

LUM 29A
Randolph Eddings Rt. 2
Carter's Court
Pembroke N. C.
interviewed by
Brenda Brooks
IDL-typist

B: This is August 29, 1972 in Pembroke North Carolina, in the home of Brenda Brooks and I'm interviewing Mr. Randolph Eddings. Would you give me some of your personal family history Mr. Eddings.

E: Well, my father was Joseph Riley Eddings, my mother is Rosa Lee Thompson. And I'm thirty six years old, born October 2, 1935 in St. Pauls, North Carolina and. . . this is home . . .

B: How many members in your family. . . how many brothers and sisters?

E: Eight brothers and two sisters.

B: And you are the oldest?

E: Youngest.

B: And were you born in this county, ^{have} you always lived here?

E: Yes.

B: What about your education. ^{Can} you give me some of the history of your primary ^{through} ~~and~~ however far you were educated?

E: ~~I~~ I was educated through the High School. Um, most of it in ^{Robeson} Robeson County, about two years in South Carolina, ^{B: What part....} the early part. . .

B: ~~What part~~ What part of South Carolina?

E: Near ^{Bennettsville.} Bennettsville.

B: Are you a Lumbee Indian?

E: Yes.

B: Did you find any discriminatory acts during your school experience in South Carolina or in ^{Robeson} Robeson County?

E: No, in . . . in um, my school experience, ^{I guess} I was too young to notice it if there was any. um, Maybe towards the last there was . . .

no, I can't say I ever did.

B: What about your vocation? Did you get educational training for a specific vocation or what happened after High School?

E: Well, I went to um, one semester of college and um, ~~then~~ I went to South Eastern Community College to study sewing machine mechanics.

B: And what about your Military experience? Have you served any time in the Armed Forces?

E: Two years in the Army.

B: Did you experience any discriminatory acts during the time you were in service especially on the local level?

E: No.

B: Um, what about your church affiliation, have you had a history of being closely affiliated with any of ~~your~~^{the} local churches?

E: No.

B: I'm not supposed to ask all these negative questions that you can get no and yes answers. Um, what kind of involvement ~~an~~ have you been involved in anything in the community or county that you think would be interesting for us to know about as far as getting history of the Lumbee Indians? Um, what about um, your marriage. Were you married in the county?

E: No, I was married in South Carolina.

B: And we had some . . . I wanted you to tell me something about why you were married in South Carolina and if there was any discriminatory attitudes or actions towards you as a client in the chapel down there and why.

E: Well at the time it was back in ~~fifty five~~^{'55} and other than being married in the church, I don't remember um, chapel any place

other than Billings, South Carolina. And um, there was some question when I got there, ^{I was} signed up one day ^{and} ~~when~~ there was no problems then, ^{still} We went back and um, then the lady asked me if I would um, swear that I was Indian. She said because she couldn't marry a mixed races and if I would swear ^{that} ~~if~~ I was Indian . . .

B: Why was it questioned, ~~and~~ why did they even question your being an Indian?

E: Um, well my father was white, my mother's Indian and I'm ^(kind of) leaning towards my father I guess. I, ~~um~~ I look more white than I do Indian, ~~um~~ I guess.

B: ^{you got} ~~that~~ the palefaced features ^{stick} out, huh? Um, has this been a problem for you or has it been an asset ^{for} you because as a Lumbee Indian you do display features of the Caucasian more heavily than the Lumbee?

E: Well yes it has. It's um, been a problem on both ways, it's um, there's been times that if I had been more flexible, I guess, I could've got ^{along} real well. And um, I'm just not built that way and ^{there was} ~~it's~~ times that it would get me in trouble, being white or so taken to be, and then there were times that it would get me in trouble the other way. But um, my philosophy is just being a man and . . . and u, being treated as a man ^{until I've} ~~been~~ proven different. And that has caused some (friction).

B: How have you suffered or benefited as a citizen in ^{Robeson} ~~Roberson~~ County because of your caucasian features and your being an Indian inwardly?

E: Well, to answer the first there, I found it very easy to get a job, and then again ^{that's} ~~it has~~ caused me to quit quite a few quicker than ordinary. UM, I can go down to Lumberton and any of the um, jobs that were . . . up until about five years ago, an Indian had never held, I could get

'em pretty easy. And um, and I could keep 'em so long as I was acting white. And um, just as soon as I would run into something that would prove um, ^{would} make me stand up and say what I was, then I would be treated a little differently.

B: You didn't necessarily advertise the fact that you were Indian then, until circumstances provoked it .

E: No, I never had to, ^{just} because, it's like I said I always figured that I was a man and I ^{just} wanted to be treated as a man until somebody found ~~some~~ other reason other than my race to treat me differently.

B: Can you sight any specific experiences you've had?

E: Well, I was, — I was hired as a sewing machine mechanic once in Lumberton and um, I was approached about two weeks after I was hired on as a mechanic and asked if I would take head mechanic job. ^{Not} of course it meant a lot more responsibility and I, — I was hesitant at first about taking it because I just didn't feel that well, an Indian had never done it before and I was almost afraid to try, ~~it~~ But I did and every thing went along fine for about a year, ^{or} maybe less than a year. And then they um, there was a salesman that called ^{ed} on me to sell supplies to me and um, I got real friendly with 'em and they would um, sit around and talk sometime, two or three hours and one day this one particular salesman came by and wanted me to show him over the plant. And as we were walking through the plant, um, he ^{says} ~~said~~ "I noticed you have quite a few Indians working here," He says ~~is~~, "are they good workers?" And I started burning in the face just a little bit and I said "yeah, I think we work pretty good." And of course he started apologizing right away and said he didn't mean anything ^{that} ~~and~~ he didn't know that I was Indian. He um, almost got on his knees and ask ^{ed} me to forgive him for it. Of course there was nothing to forgive, ^{because} I was

I was proud of the people and proud that I was an Indian. But things like that, ~~D~~ would kindly burn sometimes.

B: What about your experience in the military as a ~~quite~~ ~~one~~ "Indian?"

E: Well, um, I was inducted (*up at*) Raleigh and, I was the only Indian in the group of about twenty five. And um, we went down to Fort Jackson, South Carolina from there and at the time that I was at Fort Jackson I didn't see another Indian. And I was beginning to wonder if all of 'em had disappeared. And then we were shipped out to Indianapolis, Indiana, Camp Adaberry. And still I was without Indian friends, I had never been away from home before, I was only seventeen, ^{and} I was pretty lonesome there for a while but somebody came by and said that there was a couple of Indians coming in down the street and they thought they were from ^{Robeson} ~~Roberson~~ County. I ~~made~~ made haste to go down there that night and looked them up, and there was three fellows from my home town. And um, we stuck together pretty close from then on out. But um, I ~~didn't~~ ^{didn't} have too much trouble ~~with~~ ^{with} the white people from other states or even two-hundred miles from ^{Robeson} ~~Roberson~~ County. But um, usually the ones from around Lumberton, (*Fairmont*) and Rowland, I had more trouble with than anybody else. Like sometimes we'd go uptown on the weekend and take in a movie and if there was a western or if ^{there was} an Indian party come on the screen, they would ^{all} turn around to me and ask me if that ~~was~~ ^{was} the way we did it in Pembroke and um, 'course it was a big joke for a while but sometimes they would get on my nerves pretty good and eventually one night we did have a fight about it.

B: What about movies in ^{Robeson} ~~Roberson~~ County in your particular situation? I understand we had um, (*several*) ~~theatres~~ theatres in Lumberton that we could attend the movies but we were required certain areas.

E: Yes, um, my wife and I used to go down to the Carolina in Lumberton. ^{part} Of course, there was three sections there. I think the um, colored ^{people} had one part of the upstairs and ^{the} Indian people had another section upstairs and the white people were downstairs. And um, when I came out of service, I um, always went where I wanted to go. If I wanted to go upstairs, I went upstairs, if I wanted to go downstairs, I went downstairs. And a lot of times I would go downstairs just to prove that I could. And all the time, I guess I was just kidding myself because when I had somebody with me as I did find out at one time, then I would have to go upstairs. Um, my wife and I went down and um, of course, we started ~~downstairs~~ like I'd been going when I was going by myself, right away the lady asked me um, shouldn't I go upstairs or something like that. She told me to go upstairs and um, *(there was*

¶ a few words.

B: Do you think ^{that} the county has changed in respect to the experiences that your children may face and those that have exist. Maybe you haven't faced ^{So Many} ~~any~~ of them, because of your features, but do you have hope that our county is undergoing some change and that because your child is a normal human being he will not face similar discriminatory acts?

E: I'm hoping that he won't. But um, I ~~am~~ *(have my doubts)*. I . . . I . . . I . . . the only difference I see now, ^{when} ~~that~~ it was . . . when I was younger, ^{it} fifteen years ago, is that now they're behind your back and they . . . they . . . they don't care any more about you than they did then. It's just that they are . . . quieter about ~~it~~ and they . . . they um, they . . . they'll let you join in or take you in. They let you come in but they're not doing it

because they want to do it. . . they're just putting up with you.

B: What about the schools that your children attend now. How . . . how do you ~~feel~~ ^{feel} about the quality and the fairness in the educating of the Indian children in ~~Roberson~~ ^{Roberson} County?

E: I, well um, I have heard that some of our better teachers were going to the ~~White~~ schools, but um, I really

B: You say our better teachers . . . Indian teachers?

E: Indian teachers, yes.

B: Indian teachers who ^{are qualified} ~~qualify~~ to teach, and because they show a little superiority, they're being placed in ~~White~~ schools.

E: Yes, but I can't say that that's because of the ~~White~~ ~~Person~~. I think a lot of it is coming from our own people. They're (~~being~~ ^{being} ~~manipulated~~) by, ~~manipulated~~ well, yes, ^{and} ~~it~~ ^{leads} all ~~relates~~ back to the same thing.

They're . . . they're being used and um, a lot of 'em, in order to keep a good job or what they figure to be a good job, they'll be um . . . Uncle Tom just to be a . . . just to keep their job.

B: This was my first interview and I have had an emergency apendectomy last ~~Saturday~~ Saturday and I have been unable to get to work immediately on interviewing. But I hope that you [?] will be receiving many tapes from me in the near future. ^{just on tape}