classified everybody that was not white as "Negro" or "colored." And so, the newspaper article referred to the "Negros of Indian descent." Well, I'm not responsible for what-- [tape runs out] I'm not responsible for what people classified or called us then, as I am not responsible for what they classify us as today. And, as for just as "Negros" and "blacks" and "coloreds" and "Italians" and so forth. We have slang -- we have derogatory slang for us, names for us today. Can't help that. So, we're saying that we have strong lineage, we have strong heritage. We have strong documentation. So, I think that the Commission knows that we are strong people. They had not expected us to go this far, much less, file a complaint against them. I think that also the Commission may feel threatened by us coming in, because we would have a seat on the Commission, and we are very strong and opinionated, and we have to do with Indian business, because we'd have a seat on the Commission. I also think that some may feel kind of -- from what I've seen -- and from some of the actions, some of the members seem to be-- let's just use the word "not very pleased" at what we've found about our people and [pause] if you use the term jealousy, that's fine, because we feel some of them are. And, the statement was made to me by some of the native people of North Carolina that are already members of the state-recognized tribes-- they told me, they said "John, you know, y'all are breaking into the country club." And, some of the native people in North Carolina that are already members of state-recognized tribes said, "John, we don't see why we need to recognize you as Indians. We know you're Occaneechi-Saponi. How do I know I'm Lumbee? Somebody told us that. You know when they give us names, 'people of the Lumber River.'" And that's what really gets me. They say that because they want to be. We're saying that because history tells us. I didn't get the name Jeffries because I was adopted. It's just handed down. And, whose to say who's Indian?

LS: OK, I know who you are.

JJ: Yes.

LS: What does state recognition mean?

JJ: State recognition means to us our God-given right as Native Americans. They didn't-- if the state of North Carolina said "OK, we're going to recognize you as Indian people, because you say you're Indian, you've got your Grandma's bible, so we're going to recognize you as Indian in North Carolina because this is your God-given right, this is where your people were." So we say, "OK, here's all the documentation we got. We're Indian." And it's not the legislators that's holding us back. It's our own people. Own people are holding us back. I don't know whether it's a lack of understanding, but when you give this information to people and we can find it in our history books, I expect it to be recognized, and honored, because if they can't believe the words of the historians, then how the hell do we know there was ever a Revolutionary War? How do we know there was Civil War? George Washington was a figment of our imagination. Because nobody now is back there. And people are really searching their heritage on the Civil War right now. Only thing they've got to go by are records, and bullets and things that they've found. And if they say "OK, I'm the great-grandson of Andy Jackson, I'm the great-grandson of whomever, because it's in the family bible, or it's in the books."

LS: It would be believed.

JJ: That's right. That's what we've got. So, we don't know what the problem is with the Commission. They recognize me as Occaneechi Saponi whenever they get -- ready to do something. I'm a member of the Board of Directors at the cultural center-- the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center. I've got a letter here, right now [reading from letter]: I'm invited to -- a meeting. I'm a member of the Board. -- I'm invited to go to the Unity Conference; I'll set up a booth there. I'll set up a demonstration there as an Indian. But-- as John Jeffries, not as Occaneechi. I'm an Indian, to them, but not Occaneechi. Now, why am I not Occaneechi? Because we have researched our heritage! The Lumbees -- I'm not knocking the Lumbees, I'm just saying -- their genealogy comes from the Lumber River. Because there are 86 -- or, umm, 40,000 of those people living down there, 40,000 Lumbee Indians scattered. In Lumbee and Pembroke, it's fully Indian. So, is that the reason? Because of numbers? And, I ask you, is it numbers that you want that are Indian? Because Alamance County and Orange County is full of Jeffries, Whitmores, Parkers and Burnies. That's four names. So, let's get all of those people, in here, get a number of about 4,000 people, and say that we are Indian. That's my question, you know? And it disturbs me that -- what really disturbs me is that we have a board of people that's the Commission. And their job is to support the Indian people of North Carolina, and to assist them in any way they can, and also to recognition. There has yet one commission member to come into our area and say, "Let's step down, and check your criteria, and check your documentation," and say, "You're strong here, and weak here." Not one. The Meherrins have several of the board members -- a board member at several times -- go down to talk to him, and the only time we've had a board member to come up here from the Commission is to pow-wow. And, he came up one time to a gathering, a social gathering, but not once have they come up to sit down and say, "OK, let's pull your application out. This is where we find your weakness and this is where we find you're strong." And I had one of the board members, who said, "Well, I've been to the pow-wow for eight years." And I say this: "I'm a Boy Scout leader. Boy Scouts hold pow-wows. We hold Indian pow-wows in the Order of the Arrow. But that doesn't mean we're Indian." Everybody pow-wows. We have -- all kinds of pow-wows. Pow-wow, to the Native Americans, was a man. It was -- And it was Algonquin Indian. What he did-- he was a man of honor, sort of a psychologist, a listener. When they had a problem they went to the Paupakawu, spelled P-A-P-A-K-A-W-U, and then the Europeans came over and heard the word "pow-wow" and it meant "gathering," so from that "gathering" came the pow-wow. We like to call it "Native American Cultural Class," just for fun, because we are teaching a culture. We're not just going to dance. So, that's it. And we shall be meeting with the Commission on the 27th, unless something else breaks.

LS: Well, I have one more question.

JJ: OK.

LS: It's about the Commission. I understand that the Occaneechis of Virginia may be on the verge of achieving recognition.

JJ: There are no Occaneechis of Virginia to step forward. We're the Occaneechis, here.

LS: Oh.

JJ: We're working in Virginia: now, we're the people in Virginia. We're the people who went up to Clarksville, Virginia about eight years ago. Went down to speak; the next year, we spoke to a few more people, and then the next year we spoke and then we did a cultural festival up there. That's us.

LS: Is there a commission up there?

JJ: No, well, just a -- it's called the Virginia Council on Indians. No, we have not received any formal letters from the Virginia Council on Indians to the governor, to say that they'll recognize us. But we have support from the Virginian Indians. They support us, all chiefs that I know, most of them personally, all but three, says, you know, "We know you're Indian people. We take your word that you're Occaneechi people." And we feel like the state of Virginia would not be sinking that kind of money into a visitor's center, for a group of people that were not, that were false. They've done a lot of research. I've got a book here that's called /Landmarks,/ written in 1990, by Catherine and Jeffrey St. John that speaks a little bit about the Indian people, and not of this, they list me in here as a Mecklenburg Indian. And you see, they don't print stuff like that just for the hell of it. They had to do research, Mecklenburg natives. And that's how I'm listed as a Mecklenburg native. Now, they say about the boundaries: we didn't set the boundaries. It's sixty miles from here to Clarksville to the village site. Sixty miles -- sixty-one miles -- from the village site in Hillsborough to the village site in Clarksville where it was in the river. So, I feel like the state of Virginia would not be putting up a $126,000 visitor's center, that talks about the Occaneechi people, past and present. And, I cannot call it across the dividing line, because there is already a -- across the dividing line. But I'd like to say this: crossing the line of the Europeans, has split our country, has split our territory. We're crossing the white man's line. We're coming from one state to the other. Because, the Indian people did not set that boundary. And we feel now-- when I go into Virginia, I'm going home. I'm leaving home for to go to my same homeland. Because, this is the route that our people took. This is a historic trail, as far as I'm concerned, in Hillsborough. And then the Dan River people, up in Marchville geared in on this, and now the people in South Hill, Virginia has geared in on this, and now the people from Chase City has geared in on this, and they're linking the Occaneechi people on their trail because it's going right down 58, the route from Marchville, Virginia to Danville, to South Hill, to Chase City, to Clarksville, to Hillsborough. That's a zip through.

LS: Let's talk about the tribal village, in Hillsborough.

JJ: OK. L

LS: Please fill me in on the excavation.

JJ: The excavation started in 1980, and is still underway. We're going in May. They'll excavate, or so I'm told, with some of the students until about June. This year, our festival here will be held on June 8, in downtown Hillsborough. May 10 and 11, it will be held in Clarksville, Virginia. So, we'll migrate to Hillsborough, or travel to Hillsborough, to do it in June. And in November, we'll travel up into the area where we are today, in Pleasant Grove, to do our last festival. So we'll have three festivals, connecting the route of our people. And the last village site in Hillsborough was an effort that I saw something I saw, and I wanted to do. Through the help of the tribe, we have support from the county, that has issued a proclamation recognizing us as an official Indian tribe, and then likewise, the town has issued a proclamation and support, recognizing us as an Indian tribe. So, we got the town and the county backing us. They're backing us and the village site. One of the first structures that will be erected in a park, in downtown, on country land right in the town of Hillsborough. We'll have a village site there. Bill and Susie will be very instrumental in this, and also the Meherrin Indians and other Indians of North Carolina, and out of state will be instrumental in constructing this park. It will be an interpretative village, what we hope.

LS: You guys are instrumental. That means you're going to oversee, you're going to have --

S: What you don't understand about the culture is, it doesn't make any difference whether it's Occaneechi, whether it's Meherrin, whether it's Cherokee, whether it's Abenaki. It doesn't make any difference.

LS: The tribe itself --

S: The tribe itself-- what makes the difference is, we are all natives. You know, we do not distinguish, unlike a lot of the people in the white culture. We do not put boundaries on who we are, it's what we are that makes the difference.

LS: Are you concerned about the white townspeople, the white involvement, taking artifacts, doing this and that? Are you guys --?

S: The only thing that concerns me when you go to excavative site is that you treat that site with respect, with the honor, that you would treat any other burial site.

LS: Have there been any incidents with, say, the Chapel Hill Archaeology Department?

S: Well, see, you see, you know, it doesn't make any difference, it doesn't make any difference whether you're dealing with whites, you know. When you start talking about history, whether it's Civil War site or whether it's a Native site, you're always going to have some individual who would not want to give that site the respect it deserves. Now, that's just the way it is. It's unfortunate it has to be that way. But you're always going to have some individual that does not show it the respect it deserves. But all we ask is that you a treat a Native site with the same respect you would treat a Colonial site, or a Civil War site, or any other burial site, that the-- that respect, and that honor. That's all we're asking.

JJ: I have mixed emotions about excavating in Hillsborough. I do have mixed emotions about it. But, number one, the site in Hillsborough, some of the remains I've seen, are of young children -- 18 or 19 months. Now, why would little children end their lives so fast? We don't know -- well, it was disease. Now, we know this: it was disease. Now they're finding out in the graves of these young children, we also have European influence. So, we're saying that these children died, maybe of famine, maybe of disease, now, mostly of disease. Some of the current documentation that they have says that it was strictly disease. And how much European influence was in the area will be revealed by what we find there. We can also tell that it was -- why would they leave the Occaneechi village? And why did they only stay after 13 or 14 years? Now, we have concluded that the reason why they did is because it was disease. How many people left? We can't tell that. But we can just about tell how many were there by the remains we are finding now, because of the cemetery that it was, that is being excavated now. We can tell more about it. And some of the sites there, we found very little European influence. So, was it disease there Europeans, or after the Europeans? We can't tell because it was a small village. But we do know that they did move back into the Clarksville area, in the Fort Christiana area after 1714. You see? So, that's why I don't mind -- but now, the removal, of the remains, I am dead-set against it. Now, up in Mooresville, they have a cemetery there, and the age range of the children were five and six years old.

LS: They were Occaneechi?

JJ: No, that's European. Now, my question is this: you walk up to a grave at a European cemetery, and see why three or four children died at five or six years old, they're not rushing to dig them bones up, to find out why they died. You see? That's what I'm saying. If you're interested in Native American -- what if those kids had died of an arrow to the heart? They don't know. They just say, "They died in this gravesite." The "Beloved Child" of such-and-such died. They may have been trying to keep a secret. The kids may have been murdered. We don't know that. That happened in the late 1800s. So, history doesn't record these kids, why they died. So, the thing I'm saying is, in those graveyards, why did they die at such a young age? Was it murder? Incest? Was it -- disease and famine? So my question is this, the archaeologists are betting on how the Indians died. Let's go down and dig up them kids and find out how they died. No, you can't go in there. Same thing. B: If the general public goes artifact-hunting, if they find out of the ground, artifacts, thats' great, because they-- it's the natural progression of things. They worked their way to the top of the ground. Arrowheads, stone knives, and things like that. But when you find these things, don't go out there and buy shovel or a backhoe and start digging it up, and trying to find more, because it wasn't meant to be. What is in the ground should remain there. If the Creator brings it to the top, and puts it out for you and me to enjoy, then that's fine. I mean--

JJ: If you want an arrowhead, see me and Bill. [laughs] We'll help you out. If you want a stone axe, see me and Bill. We'll make you one. But--

LS: Are there laws? I mean, what is protecting the -- S: There are laws, but at the same point, who is enforcing the laws? I mean, we cannot even enforce the drunk-driving laws. You know, how can we enforce digging up the ground? How can we keep people out of corn fields or out of parks, or out of--

JJ: Village sites. S: --village sites? When we can't even enforce the drunk-driving laws? You know, all we are asking is that you show the Native population the same respect, and the same honor, that you would show a Civil War site.

LS: When you say you have mixed feelings, does that mean because in the past ten years of this discovery, have you learned a lot about--

JJ: A lot about our people. And, it's through the hard work of the University of North Carolina Department of Archaeology.

LS: So the Occaneechis are -- there is a good relationship between the department?

JJ: There is an excellent relationship between us. Now, we have a few members that are saying, "Hey, I don't like it." But, then we have a lot of people saying, it's good. We have a lot of people saying it don't make no difference. You know, it's just that, but the majority of the Occaneechi people are in a position that, you know, it's not a protest against it. That's not, that land does not belong to us. It belongs to the Creator. But the man who holds title to it, he could go down there -- he can't go digging it --

LS: Who is it? Whose land?

JJ: It belongs to an attorney, downtown. I'm not going to call his name --

LS: OK.

JJ: But, it belongs to him. And, he told me, he said, "John, it belongs to you, I just hold deed to it." And he's got a sister that an archaeologist and he won't even let her down there. Because she wants to do her own study. Now the University of North Carolina Department of Archaeology uncovers something. OK, there it is, a small child. They got a tooth. They checked it out. They carbon dated it, they took it back, and they covered it up. And they got some pots and things down there, that I would have loved to have, to show, but they won't-- it cannot be removed from that site. Not even a bead. Not even an arrow point. See? And so, this is what I'm saying, and archaeologists won't let you, even the students there, would not let anyone mess with it. Me and Beverly, my cousin, and Lawrence are about the only ones who can handle it, other than the students. I hold it in my hands, I touched the bones, but John Q. Public can't go down there. Going to a grave site, if you are not studying it in documentation, I am totally against it. This right here is an article about ancestral parks. This came out of the Roanoke River, in Salem, Virginia. I walked out of an picked it from along the banks-- the rocks in the river. But, you see, but now, I would not dare go to a village, if I saw this in excavation, it stays there. If I walk out into a field, and pick this up, it was meant to be picked up. And that's the reason I said I don't even hunt arrowheads. Bill and Susie, we don't hunt this stuff. We don't need to hunt it. Hell, Bill can make this. I can make this. We can make arrowheads. Owning an arrowhead doesn't mean anything to me. Making an arrowhead-- that means something to us, because we say our people had to make this from rock, and we know how to do it. And it is pure hell, making an arrowhead. Now, there again, when you get so, like Bill, you can sit here talking about, I can sit here talking about making arrows, and it's easy, for us, and it was easy for our people. But in wintertimes, sitting a lot of times somewhere, making an arrow to hunt, and it's cold, and it's raining, and you've got a deer antler and a piece of metal in your hand, and you're striking a stone, and you can't see at night, and because of no fire, you're sitting there trying to see-- this is what we're saying: we know, kind of, what our people went through. So, owning an arrowhead really doesn't mean anything. But, other than I hold in my hand something of my ancestors, that kind of thing. I saw a collection the other day, five thousand parts in it. And there's only one part in that five thousand collection that I wanted. It was a broken knife, about this long. It was a stone knife, I don't know why it had gotten broken. This is what we talk about. Taking a rock-- B: When we see an arrowhead or an ancient tool, we don't look at the tool itself. What we see is the person sitting there, who took the time and effort to make this thing. Not the tool itself, but the effort involved to make it. We know it took. It's not the --

JJ: When I grind this rock out, when I grind that rock out, I do it the modern way. But I can see how people with big axes [pause] took what's called water grind, grind that rock out, you see. This is, what we're talking about. See, that's a stone, hand washed stone mallet. That's what I'm talking about. And, we washed-- that flat rock up there, we don't know what this was. Maybe a tool or something. Ah, people may have used it-- could have been a chipping stone. Could have been a rubbing stone. Could have been for cracking nuts, or whatever, you see. Could have been a game stone. You don't know. But, this is the sort of thing we think about. S: To put it in perspective, it's like if, you know, you were out in the middle of a parking lot, and if there was no one around, and you saw a five dollar bill laying there. You'd pick it up and put it in your pocket. But you would not think of walking into someone's home, and seeing a five dollar bill laying on the table, and picking it up and putting it into your pocket. If you go out into a cornfield and there is an artifact laying on the ground, yes, you would pick it up. And it would be a gift. You would be honored you found it. But you would not walk into a village site, you know. That is a home.

JJ: And start digging. S: And start digging. You see what I'm saying? B: It's like going into someone's bedroom, and start seeing what you can find. S: You know?

LS: That leads so well into another question. But first, of the evidence found at this site, what have you learned?

JJ: We've learned that a lot of our people left at an early age, they were a very well-to-do tribe. The remains that were left in the information, and in the village site, told us that they weren't a hungry tribe, that they ate well. We found remains of bear, we found raccoon, turtle, a lot of catfish, a lot of turtle, we found peach pits, we found a lot of deer remains, we found iron axes, we found a lot of valuable stuff like brass, we found European trade beads that were very influential. We found wampum pieces-- not wampum pieces, small shell beads that were very expensive for that time period. We found family influence, like a mother here and a child there, and the reason we knew it was female is because she had her pots buried with her, and her scissors buried with her, and things women were using back then. See, now if we-- if Bill and I carried our tools with us, after we were buried, then they would find scissors, they may find a pot with us, so they would look down and say, "Was this a man's remains, or a woman's remains?" Because back then, the woman carried women things and men carried men things. But now, how do we define what are women's things and men's things, because we are all using the same tools. Men would use the knife. Women made all the clothes, and so they had the scissors. They did the skinning. Men carried an axe, a stone axe, you'd have an arrow. Susie may have a stone axe and she may have an arrow. So, that tells us that these were mothers, and their children, and that the fathers may have been buried -- that tells us also that the Europeans must have been an important trade. We know Occaneechi islanders traded. That's recorded in a lot of the Jamestown history -- this was a small area here, and the Occaneechis came in the 1700s, late 1600s, and they came to Eno Town and they said, "Eno Town?" And they turned it into Occaneechi Town. That shows that they were a dominating people. They came by here, and they made a small trading path -- there was European influence. Also came to, also did a lot of writing-- they were a strong-willed people, very handsome, the women were beautiful, but they smelled of bear fat. And you found out, bear fat kept the mosquitos off, the bugs off. And it also gained a red-tint color. And he also described the lodges, on the inside -- round lodges, covered with many skins, in many pelts. And, their rifles all outside the hut, and weapons on the inside the hut. So this is what a lot of people come in here and envision, the Native's hut would look like-- minus the lights and such. So, here's a bed and-- this is not just for show, people sleep here. People sleep in this place. And when they come, it's -- the house is their apartment, but they come down, Bill and Susie come down this weekend, we ended up making -- a jacket, getting ready to make a shirt here now, made bags and -- B: Last week we made knives.

JJ: Stone knives, and of deer antlers, we made lances and things, and so, that's what this is -- [tape ends, but picks up again]

LS: In my Native American Literature course, so far we have read three novels. In each, there has been a recurring theme of commodification, whereby white men sell a mythological and insulting image of Native Americans. Locally, I am aware of the name Occaneechi used in a variety of unexpected places, like the golf course, the steakhouse, the street name. Perhaps the name, locally, is used in these cases to designate the fact that this area was once occupied by Occaneechis. This recognition-labeling serves a useful purpose, in that it brings recognition and awareness of the Occaneechi tribe to the town. And, of course, Hillsborough is a town that prides itself on its white, Colonial history. May I have your comments on -- whenever you see the Occaneechi Steakhouse, is that -- how do you feel about that?

JJ: My picture's in there. There's a painting of me.

LS: Is that right?

JJ: Yeah, there's a painting over the fireplace. "John Blackfeather." Let's go back a little further. Let's go to Occaneechi State Park in Clarksville, Virginia. There's an Occaneechi Camp, Occaneechi Firing Range. Occaneechi. Occaneechi State Park was named in honor of our people. Now let's go to the Occaneechi Boy Scout Council, here in Raleigh, which I've been a member since 1949. The Occaneechi Boy Scout Council aren't the Occaneechi. People. It's an honor thing, we're not taking it as anything derogatory. Occaneechi Steakhouse, I would've hoped it would be in honor of the Occaneechi people, just like when they name a highway in honor of someone--

LS: And the golf course.

JJ: And the golf course. There's nothing wrong with that. As a matter of fact, I think it's very impressive that they named it, and then that was before we were even thought of being Occaneechi. Now, it disturbs me, and it was moved. There was a sign down on Margaret Lane and Churton Street -- said "The Catawba Trading Post" on it. And I was very disturbed by that, and so I initiated -- and as a matter of fact, I was very disturbed by it and I did some research, and after I did some research on it, I approached the [pause] North Carolina Department [pause] of Transportation. I wrote them a letter, and I got a letter back from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, that said: "It is my pleasure to inform you that the members of the North Carolina Highway Historical Markers Advisory Committee on April 26 reviewed your proposal for a marker on the Occaneechi site. The inscription, as approved, reads: "Occaneechi. Indians of a great trading path inhabited around 1680-1710, visited in 1701 by the explorer John Lawson." One-half mile east, they removed the Catawba sign off the corner of Margaret Lane and they put it up there. Now, that proves to me I had things done, with the assistance of [pause] Dr. Traywick Ward, and Dr. Steven Davis, with the Department of Archaeology. And UNC supported me on this. It was my, that was my fight, to get that changed, you see. And it's done. Now, since then, we have successfully resolved approval to put that Occaneechi site downtown. And it's going to be a replica. It's going to be assisted by the Department of Archaeology and other people in the town and in the county. So, yeah, I'm very pleased with these names Occaneechi. Now they say, when people come in to the steakhouse, they say, "Oh, isn't this a lovely steakhouse? This is lovely. I would love to know where are the Occaneechis." Now, they just say, "They're around Hillsborough."

LS: I lived here for a few years, from around '86 to '88, and I had no idea there was a tribe. I remember the golf course, I remember the steakhouse --

JJ: Yeah, well, people do. They -- Hillsborough is colonial.

LS: I know. John Lawson's name had to be added to that sign.

JJ: Yeah -- it's true. Because, if it wasn't for John Lawson writing those books we wouldn't have had that information. See? So, I have an original printing of John Lawson's journal. That's an original printing -- it cost three dollars. My wife paid thirty-five for it in Chicago. First of all, it's an original journal of John Lawson-- it's not a reproduction. It's got in there the date it was written -- look here. So, yeah. John Lawson was a white man. And, so are a lot of our Native Americans. John Ross-- one-fourth Indian, the rest white. He was chief of Cherokee. So, you know, you can't get around European influence in this country. They stepped off the boat, and -- [pause] but, recognizing us as indigenous inhabitant of this county, and of near here -- my father was from Alamance County -- my mother, and for some reason, they decided to head north -- so, you know, it's something. Of all the calendars that were created -- my philosophy is this. the Creator's got a calendar, of every individual on this Earth. And each has a date here, so no overcrowding. And, when that date comes, you have a purpose here, and once you complete that purpose, no matter what people's opinion is, once you complete that purpose, you can "call home." And, I know my date is on that calendar. And I know I'm not projected to do certain things. And, I did not finish college, I am not a politician, I did not do great things for other people to see. My job is to put this here for my people. And to do something. And it started with the museum -- being what other various people of color, in a Confederate museum, downtown, it's the museum. We have a Native American exhibit by John Blackhawk and it's still here today. And I've called into the museum sometimes people say, "Oh, the Indians are still here." And the museum curators say, "John Jeffries." I was born and raised here. And so, this is my purpose on that calendar: to create.

LS: Tell me more about the reconstruction of the village.

JJ: Well, I have an artist's conception of how the village will look down here. But, we don't know exactly -- the Native Americans on the east coast had virtually the same type houses. The Iroquois log house, we didn't have "log houses", so to speak, but what we called, we had squaw huts, for whole families. And, of course, the Iroquois nation was humongous -- and Tuscaroras, and every other tribe there. They had to have big house -- to house their meetings. We have a small village here. The Occaneechi people were very small. If we had five or six hundred up here, it was very -- down on the river, they said we had sixty, maybe fifty or sixty. There was no reason to have a sweat lodge there. And they had a general meeting area, so, what we hope to do in an area of about one-hundred feet in circumference around is to put maybe three huts in there. We'll have a cook pit, we'll have a place where they put -- we'll have a garden of some other. We'll have an interpretive village -- Bill and Susie are going to teach our people how to do this. You see? I'll be doing -- method, and also, historical background, the tribal chairman will be talking the language, and storytelling, and so this is what it's supposed to be: an interpretive village. At times -- it will not happen every day, so we'll do it when we can. In April the 12th and 13th, we'll be in Paddle Creek, Indian Mound, doing an interpretive thing down there.

LS: What are your feelings about the Daniel Boone drama?

JJ: The Daniel Boone drama? You mean what your daddy is talking about? Well, I don't ever recall Daniel Boone coming to Hillsborough -- I'm not sure. I don't see anything in the history books. But, as far as I'm concerned, he was a scoundrel. He was a murderer. An exploitator from what I've seen and read. But, that's my personal opinion. /The Road to Orange/ was a mighty nice outdoor drama. I gotta know why he was in this area, OK? Was Boone just a -- was he a label to put on this town, to say this town -- Boone everybody knew Boone? How about Eno Wheels? Do you know who Eno Wheels was? Eno Wheels was the man that John Lawson -- he was an Eno Indian, he was a scoundrel, he was a philanderer and he was a thief. But he led John Lawson from afar. He led them through the Eno, and the Occaneechi village. So I -- I'm not real impressed with Daniel Boone. The name. And I know your dad is going to kill me. [laughs] We've talked about the outdoor drama. And he said, "John, the outdoor drama in part is your work, and our beginning is -- has got to begin with the Native Americans." And I said, "Scene One, Act One, the village, where the Native Americans are getting ready to leave, in 1711, 12, 13. And after that period, between 1713 and 1715, you got a long span in there. What happened? And then, Hillsborough was established in 1756." So, see.

LS: Do you foresee any negative representations of the Occaneechi people in the drama?

JJ: About?

LS: Any stereotyped kind of negative representation?

JJ: The only time I'm opposed and have stereotyped representation is when they exclude the Native people in these roles. I mean, Burt Lancaster did a great job as Cochise, in 1950. But, we've got Blue Study, now that played ( ) and in Last of the Mohicans. And, we've got all kinds of Virginia Indians that play different roles and different things. They may not be movie stars, but they are Indian people that can play the part. They're educated, they're college kids. Some of them in drama. We've got an excellent Lumbee, right up there, who could play any part. Cedric Wood could play any part of a Native American. There's a cast of Native Americans that did "Tecumseh," right here in Hillsborough. We've got some people over at the University of North Carolina in drama, right now, that can be -- and at Duke, and at State, Native Americans -- North Carolina Native Americans -- that can do it. I've got a cousin in Winston-Salem that is a drama student. She could come down here and work with this thing. So, I'm saying, let's use Native involvement. How in the world who's not Native American tell how a Native American feels? I can't tell how a white person feels. I can tell you how I feel as a Native. So I'm saying, the only time we have a stereotype is when they do a part without consulting a Native American. So --

B: The Native American did not scalp the European. They had a bounty on the Native American. That's how the name redskin came about. A redskin was a scalp. The red part of the scalp. And they got paid so much for each one, because they were trying to annihilate the Native Americans. And, for the Native American to go to the next world without part of your body was degrading.

JJ: That's the reason why Native Americans cut off your finger. Because he believed, even if the white man didn't believe, the Native American would cut off a digit, just to say "I got your finger." In warfare, all people would walk up to the enemy, to the soldier, before -- they'd, they weren't stupid, just part of their culture -- to touch you and then say "I touched your hand, now I have to kill him." And then, when -- the man shot him. And so the Native Americans said, "Hey, wait, now. We don't want to do this stuff." And so they started killing the enemy. But they -- it was more honorable to keep the enemy alive than killing him. Now, another thing our people did was they had a type of warfare that Europeans weren't accustomed to, and that was ambush. When they got ready to march, they'd march in a row, and kneel and shoot. Native Americans said, "That's stupid." And they went around and ambushed themselves. And then the Scotch, the Scotch people, when they came over they were mountain people, and when they got in the mountains, they said, "Hey, we use the same tactics as Native Americans used," and they were able to defend themselves against the mountain Indians. And so, General Howard said the best military man he'd ever fought was Chief Joseph. And he fought Chief Joseph with about six or eight companies, and Chief Joseph fought him, with about fifty men, and about -- sick or injured old people and children that they had and they staked for thousands of miles, into Yellowstone, before they got to Canada.

S: "Native American" is not what we do. What we do is work the telephone company, or for Wal-Mart, or Food Lion. That's what we do. Native American is who we are. You see, there's a difference. You have to realize the the difference, before you can understand the culture.

JJ: See, a lot of people play Native American, you see. Not being disrespectful to you, but you could pull off anything in here. You could put on a regalia, you could put on a dress, you could walk into the arena and you can dance. They will say nothing else -- unless you are Native American. But we can walk into the arena -- we are Native American -- I'm a veteran, and Bill's a veteran, and we get ready to go into the arena, it's proper to be dressed in regalia. If we're going to a veteran's dance, we go dressed just like this. Other people go into the arena -- if they are not a veteran, they have to be in regalia. Bill and I -- very seldom have we ever been into the arena with our regalia. If we do, we are usually dressed like this -- a feather in our hat and our hands painted. And this would be our costume. Buckskin. We are in our regalia, our dress. So, a lot of people go in and say, "I'm Cherokee." I can't deny that, because we don't know. But we know one thing: we can tell, by the way they interact, when they get into the arena. Because there are certain things, if you are a Native American -- a Native American not just on Fridays and Saturdays, pow-wow days. You're Native American every minute of the day. We know you -- there are just certain things about you we know, because we are Indians.

B: It's the way you carry yourself --

JJ: Yes! See, my daddy's never been to an arena, in his life. He's never done anything, as far as Native American is concerned. And -- my dad, when they look at him, they don't even flinch an eye -- when they look at my daddy, when they look at my father, and -- the other Indians come in and say, "He came from the rez." And this is the generation -- there's me, my father, there's his father, and that's my great-grandfather. Now, see, if this man would have been sitting there in this jacket and hat, with the hand fan as I have here and pipe or an axe, we would have had no problem being recognized as an Indian tribe. But the Europeans put him here, and here, when it got to here, his culture was still here, but the explanation was not. But when it got to here, the explanation and the culture was gone, but there was certain things he done. And, when it got to here, I was interested in going back to his father, and to his grandfather. And that's what we're doing today. Seventh generation -- this is one, two, three, four -- his grandfather would have been seven generations. His grandfather would have spoken the language. And so, what I'm trying to do today is to preserve what we have here. My granddaughter may not care. Her daughter may not care. Her granddaughter may not care. But sometimes, sometime in her lifetime, someone is going to say, "Grandmama, tell me about my people." And Grandmama can pull this out, and she can say "Go to the museum, go to Occaneechi State Park, or somewhere, and this is your father, and his friends." And Bill and Susie will be involved in it, photographs we have here. Bill leads the historical journey for our people. And that's why we do these things. I told one man, "I don't have to go nowhere." Bill and Susie will tell you the same thing. We don't have to go nowhere. We can just sit right here. We don't have to go to a pow-wow, we don't have to -- nothing, we don't have to do a thing. We can sit right here, and do what we are doing. I don't have to restructure a village site, this is a village right here. I can't tell you how many photographs have been made in this place. All over the world: Germany, Japan, Australia have been here. I have pictures here of all the foreigners have been here. They come to Raleigh to the airport, the first thing they tell the tourists: "We want to see some Indians." Next thing I know, they're calling Hillsborough, wondering where the Occaneechis are. Raleigh is full of Native Americans, from all branches. They all live here. And so that's why, I'm not exploiting, I'm not advertising, I'm just here.

LS: My next question: have you considered writing, or producing a drama based on the Occaneechi tribe?

JJ: You're sitting right in the middle of a drama.

LS: [laughs] That kind of answers the question.

JJ: This is the drama of the Occaneechi people. I'm not going to write about it -- you're going to write about it. Several works up from students are going to write about it. And, one day, somebody's going to wise up. Like Singleton. You know, ( ) a drama. I'm not going to write about it. I don't have to write about it. My granddaughter lives it, my son lives it. You write about it. It's already written.

LS: But it'll be authentic coming from you.

JJ: It is authentic. It's coming from me to you. You've got my words --

LS: That's right, ( )

JJ: And if you write my words, and you don't put your words in it, it'll be right. I've got five pounds of newspaper articles on things that I've said right on my desk.

LS: I saw one in the Observer -- Charlotte. Do you have that one?

JJ: May not have.

LS: It was back in the fall, and I didn't clip it. But it was about recognition, and I vaguely remember it.

JJ: Yeah, if you stand by just a minute, this is what I have. This is a portion, and I stopped putting it in here four years ago. That's a portion of the newspaper articles. That's just a portion, of the words people have put on paper. And, each paper in here is not my exact words. And, if you write the exact words of what I say, then that's my words. But, if you change it, it may not be grammar -- grammatically readable.

LS: Or politically correct.

JJ: Or politically correct, but if you write my words as I say them, then that's me. But once you change it, it's something different. And there's a few in here -- there's some in here that's absolutely excellent. This is the village site -- they're excavating. The words of the archaeologist -- they are true. But, sometimes, the news reporters write what they think I said. But now, to get it perfectly -- to get it perfect, watch the tape. What I said on television is what the people hear. But the newspaper articles are great. Don't get me wrong. But this one reporter came there, and I told him I live in a colored neighborhood. And it is -- I went to a colored school. And, I told him, I said, "Now, this was in the 40s to 50s, I was in the colored schools." And he wrote "black." No, no, no, no. It's not "black, it's "colored." You see? And, Puerto Ricans are a people of color, and so a nationalities such as -- some people are people of color because they are dark complected, because they were not classified as Caucasians by the Europeans, see, they were not Caucasians, they was Jewish people. Now, Judaism is a religion. It's not a race. But, that's a religion. Now, you know, and this reporter eliminated the word colored and put black in there. And I did not say these things. Because, you went from colored, from, ( ) the slang word for the slaves, then you went to Negro, and then you went from Negro and colored in there and went from Negro and colored to black. And, you went from black to African-American. Now, my definition, I mean my explanation -- when I was growing up, we went to a colored high school. And, we had just as many white complected people or light complected people as we did the dark complected people. Now, my people from Alamance County were blue-eyed blondes and green-eyed redheads. OK? But they were still colored, because people say, "well, that's where they came from." We weren't Indians at that time, by the eyes of the white people we were not Indian. But to us, we were Indian people. We couldn't fight it, because they were the days of segregation. And, we could not go downtown and say we were Indian people. There was still a bounty on some Indians, in the 40s. So, we had to accept the fact that we had to live. My father had to live. Bill, I bet you, Susie was white, weren't you Susie, where you were? And Bill was white.

S: And grateful you were white.

JJ: And grateful you were white.

S: Grateful you were white.

JJ: And she could not go -- she went into an area and said she was Indian and they laughed at her.

LS: Are you from Lenoir?

S: No, I'm from down on the coast. Right down Virginia, right --

JJ: Right in the middle of a swamp.

S: Just a swamp. Just like his daddy. His daddy, my husband's father -- had a brother. His father was put in an orphanage, simply because he looked enough "white" to pass as white. And his mother knew being in a white orphanage, he would be taken care of. He would eat three meals a day. He would have clothes. His daddy, here again, stayed out in a rural area, his brother stayed out in a rural area, because he looked too much Indian.

JJ: They called him colored.

S: My hair was never allowed to be long. My hair was always short, and curled, because when you have all of this, and when you take the hair down, you see? Now I'm Indian. But, when I got in and have my hair cut, and I have my hair curled, then I'm questioned.

JJ: See, when my hair is short, I have a little humor in my ethnic background. When, in this area -- Alamance and Hillsborough -- the name Jeffries puts you in a classification in Alamance County, which the Jeffries up there were classified as Indians even though people say there were no Indians. And so, the Jeffries and the Parkers, because we were light complected, our hair was no different than other people. My daddy's hair is just pretty long, straight, black, and he's eighty years old -- like my granddaddy's got. Well, in the area, when people would come in, and they -- outside, you know, and white people came into town -- and there were no Indians. And they would look at us and say, they know we weren't black, they know we weren't white. And so they'd ask us, "What is that guy right there?" "Jeff, oh, he's a Jeffries." And so I thought for a long time that I was Irish: my name was O'Jeffries, like O'Mally, you know? I said, "I thought my name was O'Jeffries," because that's how they'd classified me: "Oh, he's a Jeffries," you know, "oh, he's a Jeffries." These people from Alamance would say "what is he?" And, "I think he's Indian." So, the conception was always there, for the Indian people, but they couldn't say, "Now, he's Occaneechi." They didn't know. But, they know we weren't white, ( ) so, getting back to that, you know, they classified us as colored and Negro, and so forth. And then when they word black came in, when I was in school, you dare not call a man black. You call a man black, and you'd get a whupping. And then in the 1960s, with the Civil Rights Movement, and I was up in Greensboro -- [tape abruptly ends here]