

Project: Person Place: Voices of the Century
Interviewee: Asher Johnson
Interviewers: Caroline Fleming and Jaclyn Ocumpaugh
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Length: 01:32:08

START OF INTERVIEW

[*Transcript begins at 00:00:45*]

Interviewer: I guess I explained a little bit about what we're doing. We're working with the Person Place [00:00:52] so if you're willing to give over tapes for them then we'll have you sign something at the end of this, but we're also doing research just kind of on how the language and the community have kind of evolved together and that sort of thing, so we're interested in stories about what the community's been like and how the community's changed, and we figured you were probably in a fairly good position to commentate on-. [*Laughter*]

Asher Johnson: [*Laughs*] I don't know about that, but I'll help you if I can.

I: So, you grew up here, or you were born here?

AJ: Yeah, I was born here.

I: You were born here.

AJ: Mm-hmm, born and raised.

I: And your parents were from here too?

AJ: Yeah.

I: What did they do?

AJ: My dad was owner and publisher of the local newspaper and my mom was a homemaker.

I: And how did they come to be here? How many generations back, I guess, are you here?

AJ: I beg your pardon?

I: How many generations back?

AJ: Oh, well, actually dad was born down in the eastern part of the state, and he came to Louisburg with his parents when he was about, well, a young man, before the turn of the century. Mom was born in Minnesota and her folks moved to Greensboro when she was a child and then she eventually wound up in Louisburg.

I: Were you born in town or did you live out in the country?

AJ: Just out in the country, just outside of town, out on what is now the Raleigh Road, US 401 North. In fact, just as you come into town there's Oak Grove on, it would be the left, heading towards Raleigh, just before you come into town. There's a little single-story house, ranch-type house there now. That's where I was born and raised. The original house burned in 1940. That was an old two-story frame house.

I: So how soon did you end up in the newspaper business [00:03:11]?

AJ: I beg your pardon?

I: How old were you when you started working for the newspaper?

AJ: I grew up in it.

I: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

AJ: When I was a kid, you know, I helped out. In addition to the newspaper it was a commercial printing plant as well and I gathered or collated papers and all, tickets and receipt

books and things like that, and helped clean and melt and pour the type metal and all, so actually I was born and raised in it.

I: Wow, yeah. I remember my dad used to be in the insurance business and when I was eight or so I'd go to visit him and he'd say, "Why don't you run this down to the post office," and stuff, so I know what you mean about just getting to do odd jobs from the time you can.

I: My dad usually just told me to keep my hands still. [*Laughter*] "Stay out of trouble! Don't touch that! [*Laughter*]"

I: Have you ever lived outside of Louisburg, or have you worked here all your life?

AJ: Well, of course I was in the service and I lived in Florida for a while, and I worked for a short while and lived in Sanford, and Durham, and High Point.

I: Were you working on newspapers then?

AJ: Well, related, the publishing business, yes. When I was in Sanford I worked for the Roberts Company, which is a large textile machinery manufacturing company, and I worked in the public relations end there. In Durham I published a shopping guide for a radio station. In High Point I set up an offset printing plant for the *High Point Enterprise*, which was the large daily paper there.

I: So, did you prefer that kind of publishing side of it or actually being at the newspaper?

AJ: I don't understand exactly?

I: Well, did you prefer more working to set up papers or to set up the plant or just actually being in the day-to-day—?

AJ: Well, of course I've been in the day-to-day operation of a newspaper for the past twenty years, and prior to that I was part owner of the radio station here and I was in the radio business for about twelve, fifteen years. I don't know. Of course, most of the work in the

newspaper business has been with the local—. It's a small town paper, as you know, where one man does it all. I mean, you have to be the janitor, [*Laughs*] the printer, the editor, whatever comes along. You do some of all of it.

I: Yeah.

AJ: I'm semi-retired now. I work—. I help them put the paper together here on Tuesdays and Fridays, and I write a column for the paper, and I attend some government meetings and report them for the paper: the Louisburg Council, Youngsville, and the county commissioners and what have you.

I: How have you seen the business change?

AJ: I beg your pardon?

I: How have you seen the newspaper business change since you've been in it?

AJ: Oh—.

I: That's kind of a big question, I know.

AJ: Yeah. I mean, there's hardly any resemblance to publishing today as to what it was when I came—. [*Laughs*] I came along at the beginning of the era, you know, when you switched from handset type, linotype machines, hot metal and all like that, to desktop publishing, so it's run the gamut.

I: And that's changing faster now.

AJ: I beg your pardon?

I: I'm sure that's changing faster now.

AJ: Oh, yeah. Publishing today is something I never dreamed of when I first got into the business, as far as the mechanics of it go.

I: What about—? I mean, have writing styles changed much?

AJ: Yeah, yeah, quite a bit. Well, I guess you would call it styles.

I: I mean, the marketing's obviously--.

AJ: You use language and words, descriptions, and all in your news service today that you wouldn't dare utter in public [*Laughter*] back when--. Seriously.

I: Yeah.

AJ: I recall that you didn't use a term like the word "rape." You didn't use that. It was not used at the radio station or--. I reckon when I was in the radio business I was concerned mostly--. Well, as news director and engineer for the station I also--. I trained as a radio operator in the Navy during World War II and I had a Federal Communications Commission first class radio license, so I handled the technical end of the radio business, and that's the same way in small town radio as in small town newspapers. It's the same. You handle the technical end as well as the editorial end.

I: I'm really surprised to hear that "rape" would--. But I guess, if I look back, that would be a taboo word.

I: Yeah.

AJ: I keep asking you--. I'm hearing impaired, by the way.

I: Oh, yeah. I'm sorry.

AJ: I'm totally deaf [*Laughs*] in my left ear.

I: [00:10:09]

AJ: So I have to look at you and try to read your lips.

I: Did you have brothers and sisters growing up too or was it just you?

AJ: [*Laughs*] Yeah, I had a few brothers and sisters, about ten or twelve of them.

I: Oh, my gosh. [*Laughter*] Just a couple.

AJ: I just recently lost one of my older sisters. She was eighty-nine. Two of my older sisters now, one is ninety-two and another one is ninety.

I: Wow.

AJ: And the youngest one, Jean, she's probably pretty close to sixty, I guess.

I: That's a big stretch.

AJ: But I have one brother living, Fred. The two of us published the local paper for a number of years. We sold it in 1991 to the corporation that currently operates it and I stayed with the paper and he opened a Sears dealer store out here on the bypass. But he's in his sixties, and I have an older brother that's dead and a younger brother that's deceased, and I've got three or four more sisters. Altogether there were twelve of us.

I: Wow. How many girls and boys?

AJ: There were four boys and—.

I: Gosh. So you got outnumbered.

AJ: Yeah, [*Laughs*] badly. [*Laughter*] I made up for it later. I have six children, four boys and two girls.

I: Oh, wow, so [00:12:19]. [*Laughs*] What was it like growing up in that big a family, because I'm an only child and I have no idea what—?

AJ: I have no idea how to answer that family because I've never been in any other size family. [*Laughs*]

I: Did you play a lot?

AJ: We played and we fought.

I: Really? What kinds of games did you play?

AJ: Oh, golly. [*Pause*] That's a good question. [*Laughs*]

I: What did you and your brothers band together to do to your sisters? That's what I'm curious about. [*Laughter*]

AJ: Well actually there was so much age difference in my brothers that we didn't actually get to play, [*Laughs*] really. The most vivid recollections I have of playing with my younger sisters is fighting with them. [*Laughs*] The sister that's a year and a half younger than I am, Florence, she used to pester me, and I reacted rather violently to that. [*Laughs*] I got a lot of lickings from Mom and Dad for bopping her. [*Laughter*]

I: What was the age difference among all of you?

AJ: Ooh, well, actually there were two sets of children. My father was married twice. His first wife died. There's the older set, which was three girls and a boy, and then the – actually two boys. One died when he was very young. Then the later set, of which I was the oldest, and there were seven of us, so they ranged in–. The older children were in their teens, of course, or early twenties, when I was born. The surviving brother of the first batch of children, James, was twelve years older than me. The other sisters, or my sisters in the second set, were all younger than me, but they ran anywhere from, as I said, a year and a half, which was my sister, Florence, down to the baby girl, Jean; I guess it was probably twelve, thirteen years difference there.

I: Wow. So among all of you it was almost thirty years.

AJ: Yeah.

I: Wow.

AJ: Yeah. It's almost as bad–. My children–. I've been married twice. I have a son by a first marriage, the one that lives in Texas. He's fifty-two. My oldest child by my second wife is–. I think he's about forty-two or three, something like that.

I: What about grandkids?

AJ: I've got a bunch of them. [*Laughter*] I've got nine grandchildren and, I don't know, about seven or eight step-grandchildren.

I: Oh, wow. Do they live near here?

AJ: Well, the one grandson, you know, stays with us in the daytime while his mom works, and he's been with us ever since he was born, practically, so it's just like starting all over again in that respect. [*Laughs*] And my oldest daughter just gave birth to her first child Friday, it'll be two weeks ago, and he spent the night with us, by the way, night before last. [*Laughs*]

I: Oh, how exciting.

AJ: But—. Yeah. [*Laughter*]

I: Exciting until you have to get up in the middle of the night.

AJ: But all of my children, except for the oldest one, are right here in the local area. I have one son who lives in Raleigh and the others are here in Louisburg.

I: Are any of them in the newspaper business?

AJ: No. They were smart. [*Laughter*]

I: Did you try to convince any of them to join you?

AJ: No.

I: They didn't have any interest in it?

AJ: It was there, you know, but nobody twisted my arm and I didn't twist theirs.

I: Did you go into the service right out of high school or did you—?

AJ: Well, you could say that. I lied about my age and joined the Navy when I was fifteen years old. On May 10, 1943 I had just completed my sophomore year in high school.

I: Wow.

AJ: I was afraid the damn war was going to be over before I could get in it. [*Laughs*] I later completed the requirements for my high school diploma and got that.

I: What did your parents say?

AJ: Well, there again, Dad—. Of course Mom, she was pretty upset.

I: I'm sure.

AJ: But Daddy was the type, you know, if that's what I wanted to do, so he wouldn't stand in my way.

I: How long were you in the service?

AJ: Well, the first time was about three years in World War II, and then I went back in for the Korean conflict for another couple of years.

I: In the Navy both times?

AJ: Mm-hmm. I was what's called a combat air crewman. I flew as a radio/radar operator and gunner on a carrier-based dive bomber, a torpedo bomber.

I: Oh, gosh. I just can't imagine. I'd be terrified.

AJ: Well I was a good part of the time. [*Laughter*] No denying that. [*Laughs*]

I: Where all were you stationed?

AJ: Oh, well of course the two biggest stations were aircraft carriers, the USS *Randolph*, which you might have—. It was also involved in the recovery of our first Earth orbiters and all, you know, the capsules and all. The *Randolph* was part of the recovery vessels. Of course that was long after I got out of the service. And [I was on] the *Ticonderoga*. Both of them were twenty-seven-thousand-ton Essex-class aircraft carriers. But other than that, let's see. I went through initial boot camp training in Bainbridge, Maryland. I went to radar school in Jacksonville, Florida. I was in Cape May in Wildwood, New Jersey for operational training. I

was at several bases in Florida, in and around Jacksonville, and also Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

Most all of the naval stations were on the East Coast.

I: What years were Korea? I don't remember.

AJ: Korea?

I: Yeah.

AJ: That was 1950s.

I: 1950s. Late 1950s, right?

AJ: Well, it was about five years after World War II. Let's see, World War II was '43, '44, '45. I was discharged in 1946. I guess it was early 1950s. Yeah. The fact is July of 1950 is when it began, because I went back in the service in November of 1950.

I: But we were just involved in it for two years, right?

AJ: Korea was only a couple of years, yeah, because I was out in '52.

I: Did you sign up specifically for the Korean [conflict]?

AJ: The first time you signed-. I was in the Naval Reserve, USNR, and what you did, you signed up for the duration of the war plus six months. That was the length of your enlistment, so it was kind of open-ended, and I've forgotten-. I believe the Korean War was just for two years, is what I signed for, I believe. But it's been a while ago.

I: Yeah. That was just a police action too, right? We never actually declared war with Korea. Were there differences based on that that you saw?

AJ: Well, what you're doing there is you're playing word games.

I: Yeah.

AJ: It was war, just as damn horrible war as World War II and any other wars you can imagine.

I: [I grew up] watching M*A*S*H, my parents were big M*A*S*H fans, and so the one thing that sticks out is they always made fun of Truman for calling it a “police action” when there’s bullets flying around all over the place.

AJ: Yeah. That was no police action. *[Laughs]* That was full-scale war, by land, sea, and air. The only thing that we didn’t have during the Korean War that we had in World War II were the great naval at-sea battles, and submarines, and ship-sinkings, and torpedoing and things like that. But for the guys that were over there in the trenches and all like that it was just as bad as war gets.

I: Didn’t matter what you called it.

AJ: That’s right.

I: Were you ever on land in either of those two or were you always just either on an aircraft carrier or—?

AJ: Well, of course in the Navy, we operate at sea. *[Laughs]*

I: Right. *[Laughs]*

AJ: The only time I saw land was when we were bombing targets on land. We supported Marine invasions of the islands in the Pacific, when we were taking those islands in the Pacific.

I: I actually grew up in Beeville, which was a naval air training station for years and years and they shut down when I was in high school. In Beeville, Texas?

AJ: Uh-huh.

I: Where they did all the air training, so they would have—. They had a big practice runway that was set up to be like an aircraft carrier [00:25:29] land on it.

AJ: Practiced on those, and they wrapped wires across the runway.

I: Yeah. In fact, one of my teachers got invited to go make a land, to ride with a pilot that was making a land on one of the aircraft carriers, and she came back and said, “Never, ever, ever, again.” [*Laughter*] So you were flying, is that right, too, or were you just operating the radio?

AJ: Well, the dive bombers had dual controls. There were just two [people] in the plane: the pilot and one crewman. The pilot was the flyer and the navigator, and the front-gunner, you know. [*Laughs*]

I: Right.

AJ: And the crewman in the rear cockpit was a gunner, radio, and radar operator, but we had dual controls and so you used to get a lot of stick time.

I: Really? Gosh.

AJ: But of course the torpedo bombers, the crewmen were not—. Flight controls were not available for the crewmen.

I: When you came back did you take any college classes or did you get back into the newspaper business?

AJ: I didn’t really take any college classes per se, or anything like that, but I [*Pause*] managed to get what education I needed to get by through other means. [*Laughs*]

I: You were fairly resourceful. [*Laughs*]

AJ: Well, yeah. You know, of course I read a lot, and you can learn a lot from reading.

I: That’s definitely true.

AJ: I’ve been to—. In the Navy I went to one school after another. I had what amounted to two years of college radio engineering in radio school, and we accomplished it in eighteen weeks by going to school eight hours a day, seven days a week. You failed an examination two weeks

in a row and you dropped back a class, and if you failed again you went to sea as a deckie.

[Laughs]

I: Wow. That would be fairly inspiring. Motivating. [Laughs]

AJ: Yeah. [Laughs]

I: What got you interested in radio engineering? Had you done that before you enlisted?

AJ: No. I wanted to fly and with my particular situation, no more education than I had, I knew pilot training was definitely out, you know, so this was the next-best opportunity.

I: So what did your brothers and sisters end up doing with their lives and their careers?

AJ: Well, let's see. The two surviving older sisters are both school teachers. In fact they retired after years teaching at Louisburg College. One was head of the math department and the other was head of the business department. The sister that died just recently, she was a doctor of chiropractic and she practiced first in Louisburg and then in Henderson until she retired, about 1980 or something. My brother, James, was a postal carrier. I ended up in the newspaper business. My sister, Florence, she lives in Florida on the west coast, and she was a renegade, a homemaker and in real estate. Margaret was a paralegal and a homemaker; Myra, the same, she's in Richmond; and Jean is a homemaker. My brother, Bill, was in the Air Force and he was a twenty-year man, and he spent most of his career outside of the United States in Spain, Italy, Greece, and places like that. In fact he married a girl in Spain. He drank himself to death. He died from cirrhosis of the liver.

I: Gosh. How awful.

AJ: That's about it.

I: How did you meet your wife?

AJ: Hmm. I don't know. We were raised within a couple miles of each other.

I: Oh, that's neat. My parents have known each other since they were five years old.

Nobody ever believes me when I tell them that. [*Laughter*]

AJ: At the time – let's see, this was about 1934 or '35 – my dad bought a small farm out here on the road you came in on, 561, down just maybe a half mile from here, on the left, and built a house and we moved out there [...] at the corner of what is now the T K Allen Road and NC 561. My wife lived on the Allen Road about, oh, a couple of miles away, and she was from a large family as well.

I: Is T K Allen the one that we took when we went out [00:32:02]?

I: I'm not sure. We went out to see Sen. Speed the other day. Is that out towards his–?

AJ: You saw Sen. Speed?

I: Yeah.

AJ: No, his is–. You were actually [on] Laurel Mill Road.

I: Seems like I passed T K Allen. I can't remember.

AJ: Yeah. You would probably pass it between here and [there] because just from here, going back towards Sen. Speed, you would pass the T K Allen Road, probably one end or the other anyway. [*Laughs*]

I: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Gosh. Well we could ask you, I guess, [00:32:39] how have you seen politics change in Louisburg that you've reported on, or been around in the newspaper business and reported on it?

AJ: Now, what was the question exactly?

I: How has politics changed in Louisburg?

AJ: Politics hasn't changed.

I: [*Laughs*] Wow. Okay.

AJ: It hasn't changed at all. What's the old saying, everything's fair in love, war, and politics? [Laughter] Politics here is much like it has been and is elsewhere. It can get down and dirty at times, and does.

I: Are there any stories that you remember from twenty or thirty years ago that you can repeat now, more interesting stories that might tell us a little more about Louisburg?

AJ: Well, there are some I could repeat now but some of the people are alive [Laughter] and probably—. [Pause] There were elections won and lost over the segregation issue.

I: Really?

AJ: As much as it is today where United States Senator Jesse Helms has always been allied with the far Right.

I: Right.

AJ: [Laughs] And actually have pitted the blacks against the whites in order to gain political position. They'll deny it and all like that, naturally, but that's the long and short of it. Anybody with an ounce of gumption can see. It's readily apparent.

I: Did integration go fairly smoothly here?

AJ: I would say fairly, yeah. For one thing we were under court order. Franklin County was one of the few counties in the state and nation, you know, that was under court order—

I: I didn't realize that.

AJ: —as the result of a lawsuit. We were under a federal court order to integrate, which took a lot of heat off of the county board of education.

I: Right.

AJ: I mean, you know, we were under court order. It's no question—. It's not whether we want to do it or not, like that, it's we are ordered. We are bound to do it or we're going to jail.

[Laughs]

I: Right.

AJ: And that's what it boiled down to. Now we had, oh, some marches, you know, and stuff like that, but no widespread violence. We had a few dynamite explosions in places around the county, you know, and I had a cross burned in my front yard, and there was one burned at the newspaper office.

I: Really? My goodness. So—

AJ: But no big deal.

I: —is that the only time that's ever happened?

AJ: Pardon?

I: Is that the only time that's ever happened to you?

AJ: Well, you know, I've had people that didn't appreciate my editorial [Laughter] prowess [Laughter]. Let's put it this way: I've been involved in one or two fistfights. [Laughter] The funny part about one of these cross-burning incidents was that they got the wrong house. They burned the cross in front of my neighbor's house.

I: Oh, no! [Laughs]

AJ: And it scared him so bad he moved. [Laughter] He didn't want to live next to me.

I: Oh, gosh! [Laughs] Wow. Well, what's the most scandalous thing you ever had to report?

AJ: The most—?

I: The most scandalous thing you ever reported.

AJ: [*Pause*] Hmm. I don't know. I really don't know.

I: [*Laughs*] [Were there not any] scandals?

AJ: Not in Louisburg. [*Laughter*] Stuff that would be a scandal elsewhere is acceptable here. [*Laughter*] Normal day's business. [*Laughs*] We don't deal in scandal. [*Laughter*] "Just the facts, ma'am, just the facts." [*Laughter*]

I: I don't think I could have been your neighbor either. [*Laughter*]

AJ: I've always been pretty plainspoken, in my news writing and my editorials and columns. The news I treat as news, as fact. My column is what actually takes place back of the headlines in the news.

I: What kinds of things have you written about for the column?

AJ: Pardon?

I: What kinds of things have you written about for the column?

AJ: Everything. Anything and everything. I try to let people know what's behind all the political actions and all, you know, the real skinny, the real lowdown. What bureaucrats want you to know and believe lots of times is one thing and the real truth behind the story or behind the headlines is a horse of a different color, and I try to make a distinction between the two.

I: I remember actually when I was in high school [we were on a class trip to Austin] and they came in and they were talking to us about different things that were going on and they're like, "Well, and then there's also the Meetings Act, which says that if you walk into your corner drugstore [and] you find your board sitting there discussing how they're going to vote the next week--."

AJ: [*Laughs*] Yeah, well [00:40:21].

I: [...] Every adult in the room just started rolling out of their seats laughing because apparently the week before that had happened to the newspaper man that owned the [Laughs] [00:40:35].

AJ: Oh, yeah, we've had board members sneaking around, holding secret meetings at various different locations, you know, to keep out of the public eye, and of course as a result of this we have what is called the Open Meetings Law in North Carolina. But they still do quite a bit of that.

I: Yeah.

AJ: But the great part about it is that's never been a problem to me because I've always found that sooner or later somebody will spill the beans.

I: Right.

AJ: The participants themselves, they will tell somebody, you know, and they will tell a friend of theirs, and sooner or later it'll get around.

I: In a small town like this I would imagine that wouldn't take too long.

AJ: That's right. Rumor: that's the fastest means of communication in a small town. [Laughter] That's what they say about small towns: the definition of a small town is where everybody knows what's going on but still reads the local newspaper to see if they've been caught at it. [Laughter]

I: Well, how have things changed with all the people that are moving into the area?

AJ: It's for the worse. [Laughs] No, I'm serious. I'm not particularly happy with it. I like it like it was. It's putting a burden on the county's infrastructure, and these people that are moving into the county, they have their own agenda and that's different in many ways from what I call the agenda of the native population. [Laughs] I imagine it was much the same way when

the Pilgrims landed off the coast of North Carolina and came in and started with their ways and started shoving the Indians back. Well, I'm one of the Indians in this case and I don't like it a damn bit. [*Laughs*]

I: Are you getting competition in the newspaper business now?

AJ: Well, yeah. If you're an active newspaper person you're in politics.

I: Yeah.

AJ: Because that's the only game going. I dabbled in politics a little bit. Some years ago I ran for and was elected to the town council and served a number of terms on the town council, but I found that that compromised my situation at the paper and so I [00:43:37].

I: Are you facing more competition as far as other newspapers coming out, or more radio stations coming into the area, or anything like that?

AJ: That doesn't bother me. All competition does, as far as I'm concerned, is make me better. It makes me do what I should have been doing anyway.

I: That makes sense.

AJ: So, you know, welcome. Come on in, the water's fine. I mean, I'm not going to make it easy for you.

I: [*Laughs*] Right.

AJ: The fact is I'll do just the opposite. I'll make it as hard for you as I know how, but I'm going to do it by becoming better myself.

I: Right. How did you get the name "Asher?"

AJ: My mom and dad picked it out. [*Laughs*] My dad was named that. He was an Asher.

I: I had never heard it before. It's unusual.

AJ: It's a nice, old, biblical, Jewish name. [*Pause*] I guess what happened, back in those days if you were looking for names you looked in the Bible, or something like that, and picked them that way. I guess. You know, your guess is as good as mine. My dad was an Asher. He was apparently very enamored with the name because my older brother, James, was James Asher, and I was named after my dad, Asher Frank, Jr. Then I have a son who's an Asher Frank III, and he has a son who is Asher Frank IV.

I: Wow.

AJ: [*Laughs*] But he also has a bunch of other sons as well. [*Laughter*]

I: So did you grow up in one of the churches here?

AJ: Yeah.

I: Which?

AJ: I'm an Episcopalian and I was a lay reader [*Break in recording*] senior warden for a couple of terms.

I: Has the number of people moving into the area changed the way that your church is?

AJ: Oh, yes.

I: Really?

AJ: Yes.

I: What kind of impact has it had?

AJ: Well, if you listen to folks like me, you'd say a negative impact. [*Laughter*] Well, it's the same way the church is everywhere else: you can get away with murder nowadays. I can remember back when I started going to church, in the Episcopal Church women had to have their head covered. Now they come to church in shorts and jeans, you know, [*Laughs*] just about everything. Back then it was quite a bit more formal. Now it wouldn't surprise me if you go to

church and, you know, [there's a little something and somebody starts] shouting. I mean, they play trumpets, and strum banjos, and all that stuff and, I don't know. You know, I have a hard time with that. But if that's what they want, they are welcome to it.

I: Right.

AJ: So I stay at home.

I: [Laughs]

AJ: Because, you know, I don't get in the mood for that. [Laughs]

I: Right.

AJ: It raises my blood pressure and stuff. [Laughs]

I: I was brought up in an old country church in Warren County and we didn't have to wear hats or anything but, you know, you put on your Sunday best, your tights and your little patent leather shoes and a nice dress, and I go back and people are in cut-offs and tank tops and it kind of throws me for a loop.

AJ: Right. I don't know. It gives me a feeling of irreverence, you know. [Laughs] It just don't make you feel—. I just don't feel comfortable.

I: When you think about it I guess it doesn't really matter what you wear but still, I mean—.

AJ: No, it really doesn't. Like I say, when you think about it, it really doesn't matter how you worship, or where you do it at, or what you wear and all like that, but then—.

I: But you get there and you look around and you think, "Hmm."

AJ: Well, it kind of takes you—.

I: [00:48:47] [Laughs]

AJ: Yeah, you know, it's—. I don't know. I'm just not comfortable.

I: This house is beautiful. How long have you guys lived here?

AJ: Oh, twenty-some years.

I: Did you design it?

AJ: We didn't design it. We made some changes. It's a plan I clipped out of a Sunday *News & Observer*—

I: Really?

AJ: —and ordered. Yeah.

I: Wow.

AJ: And we made some changes in it and all [00:49:18]. See the big den on the end of the house. We've got a big, huge family room, fireplace and all, and that was a garage. [*Laughs*]

I: Wow.

AJ: But when we built the house we realized the possibility [00:49:41] family that we might need the extra room, so for a while we had the only two-car garage with paneled walls and a stippled ceiling. [*Laughter*] So when we decided to turn it into a family room we just took the double doors down, walled that in, and knocked the end wall out and put in a door and a huge fireplace and all.

I: Especially looking out the back really makes me think of the mountains, with all the tall pines.

AJ: We had a bunch of those removed. I had about forty trees cut off of this place, right around the house here mostly, back last year this time.

I: Really?

AJ: Yeah, because, you know, we've been through one more hurricane than we wanted to with all those huge pines around us.

I: Yeah. My parents have done the same thing. They've taken down about five or ten that were near the house because they said--.

AJ: We had about forty of them taken down. This place was--. The only thing we did when we built here is we removed just those trees we had to to get the house in. As a result, the roof really--. It was too moist. The house never really dried out, the roof didn't. The roof had moss on it and all, you know, so we needed to get more light into the house and all like that, and it helped that quite a bit. But I kind of miss those trees, in a way. [*Laughs*]

I: Yeah, I can understand. My parents are from Oregon and south Texas has been really hard because there's not many trees there. I remember actually growing up and visiting my--.

AJ: I remember visiting my son out in Texas and they would talk about trees out in Texas and I said, "Trees? You call these damn things trees?" I said, "We plant stuff that big around our house and call it shrubbery." [*Laughter*]

I: Mesquite? No. [*Laughter*] It's not a tree. [*Laughter*] I remember actually watching them haul these big trees out from behind my uncle's in Oregon one summer. My aunt was just in the back yard, just wringing her hands, because of these huge, huge pine trees, probably as close to their house as you're talking about, and they were trying to get them all out without--.

AJ: Yeah, this place looked like a war zone after hurricane Fran.

I: I'm sure.

AJ: But after cleaning up that mess I didn't want to go through it again.

There's a little doe, right between there, I think. Yeah, see him moving right out there at the end of the woods? See him?

I: Oh, there it is!

AJ: See?

I: He's all spotted.

AJ: [*Laughs*]

I: Is that mom and baby?

AJ: I would guess so, yeah. Look at that. See, the little tiny fellow? [*Laughs*] That happens all the time. They graze around the house here. I had to put a--

I: There are three of them.

AJ: I had to put a ten-foot fence around my garden spot to keep them out of that.

I: Oh, no!

AJ: They ate everything.

I: Oh, really?

AJ: I couldn't even have a garden.

I: Oh, how precious. Do they ever come any closer than this to the house?

AJ: Oh, yeah. [*Laughs*] About four or five years ago they clear-cut this place behind us over here, that's so thick now, and I planted a row of two hundred of these red tips to grow and screen the area, you know, from where they cut over, and the deer ate every one of them level with the ground. [*Laughs*]

I: Oh, no! How frustrating. [*Laughs*]

AJ: Yeah.

I: All that time and energy.

AJ: Not to mention the money. [*Laughs*]

I: Yeah. Gosh. That's so neat. You know, I get excited when I see a bunny in Raleigh, and that happens like maybe once a month. [*Laughs*]

I: We saw one on campus a while back, didn't we?

AJ: Yeah, they—. I've got a—. I planted clover out there for a lawn because they grow so much easier than grass and you don't have to worry with it, and the rabbits love it. They graze out in that stuff like cows; run around and horse around.

I: Do you have any pets?

AJ: We've got one mangy old cat.

I: What's its name?

AJ: Sam. He was Samantha but it turned out to be a Sam.

I: [*Laughs*] I was about to ask if that was a girl Sam or a boy Sam.

AJ: [*Laughs*]

I: I had a puppy when I was five and I didn't know anything so I named that puppy Mr. Snuffleupagus. It was a girl, so we called her "Snuffy."

I: [00:55:06]

AJ: How familiar are you ladies with Louisburg?

I: We're getting there. We started doing research on the area in November, December, and we've done fifteen or twenty interviews now, I think.

AJ: You should have seen Louisburg back in the 1940s and early 1950s and all, when there were, I don't know, a good fifty, sixty or more going businesses. I recall—. Saturday used to be the big day in Louisburg. This was a farming community – outside of the college, of course – tobacco and cotton. We had a cotton gin right downtown in Louisburg.

I: Wow.

AJ: Yeah. We had two tobacco warehouses right downtown in Louisburg and before that more. This was when I was coming. This was [00:56:17]. But on Saturdays the town would be so

crowded they marked off the sidewalks where you couldn't stand and talk to someone in the center portion of the sidewalk. You had to—. That was for walking.

I: Too much of a crowd?

AJ: There were so many people in town. They would just block the sidewalks, you know, and people would have to walk out in the street. [*Laughs*]

I: When was this?

AJ: Back in the 1940s [and] '50s.

I: So there were lanes on the sidewalk, really. [*Laughs*]

AJ: Yeah, actually yellow lanes; walk lanes painted right down the sidewalks.

I: That's wonderful.

AJ: Yeah. We had—.

I: What do you think—?

AJ: [00:57:11] [*Laughs*]

I: I mean obviously all the changes and everything that are coming in are changing thing. How else have businesses—?

AJ: Of course they've all moved out, or gone out of business and moved out. The shopping centers have taken over, you know, and all the commercial activity, ninety-nine percent of it, has moved out on the bypass, on Bickett Boulevard. But, oh, we had department stores, we had dime stores, furniture stores, hardware stores, feed stores, a livery stable, a blacksmith – two of them, in fact.

I: Wow.

AJ: There were two cotton gins just over the river on the south side of town, and a warehouse as well, tobacco warehouse. There were dress shops, a bookstore, a men's store, liquor stores, undertaker; you name it.

I: Right. Has it always been the ABC package store in this state, or how has it been?

AJ: No. North Carolina's had an up-and-down history with liquor. Back before my time of course they had the old barrooms, you know, and then when the state took control of, I guess it was the liquor business, they had the ABC package stores and the local communities would vote them in or out. We had an ABC package store—. The county at first had ABC package stores and the people voted them out, and then the municipalities within the county got a special law passed by the General Assembly to allow them to hold liquor referendums, and the town voted "wet." So instead of having the county stores with the county getting the revenue we had the municipal stores with the municipalities getting the revenue, and instead of ending up with—. We'd had the one county store in Louisburg; so now we have Louisburg ABC store, Franklinton ABC store, Bunn ABC store, Youngsville ABC store. [*Laughter*] Every crossroads has got its own ABC store. Then finally they came to their senses somewhat in Raleigh and allowed liquor by the drink. The saying was that, under the ABC package system, you had to buy a drunk in order to get a drink. I've always been, I guess you'd say pro-alcohol, in the respect that I've used it all my life, but I've never abused it.

I: Right.

AJ: When I was a little fellow, two or three years old, I can remember – and this was back during Prohibition, late 1920s, early 1930s. I can remember the bootlegger used to make weekly visits to the house and drop off a jug of brandy for my dad, and he kept his liquor jug in his bedroom closet. Every evening when he'd come home from work he'd make a beeline for his

closet in the bedroom, you know, and get the jug and take him a nip. Back in those days there was a children's laxative called Fletcher's Castoria. It was a child's laxative and it came in a little bottle with a cork stopper. Daddy had one of these little old Fletcher's Castoria bottles right beside his jug and every Saturday when the bootlegger would come Daddy would take his jug and pour just a touch of brandy in that bottle and fill the rest of it up with water and cap it and sit it down beside his jug. Then every afternoon, when he'd come home from work, he'd go in the closet and get his jug and take a drink and I'd run right in behind him and grab my bottle and take a drink. *[Laughter]* And that's the way it is. I grew up with an appetite for alcohol but also respect, you know. *[Laughs]*

I: Right, right.

AJ: And it's been pretty much the same with my children. Of course I don't keep it in the bedroom closet. I keep it in the kitchen cabinet. *[Laughs]* But all the babies—. I like to have beer with my meals a lot, depending on—. I like wine with Italian foods and certain things. I like beer with steaks and certain things. As a rule I don't use it except with meals and mostly now in my *[Pause]* more moderate years, I guess you'd say, my drinking is confined to beer and wine as opposed to any hard liquors or anything. But I've never seen a kid yet that of course didn't want some beer if I was having one, and I'd let them taste it, and they'd make an awful face and then grab for the bottle. *[Laughter]* And right to this day if I'm having a beer my grandson's liable to come in and say, "Pop, can I have some of your beer," *[Laughs]* and I'll let him have a swallow. He says, "That's good." *[Laughs]*

I: Gosh, I remember the first time I tasted beer. I was about eight and my parents were having a cookout and my uncle thought it would be funny to let me try it because I'd never had it before, and I thought it was a cool thing to do because everybody had a beer in their hand, you

know, and all the grownups were doing it. So he gave me a can of beer and I took not even a whole mouthful, just a little taste and, Lord, that's turned me off of beer for life. *[Laughs]*

AJ: *[Laughs]* He should have started you a bit younger. *[Laughter]*

I: See, I remember my parents would never let me have anything. When I was really little they let me taste it once and never again. So when I was fifteen I was at some meetings my dad had in Australia and he took all these guys out to a winery. They were all researchers so he took them out to a winery to see how the wine was made, under the pretense of agriculture I think. They started passing out samples at the end of the thing and Dad handed me a glass of wine and I should have known then *[Laughs]* that if he wasn't willing to drink it-. *[Laughs]* Because I don't think I ever asked him again to have a drink of wine. *[Laughs]*

AJ: I don't know. You know, I've always held to the principle that, I mean, they're going to see grownups doing it.

I: Right.

AJ: You know, and they're going to try it.

I: Right, one way or another.

AJ: And smoking and the whole nine yards, you know, everything. One way or the other they're going to try it, and I was the same way about smoking. I said, "Look-." I smoked terribly bad. I quit about twenty years ago, about twenty years too late, but I said, "You shouldn't do it. It's not healthy for you. It's a nasty habit and I wish I didn't have the habit, but if you're going to do it don't sneak and do it. I'm not going to say I'm going to like it but I ain't going to go through the roof if you smoke." And it's the same way about drinking. I feel like sooner or late they're going to try it, you know, and if they're off somewhere else where I can't keep my eyes

on them they'll get into trouble, so the best thing to do is teach them how to appreciate drink at home and not to overdo it, hopefully.

I: Right.

AJ: It's a good theory. It ain't worth a dang, but. [*Laughs*]

I: I have a friend when she was growing up who, you know, at a certain age kids [01:06:32] alcohol and her mom asked her about it and she said, "I've never tasted it because you said not to but I'm really curious," and her mom said, "Well, why do you want to try it?" and she said, "Because everybody says that being drunk is so fun," and her mom said, "Well, if you want to try to be drunk, let's do it here." So her mom gave her beer or a mixed drink or something and she just got drunk, and her mom was able to take care of her, but since that age she's never got drunk again in any situation.

AJ: As far as I'm concerned, being drunk is the most awful feeling in the world. [*Laughs*]

I: Right. I'm not a big fan. Yeah, but I know she's glad she was with somebody that she knew would take care of her and then she knew that she never had to do it out off with friends where something bad would happen.

I: So many kids smoking around here, I guess that would be a real danger with all the pine forests and stuff, if people are sneaking out.

AJ: Well, I expect a lot of fires are caused by smoking. I know a lot of house fires are and all.

I: My dad worked at a boys' ranch in the summers when he was in college and he said that it was a big deal for them to go camping because that was the only time that they were allowed to smoke, because they were scared that they were going to sneak off otherwise and they

didn't ever want them sneaking off into the woods somewhere with lit cigarettes, whereas in Texas [01:08:09 it's flat.] [*Laughter*] [*Pause*]

One of the questions you mentioned earlier – because I had not realized that Franklin County had been named in a specific suit on the integration thing and I'm really curious actually how that worked, because I knew that there were lawsuits in other states but I didn't know that North Carolina was involved in a specific lawsuit. I thought it was just like it came down across the board.

AJ: Of course the Supreme Court, you know, made the determination that segregation is illegal, or rather not – yeah – but for years following that ruling, I mean it was just business as usual. This is when the individual groups starting filing the lawsuits against the various county boards of education and all, and we were one of the first ones.

I: Really?

AJ: Yeah.

I: Wow. What year was that? Was it in the late '60s?

AJ: Yeah. This would be back in the late '50s, early 1960s. Franklin County is still under federal court order for the schools.

I: Really?

AJ: Certainly it is. It remains till today. [*Laughs*]

I: Wow.

AJ: In fact the judge's name was Federal Judge Algernon Butler, U.S. Eastern District Federal Court, and he made the statement at the time, to the Franklin County lawyers, that they probably felt pretty harsh towards him for ruling the way he did. He said, "But there'll come a time when you will appreciate what I have done," and he was right, because Franklin County has

used that court order as a shield, the board of education has, to shield themselves from countless [Laughs] individual lawsuits and complaints and what have you, you know.

I: Yeah. I didn't know that was still in effect. I guess it's just something I take for granted.

AJ: Well, I doubt very many people realize it. It's just like the election laws. [Pause] We were among those counties in North Carolina singled out by the federal courts or the Justice Department for [Pause] [the fact that we had a low percentage of registered black voters]. Any changes in voting precincts – moving them, starting new precincts, splitting old precincts – any changes in the voter rules and regulations in Franklin County have to receive Justice Department approval before they can be put into effect.

I: Wow.

AJ: And municipalities annexing new areas into town have to prove to the Justice Department they're not using annexing as a way to increase their white voter base as opposed against the minorities. If you take in so many voters or new homes on the white side of town, you've got to go back on the black side and take in that many on that side of town.

I: Yeah, I remember back – this was I don't remember how many years ago but it was in my lifetime – that the Warren County districts had a lot of trouble with that because they said that they'd redrawn the lines unfairly and so there was all this turmoil about how they were going to do it so it would be something approaching equal and not just really heavily weighted on any one side. I don't quite remember when that was. [Pause]

I have a question. I've been working with a professor at State and we're studying ghost stories.

AJ: [Hmm?]

I: Studying ghost stories.

AJ: Okay.

I: So I was wondering, I know when I was little my cousin always used to scare me by telling me, you know, "Somebody got hanged in that tree and the ghost is going to come get you tonight." When you were little did you and your brothers and sisters try to scare each other with ghost stories?

AJ: I don't recall trying to do that. I know that there have been a number of ghost stories, [Laughs] you know, associated with Louisburg and the community and all.

I: Any good local ones?

AJ: Yeah, there was one house up here in the Epsom community that people complained that the furniture would move around in the room and stuff like that, the old Boyd house, and I can tell you who would tell you more about that particular interest would be my brother, Fred, down at the Sears store here in Louisburg. He could tell you more about that because he was actively covering that and involved in it in that period of time. There are stories about the ghost rider that used to come across the Tar River Bridge down here in Louisburg, the one downtown, the old Tar River Bridge downtown. Years ago they would see him and people have reportedly shot at him and everything else, my dad being one. [Laughs]

I: Wow. Your dad saw that?

AJ: We had a thing when I was at the radio station we called the WYRN ghost. As a small town radio station we were cramped for enough equipment to go around and all like that; consequently our production board, our control console and all that we used on the air, we had to use that also to make our commercials with and we had to wait till after the station went off the air at night in order to get into the control room so we could mix the various things to make the

commercials. So it was not unusual at all to be up there by yourself late at night, well after midnight, and that's also, incidentally, the time when you did the maintenance on your equipment, because those were the experimental hours when you could actually go on the air, you know, to test the transmitter and stuff like that, legally.

I: Right.

AJ: But it was not unusual at all to be out there late at night, and you could be in the control room – and everyone who's ever done this will tell the same story. You would hear the front door close to the station, like somebody had opened it, came in, and closed the door. You would hear somebody walk across the front office, come around through the transmitter room and up in back of you in the control room, and I don't know how many times I have actually turned around to speak to them and nobody there.

I: Oh, my gosh!

AJ: And I've gotten up I don't know how many times and searched that radio station from top to bottom, because I would swear to you, just like I said, I heard them come in the front door, close the door, walk across the room, come up behind. You could feel them, practically, you know, and you'd turn around to speak to them and there's nobody there, and that's a fact.

[Laughs]

I: Weren't you terrified? I would have been just scared to death.

AJ: No, I was just curious.

I: Man, that would have been the first and last time I would have stayed by myself in the radio station. [Laughs]

AJ: You know, kind of a chill bump [would come up], you know. [Laughs] "What the hell's going on here?" you know. [Laughs]

I: Did you build the building for the radio station or had it previously been a house?

AJ: No, it was built specifically for a radio station.

I: So no good explanation for why the ghost would be wandering in at night.

AJ: No.

I: Maybe he wanted to try out the radio business. [*Laughter*]

AJ: Yeah. Well, we'd just write it off as anybody who wants to be in the radio business has got to be a little touched anyway. [*Laughter*]

I: Oh, who was this rider that everybody was shooting at, that came across the bridge? Who was—?

AJ: I don't know. I don't know.

I: Nobody knows who he was or anything, they just shot at him? Do people still report that they've seen him, or do you think that's died out?

AJ: That's died out. It's been years since I've heard anything about that.

I: Were you there with your dad when he shot at him or did he just come home and tell you?

AJ: No, no. Back in those days, the '20s and '30s, a lot of people went armed. [*Laughs*] I remember my daddy's gun. It was a .45 caliber revolver. Now, they are unusual. They're like a cannon without wheels. But back in those days when they shot you they intended to kill you. [*Laughs*] But Dad, he also served for a while as coroner of the county.

I: Wow. [*Pause*] Gosh. I don't think I could—. I could probably work at the radio station but I don't think I could work as the coroner. [*Laughs*]

AJ: I don't know; I spent about thirty years with the local rescue squad, EMS unit.

I: Really? Going out on calls?

AJ: Oh, yes.

I: Oh, gosh. I'll bet you saw some awful stuff.

AJ: I saw some gruesome stuff, and then as a reporter I covered a whole lot more [Laughs] gruesome stuff. As I said, of course in a small county they made do with what they had. I ended up as, I guess you'd say the medical photographer, for the sheriff's department and police and all like that. Any time they'd have a murder or find a body or something like that they'd call for me to come out and photograph the scene for them, the body, the remains, and the scene, and I'd furnish them the prints and all like that. I used to testify in court a lot.

I: Wow.

AJ: But of course all that's changed. Now they shoo reporters away from the scene. Back then we were necessary. [Laughs]

I: Did you have to--?

AJ: But we had a good relationship. I didn't use--. Of course I'd be lying to myself if I didn't say that the information I gained from doing this didn't assist me in my reporting at all, but I never used the information in a way that would compromise the case or divulge anything that shouldn't have been divulged at the time.

I: Did you have to testify for any big cases?

AJ: I beg your pardon?

I: Did you ever have to testify for any big cases that went on?

AJ: Well, I mean I testified in murder cases, and liquor-making cases, and [Laughs] you just name it; most any kind, the whole gauntlet.

I: Right. I would imagine there's not a whole lot of murder that happens in Louisburg, at least not in the past.

AJ: Well, we had our share of them.

I: Really?

AJ: Yeah. [*Laughs*] Sure have. One of the big cases that I remember, a former chief of police over in Franklinton shot his mother-in-law to death.

I: Oh, my goodness!

AJ: He was tried in Louisburg and actually, I believe, sentenced to die, but later won a retrial and copped a plea to life in prison. Frank Carter. In fact, I knew him quite well. I had a Belgian model 98 Browning automatic pistol that I brought home from World War II with me, and he hand-carved a set of mahogany grips for my gun for me and put on it.

I: Wow. [*Pause*] I'm trying to think what else we haven't covered. What's the strangest case you ever reported on or went out on a police call for?

AJ: I don't know. There've been so many. You know, you can categorize them in that manner—. I guess one of the oddest things was the case of the witchdoctor.

I: Really?

AJ: Yeah. We had a case where—. [*Pause*] A great number of black people believe in witches and sorcery, or whatever it is you call it. If you ask them if they believe in it they'll say no, but they'll tell you, "But I believe a person can get something on you." This was a case where this guy had had a spell put on him by a witchdoctor and was dying. He was just wasting away to nothing. The news media got involved in it and they flew this nationally famous hypnotist from New York City down, you know, and he hypnotized the guy and supposedly removed the spell. It was a real media heyday! [*Laughs*]

I: I'm sure. When did this happen?

AJ: Right here in Franklin County.

I: No, but when?

AJ: When? Oh, golly. I don't know, back in the '40s or '50s.

I: Wow. [*Laughs*] Gosh, that had to be something to have to write about for the paper.

[*Laughter*]

AJ: I mean this guy was actually dying. He was just wasting away to nothing.

I: Wow. [*Pause*]

AJ: Crazy.

I: [01:25:49] [*Laughs*]

AJ: I recall the last lynching we had in Franklin County.

I: When was that?

AJ: Back in about 1934, '35, something like that.

I: What were the circumstances?

AJ: The circumstances were, this—. I don't remember the victim's name [01:26:25] called him. Anyway, this black man I think was mentally deranged. He killed a farmer in a field down here in eastern Franklin County, a fellow by the name of Stokes. [He] cut his head off, severed his head with an ax, and put it in what you call a guana sack—

I: Oh, yeah.

AJ: —and carried it home with him, and when the sheriff and deputies went down to arrest him the story goes he was sitting in his front yard in a chair propped up against a tree with the man's head in the sack beside his chair.

I: Oh, my goodness!

AJ: I think they — quote — had to beat him up a bit in order to take him into custody.

Whether they had to or not remains to be seen, but anyway they brought him to Louisburg and as

a result of the beating he got they carried him to a local doctor's office to receive medical attention. The doctor was Dr. Herbert G. Perry and his office was there on West Nash Street in Louisburg, right where the old Cash & Carry grocery, or market, used to be. He's treated me in that office.

While in the doctor's office the guy attempted to escape. The doctor had turned around to do something and he kicked the nurse in the stomach, and jumped off the table, and bolted out into the waiting room, and jumped through a plate glass window out onto the sidewalk, where a large crowd of people had gathered, and someone in the crowd shot him, so he didn't get very far. But anyway, he wasn't killed, but he was taken back into custody and the sheriff put him in his car and was supposedly headed to Raleigh or somewhere to take him for safe keeping. He came out 56, east of Louisburg.

At the time there was no Raleigh Road as such, 401. If you went to Raleigh you had to go some other way. We went—. As I said, I was born and my early years were spent right out there on the Raleigh Road, and when you went to Raleigh you went 56 to Franklinton and got on 1 and went to Raleigh. But anyway, they got out here on top of Strickland's Hill out here on 56 east of town and the road was blocked, and they took the fellow from the sheriff – some white-robed [*Laughs*] people, citizens – and they found his body later out here near Ingleside hanging on a tree, and all of his fingers had been amputated—

I: Oh, my goodness!

AJ: —for souvenirs.

I: [*Gasps*]

AJ: There have been reports—. I've never seen one myself but I know several people who claim they have seen those fingers – some of those fingers or at least one of those fingers – since then.

I: Wow. So do you know who might have them now?

AJ: Not now I don't.

I: But you know who might have then?

AJ: Well, this is one of those cases where I think [*Pause*] it was pretty widely known who they were but nobody would talk. [*Laughs*]

I: Right. Yeah, I'm not asking you because I want to know. [*Laughs*]

AJ: Yeah. Well, I mean all the principals are long dead.

I: Yeah. Wow. I can't imagine.

AJ: This fellow, Stokes, the farmer, his son worked with the North Carolina Forestry Service later and worked with one of my brothers-in-law and I got to know him right well. He's dead too now.

I: Gosh.

AJ: Yeah, there are some interesting political stories, but [*Pause*] let's say they've got surviving– [*Laughs*]

I: Right. [*Laughs*] Wait a little [01:31:58]

AJ: –relatives and all who wouldn't appreciate–.

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcriber: Deborah Mitchum

Date: September 27, 2016

