

JOSHUA BROTHERS

Interview 218a

February 22, 2011, at The History Center, Diboll, Texas

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Patsy Colbert, brothers Clay, James, and Thomas Joshua reminisce about growing up in Diboll as African Americans. Though brothers, they had very different experiences since their growing up years spanned the eras of racial segregation, the desegregation and integration process, and full integration. James grew up during total racial segregation and attended H.G. Temple School throughout his childhood. He reminisces about teachers Inez Sibley, Willie Massey, Mrs. Gilbert and others and recalls the school facilities and sports teams. He also played baseball for the Diboll Tigers community baseball team. Clay and Thomas Joshua were in Junior High and High School during racial integration and they discuss the differences in the schools, their social interaction with both races, and playing sports for Diboll High school. In particular they credit Mrs. Stubblefield, Mr. Massey, and Coach Wyatt for easing the transition to racially integrated schools. The brothers also remember Jay Boren, Frank Weeks, Diboll Day, Juneteenth, family dynamics, little league baseball and Mr. Arthur Temple, Jr.

Patsy Colbert (hereafter PC): Today's date is February 22, 2011. I am Patsy Colbert and I'm here at the History Center today with Clay Joshua, James Edward Joshua and Thomas Joshua, three brothers that grew up here in Diboll and are going to participate in this oral history interview today pertaining to integration of the schools and Mr. Joshua's days of playing on the first integrated Little League teams. Clay, if we can we will just begin if you can tell me when and where you were born.

Clay Joshua (hereafter CJ): I was born in Lufkin, Texas January 14, 1955.

PC: Okay, and when did you begin school and where did you begin school at?

CJ: H. G. Temple High School.

PC: Okay, and what grade were you in when integration took place? I think earlier we were looking at it and you were seventh or eighth grade.

CJ: I think seventh grade.

PC: What year did you graduate?

CJ: 1973.

PC: Was that from Diboll?

CJ: Yes.

PC: Okay, okay. Mr. James I'm going to get you to tell me the same. When and where were you born?

James Edward Joshua (hereafter JJ): Wiergate, Texas in 1941.

PC: Wiergate, okay.

JJ: January 13th.

PC: Why were you at Wiergate, your family?

JJ: My dad was at a turpentine camp back over there at that time. He came into Wiergate and that is where he met my mother and married my mother. By the way, Daddy was 36 and my mother was 16 when they got married.

PC: Wow!

JJ: She was nineteen when I was born and we left Wiergate and moved to Leesville, Louisiana and that is where my sister was born. We left Leesville and went to a turpentine camp called Hoods Camp and Mr. Temple sent a truck or trailer over there to move my mother and father and another family back to Diboll in 1947. I stayed, well I went to school, in fact I started to school when I was five years old.

PC: At Wiergate?

JJ: No, up at Diboll.

PC: Oh here in Diboll.

JJ: My mother messed around and I'd have been seven if I had waited so she put me back where I would be six, really five years old when I started school.

PC: Okay.

JJ: I went all my years' right there in Diboll and I finished in '58 and I had just turned seventeen years old. I turned seventeen January 13th and graduated May 29, 1958. I had just turned seventeen when I finished high school.

PC: Okay and you graduated from H. G. Temple?

JJ: H. G. Temple High School.

PC: Okay, we will get back to that. And Thomas, tell me when and where you were born.

Thomas Joshua (hereafter TJ): I was born at Lufkin, Texas in 1953 and was raised up here in Diboll.

PC: Okay, did you begin school here in Diboll?

TJ: Yes.

PC: Okay, and tell me quickly did your father work for Southern Pine Lumber Company?

CJ: Mom and Dad.

PC: Okay, your mom did too?

CJ: Yes.

PC: Okay, that is great! Now, Clay getting back to you, tell me what your first knowledge of integration would have been and any of you can respond as well.

CJ: My first knowledge was when they were going to let us get over here.

PC: That the school was going to integrate?

CJ: Yes, but once we found out we were going to integrate we didn't have no problem with it. We never had. The only problem we ever had was getting over here, getting in the door. That is what our problem was.

PC: And, what do you mean by that 'getting in the door'?

CJ: When we integrated they had the old high school they had it locked with chains on it. The only way we could get in the school we broke a window and we went on through and went to our classes, you know, like they told us.

PC: Was that the first year of full integration?

CJ: First year of full integration and they told us we had to walk from our school across the track in order to go to school but when we got to school they had chains on the door. That meant for us to stay out. The only way we could get in was break a window. We broke a big window and we went onto school. We went in through the window and went to our class that we was supposed to went to.

PC: And were the principals there, I mean who was...

CJ: There wasn't nothing they could do.

PC: But that was supposedly the first day, fall of '68 and so...

CJ: That is how we got in. They had the chains on the door and that is how we got in. We had to break a window and once we broke a window and got in we just went onto our classes. And you were in junior high age.

PC: Okay, Thomas how about you, what was your first knowledge of integration?

TJ: We started my memory is Coach Wyatt coming to the high school, which was H. G. Temple High School at the time and telling us about playing football and all. I was in eighth grade then so when total integration for me started in the ninth grade when we came to Diboll High School.

PC: To the high school, and how did you feel about that coming to the high school?

TJ: It wasn't any problem for me, to me it was just something different. And once we got there everything...we still had some problems but as everything progressed it got better. And then I met Coach Wyatt and a lot of things changed for me then 'cause he was more like a father figure to me and everything just fell into place.

PC: Did you participate in athletics under him?

TJ: All athletics.

PC: Okay. So, he really helped the transition, you think, once you went to sports and everything?

TJ: For me he did!

PC: Okay, now how did your parents feel about integration? Do you remember anything about, you know, their concerns or fears with the schools integrating?

CJ: My momma just wanted us to go to school, no matter what it took.

TJ: As long as we went to school everything was fine.

CJ: As long as we went to school, the integration didn't bother her.

PC: Okay, were you able to make new friends, you know, after integration?

CJ: Yes, Charlie, Kent and them were the first ones we met. Kent and Charlie Havard and them, that was my first friend that I ever had because that led up to baseball and once after baseball Sonny Neyland took over. That is how I knew all of them through baseball.

PC: Right. Now, you actually Clay, you participated on the first integrated Little League team and that was 1967, which was the year before you would have come to school with full integration. So tell me about how the Little League program became integrated. How did they recruit you? How did you come to know about it?

CJ: Through really I used to walk and I just saw them over there practicing and playing ball and I just went over there looking at them because I didn't have no glove. I didn't have nothing. I just started looking at them and seeing what they were doing. They looked and looked but they never did ask me so I ask them could I play, you know, could I play with them. So, that is when Charlie spoke up and he told me yes. I didn't have no glove so I got his glove. He always took a glove with him. It was a first baseman glove and he told me can I throw a ball pretty good and I told him yes. So I pitched my first pitch and I think Bruce Durham was the catcher and he came out the mitt and threw the glove down and then Charlie asked me he said, "Can you do that again?" I told him, "yes." So he put on another glove inside a mitt and when I threw it the second time he told me, he said, "We got a place for you." I said, "Where is it?" He said, "You are going to be my pitcher" and I ran home and told my momma. I told her, I said, "They going to let me play baseball." I said, "Mr. Havard told me I can play baseball." She say, "Do you want to play?" I told her, "Yes."

PC: That is great.

CJ: And he took over from there and he told me, "Don't worry about nothing. All you got to do is just play. That is all I want you do to is play." So when he told me that it's a lot of them that didn't like it because of the position they had started out with, I took. I took third base and I left third base and took pitcher and then I took center field. Like I told them I played all of it. That is what made some of them mad because I had the arm and I had the speed.

PC: So Charlie Havard was your coach that first year?

CJ: Yes.

PC: Mr. Charlie shared the story with me that he saw you throw a ball from the outfield to the home plate and he said, "I don't know who he is but, I want him." He shared that story with me.

CJ: That happened when I think Bobby or somebody, I don't know who it was but he hit the ball and I slipped down but I had to go get it. Then when I went and got it I just reached and got it and took two steps and threw it and I just let it go and it took one bounce and he got it in his mitt and they called him out. He ran out there on the field and he said, "Boy what's you're..." I told him, I said, "I kind of hurt my arm." He said, "Man I have never in my life seen a person throw a ball like that." It didn't take but one bounce. I told him I was taught by the best.

PC: That is great. Now, how did you get to the games?

CJ: I walked.

PC: You walked okay. And where were the games played?

CJ: Most of them were played on this field.

TJ: It was right here behind the bank.

CJ: Behind the bank, yes. No, it was right here, right here.

TJ: Yes, it sure was.

PC: Yes, okay. This [The History Center site] was the Miller's Park and then the Little League field. So you just walked to the games.

CJ: Yes.

PC: Did your parents attend the games?

CJ: No.

PC: How did the other teammates react to you being on the team as far as the first year we had integrated teams?

CJ: It took them a while but I told them I didn't come here for no problems. All I want to do is play ball and like I told them, "You let me play ball then you'll get to know what type of person I am." So far as being a bully no, just let me play baseball.

PC: So they were all fine with it. Everybody got along?

CJ: Yes, it took them a while but they got along.

PC: Okay, tell me about being selected for the all-star team that first year.

CJ: I didn't think I was going to make it. I really didn't. To tell you the truth I really didn't. And then he told me, he walked up to me and told me, H said, "You are selected for the all-star team." I started looking around and I asked, "Who?" He said, "You." He said, "You ain't happy?" I said, "Man I really didn't think I was going to make it." I just kept on saying, "I didn't think I was ever going to make it." When I made it, the rest of it just took place.

PC: And your coach that year was Mr. Leroy Smith. Where did y'all play the all-star tournament, do you remember?

CJ: No, I've forgotten where we played that at.

PC: When you went to the tournament were there other teams that were integrated teams?

CJ: Oh yes.

PC: So, there were not any issues pertaining to integrated teams?

CJ: No.

PC: Nothing that stands out in your mind about going to your first all stars?

CJ: No, everybody had fun, everybody had fun.

PC: Everybody had fun, okay. Is there anything particular that you remember about Mr. Smith as your coach that first year, or Mr. Charlie the first year, that you care to share?

CJ: I can share with both of them. They gave me the chance that I said nobody else give me. There are a lot of them I went to, like Paul Durham, he said, "Whatever you do, don't let nobody strike you." He said, "I can't say I'm against it or for it" but he said, "Whatever hits your mind Clay you go out there and do what you got to do." So like I told them, with[out] Mrs. Stubblefield, Sonny Neyland and Charlie Havard, it would have never happened.

PC: Okay, that is great. That is a great story. Now, Thomas do you remember going to his little league games?

TJ: No, I never did get the chance to see him play.

PC: Okay, okay. So, you didn't have any experience like in the stands as a bystander. I was just curious if there were any issues, you know, in the stands.

TJ: No, no.

PC: What about you Mr. James? Were you ever able to go to his games?

JJ: I went to two of his games and I saw him pitch and one night, I distinctly remember one game I went to he lost that game. The coach said he didn't have it that day but he could pitch though. The team beat him but that was just one day he just didn't have it. I looked at him and I said, "Boy you can do it." I used to get out there in the road at what they called Garrett Ranch, back during that time, and I'd get out in the middle of the road and Daddy would be sitting on the porch and I'd let him pitch to me because I was a catcher. He had a pretty nasty curve ball. (laughter)

PC: That is great. That is great. Now, in getting...we've talked about little league and your first years of playing on the integrated little league team and so I want to go back to

your school days and your first years of school, those first integrated years. Did you make any new friends the first year of integration?

CJ: My first two friends were Kent Havard and Bruce Durham.

PC: Okay and how did the white students treat you that first year on the campus? Were there any issues?

CJ: The only issue I had was just being a part of it, like I said, walk over there, “You don’t belong over here” no problem, walk over there, “What you doing over here, this is my seat,” no problem. That is the only problem I had. On down in years sports led up to it because they said couldn’t nobody...a black person couldn’t come over and take no position in sports so I made them out a lie. I went out there and Bill Gartman, they say he was the best third baseman there was. I had a pair of stack heeled shoes, a raggedy shirt and a pair of raggedy pants and I went out there and I took that position. He didn’t like that. I went out the next year I took center field, I took that position. I made all-district both years. They didn’t like that because they said it couldn’t be done but like I told them just give me...I took his position. I moved him to pitcher then I took Mark Shepherd’s position in center field and I put him on the bench. When Bill Gartman was number one hitter I became the number one hitter because I was the fastest one. I was the lead off because I was the fastest one on the team. Once I got on base it wasn’t no problem.

PC: Now was this your high school days you are speaking of?

CJ: My high school years, yes.

PC: Okay.

CJ: Out of the two years I played baseball Mr. Durham put it in the paper I was throwed out five times out of the two years I played baseball and they said that hadn’t never happened but like I told them I proved that to them.

PC: Did everybody get along on the team?

CJ: Everybody got along good.

PC: And who was your coach?

CJ: Coach Cheshire, Rocky Cheshire.

PC: Okay, I remember him. He wasn’t here very long.

CJ: No, and Boran, Raymond Bounds, I stole third base coming home and before the pitcher he was winding up and I just took off running and before he could get the ball back to the catcher I slid in and next thing I looked up, Boran came up to me and said, “Charcoal.” I said, “What?” He said, “Charcoal.” I said, “Man, my name is Clay, my

name is Clay Joshua.” He said it stuck with him and then I got off again and the next thing I know he said, he jumped up, “Charcoal strikes again” and then everybody just fell out and it just stuck with me. It’s in the book right now, it said that I was running down first base and it got down there, “Charcoal strikes again” and that stuck with me.

PC: That became your nickname?

CJ: That stuck with me.

PC: And you were okay with that?

CJ: I was okay then.

PC: Well Raymond is a pretty funny guy, he is a mess. (laughter) He is a good guy. Okay, now let’s talk about the classroom experience. Were there any issues in the classroom?

CJ: No.

PC: Again, your first year was seventh grade and then later the baseball you just referred to was your high school years.

CJ: Yes.

PC: But back to your first years of integration in the classroom, were there any issues?

CJ: No.

PC: Do you remember who your teacher was the first year, or who some of your teachers were the first year?

CJ: One of my teachers was Mrs. Stubblefield. My other teacher was Mr. Massey, Mr. Porter and then I had...what’s this...Coach Hand was my athletic coach.

PC: He wasn’t here very long either, just a couple of years.

CJ: What is his name, Mr. Douglas.

PC: Mr. Douglas. (laughter) Okay, now before integration what were your experiences as far as being around the white community?

CJ: It didn’t bother me, it didn’t bother me none.

PC: Did you interact with the whites before then like coming to the grocery store or whatever?

CJ: See I put it like this here, before we integrated in 68-69 I came over, you know, like I said, Kent Havard, Merrick Roach, all of them were at the white school but I didn't have no problem with them. We had to walk to the store back then store was named Piggly Wiggly before it was Brookshires.

PC: Right.

CJ: And see every time I walked to the store I never did have no problem.

PC: Okay.

CJ: Spoke and they didn't have no problem with that.

PC: Okay, and what about you Thomas, any experience before integration your experience of race relations with the white community?

TJ: It was Robert Tindall, the Tindall's, David Wimp, and Hendricks. Those were the guys really. Well, Robert Tindall and them lived just, you know where the railroad tracks you go down in front of the...

CJ: About a five minute walk from where we were staying across from Arthur Temple's residence.

TJ: Where that building is.

PC: The commissary, the office, the big office.

TJ: Yes, that building. Robert Tindall and them lived down the street from it but it was across the railroad track and we hung out with them. Bimbo Welch, and really the Tindall's, Bimbo Welch and David Wimp and Hendricks were really the only white kids that would just come down and play basketball with us down there by the community center after they built the basketball court.

CJ: They wasn't scared, see.

TJ: Everybody just had fun.

PC: Didn't think anything about it.

TJ: They never thought nothing about it, you know.

PC: They actually came over to the park or the H. G. Temple School and played basketball with y'all just like an afternoon just playing friends to friends.

TJ: Just hanging out.

CJ: David Wimp was the only one that went swimming with us, you know. That was an every summer thing over there. Either we would go get him or he'd come over there and asked us, "You want to swim" and we'd go swimming, you know. It was something we did with David Wimp that we didn't do with no one else. Really we had fun. We could go over there to Arthur Temple's place and wouldn't nothing be said. The only thing you had to do was if you mess up clean it up, you know. We didn't have no problem with him.

PC: And you are talking about David Wimp coming over to the Walter Allen pool and swimming with you guys just like it was nothing.

CJ: Yes see, the rest of them was scared.

TJ: It was like they were scared or something but like the Tindall's and Bimbo Welch and them they would come and just hang out just like it wasn't....just kids having fun.

PC: That is great! That is great! Now, Thomas you were in the eighth grade the first year of full integration.

TJ: Yes, but we were still at H. G. Temple High School. I didn't get to Diboll High School until I was a freshman in '69.

PC: So, that first year of full integration you stayed on that same campus?

TJ: Yes.

PC: So you actually experienced the first whites attending H. G. Temple is that right?

TJ: In '68 yes.

PC: How did that year go for you?

TJ: Well it was fine. You know, we knew it was coming and so like with our parents you just had to accept it. And once it all got going, we had some problems in the beginning and then as it progressed everything just worked itself out.

PC: Do you remember if there was any discussion at home at the supper table with your parents discussing that this integration was coming?

TJ: Be mannerable and just...

CJ: Yes sir, no sir.

TJ: Yes sir, no sir.

CJ: No ma'am, yes ma'am.

TJ: Just do what you have to do.

PC: Did they have opposition to it?

TJ: No, wasn't any problem.

PC: Just encouraging you to mind your manners?

TJ: Just mind your manners.

PC: That wasn't anything out of the ordinary probably was it?

TJ: Just mind your manners. That is one thing if you mess up at school you going to pay for it when you got home. You had to do what you had to do at school.

PC: Right, okay. Now, anything in the classroom or...

TJ: The classroom was fun to me. Everybody got along pretty good and the only thing I remember Mr. Porter saying, "Now y'all can't go over there and like mess with the white girls 'cause I don't know if they are going to be able to handle that." But it wasn't the fact that we was going to try to go with the white girls, let's just all be friends, we got to do this and let's just get along. And once it all started and everything I guess the sports brought it all together. Once we started the sports side of it everything just began to fall into place.

PC: Did you participate in sports your junior high year?

TJ: Well yes, I played football and basketball and ran track.

PC: The first junior high integrated sports was the basketball and I know Bruce Durham and Mark Shepherd. Did you play on the team with them? Was that the same year?

CJ: That was me.

PC: That was you Clay?

CJ: Yes.

PC: Okay.

TJ: I played with Bobby Murry, Raymond Bounds, George Putnam, Donnie Kee.

CJ: Nick Trout.

TJ: Nick Trout came later. I didn't play with Nick Trout until I was a freshman in high school.

PC: What teacher do you think had the most impact on you, Thomas your first year?

TJ: Mrs. Stubblefield.

PC: Mrs. Stubblefield. Can you share any particular reason why?

TJ: It was just...it was just like we were just one of her kids. She said, "Don't worry about anything. If you have any problem just let me know." And then we had a Mrs. English, Ann English, now she was a nice lady to me, a real nice lady.

CJ: A pretty lady.

PC: Yes, she was really nice.

TJ: She helped me out a lot.

PC: Well good. What about you Clay any particular teachers that had an impact on you those first years of integration?

CJ: Brother Fred, Mr. Douglas. (laughter) Mr. Douglas, that is it, Mr. Douglas 'cause like I said...

PC: Well he had a big impact on a lot of them. (laughter)

CJ: He whooped me! He didn't care he whooped me. My first time he whooped me I didn't take it pretty good because you know, he hit me with a board, you know.

PC: So, that was a new deal?

TJ: Oh golly...whew!

CJ: After that he told me, he said, "You don't know anything about journalism you going to know when you leave here." And like I said if it wasn't for him he started really me getting my lessons because he said, "If you don't get your lessons you ain't gonna be nothing but out in the streets looking." He said, "You can't get no job, you can't do nothing."

PC: So that really stuck with you and made an impression on you.

CJ: Oh yes, oh yes.

PC: Now, share with me about Coach Porter and Coach Spencer, just your relationship with them and maybe what impact they had on the whole integration process those early years.

CJ: Mr. Porter he deal with it, you know, like he said y'all...just like my momma told me, "Y'all aint' here to fight. Let them mouth off, let them talk, we just want to get in the door. Once we get in the door then you got to show them what you are made of. You want to come here to learn or you want to come here to fight?" Mr. Spencer he was different. The only thing he put out he said, "If you can talk to them, talk to them, if they don't want talk to you back off." But he said, "Once you get in the door" same thing Mr. Porter said one thing, "Get the lesson and don't worry about that out there. Let the outside world deal with itself, the only thing we want y'all to do is get an education."

PC: That is great, that is great. Now, Thomas do you have any recollection or any experience with the boys that came over the very first year of '66 when they integrated the athletics and we just had those few H. G. Temple athletes to come over and play with the Diboll white boys? Did you have any experience with that or have any feedback from them on that?

TJ: No, I was a little younger and I really didn't grasp it but I knew there was a difference but like Eddie Horton, Eddie would hang out on the other side of the tracks but I guess I just really didn't pay much attention to it.

PC: Okay.

TJ: It was just go to school, do what I had to do and go back home. I was more like a homebody at that time.

PC: Okay, I was just curious, you know, if as a younger student and you watching these older boys go to the white school and participate in the athletics just your perspective on it at the different age. Sometimes the age we are at is how our perspective is depending on where we are at in life.

TJ: See you could see how things started to change. You know, I remember when I used to always read like in twenty-two years Diboll High School would go like 0 and 10, or 1 and 9, or 2 and 8 and stuff like that. Then in '67 they went 6-3-1 and everything started changing.

PC: It was a big year for the athletics. It really turned the athletics around.

TJ: Athletics changed everything.

PC: And that was I believe that was Coach Simmons.

TJ: Yes, Coach Simmons.

PC: Okay, that is great. I was just curious.

TJ: Everybody used to want to play Diboll for homecoming and then in 1967 everybody started changing.

PC: Okay, they wanted to play because they thought they could win?

TJ: Yes, they knew we can win, we can beat Diboll.

PC: Wasn't much opponent, opposition.

TJ: Wasn't too much at all. Then like back then they were pretty good in baseball and basketball but the football side of it when they was just like everybody was beating up on Diboll. Then in 1967 everything changed.

PC: Okay, now did you attend those games?

TJ: Oh yes, I was right there.

PC: Okay and how were you treated at the field, were there any problems?

TJ: You know, you had some, some would treat you different, "What are you doing over here?" But then the others, "Oh man, don't listen to him come on with us," you know. So I just hung out with the ones that treated me fair and stayed away from the ones that didn't. Like I say it progressed from '67 to '68, is when I got to Diboll High school as a freshman I got to meet Bobby Murry and them and all those guys. There is one, Butch Carnley, that is who I want...that is the guy I been trying to find. Butch Carnley was entirely, he was just like okay you black so what and it didn't make a difference.

PC: Color didn't matter.

TJ: It didn't matter.

CJ: His mom and them, his whole family if didn't matter with them.

TJ: It just didn't matter.

PC: So how would you say the overall experience of integration and race relations, you know, looking back how do you think it went?

TJ: The only time that I really didn't like it was the year Martin Luther King got killed. And then it seemed like it just...

CJ: It came out of them then.

TJ: ...seem like everything changed.

PC: What was going on with the nation trickled down.

TJ: The only thing that got me, okay we was walking down the hall one day and the trophy case there was a piece of typing paper, “If you want to know who killed Martin Luther King ask the KKK’s.” They had two real bad fights that year at the high school.

CJ: They water hosed us down and they put that water hose on us.

TJ: Everything changed.

PC: What grade were you in then, do you remember?

TJ: Ninth.

PC: So, your freshman year.

TJ: I think it was my freshman year. Let’s see he got killed in ’68 and that changed.

CJ: ’68.

PC: Yes, you said that was your freshman, fall of ’68 was your...

TJ: Then after that my freshman year is when...

PC: That is when the paper...and how did the administration handle that?

CJ: They were as scared as they were.

TJ: It changed a lot, it changed things.

PC: I guess what I’m asking is, were they on top of that? Did they handle that?

CJ: Mrs. Stubblefield is the only one that dealt with it. She is the only one that brought them to their senses.

TJ: That changed things for me for awhile.

PC: For a little while.

TJ: Then I met Coach Wyatt and everything seemed to fall into place after that.

PC: It just kind of leveled back out and mostly that was due to what was going on in the nation just people reacting to that.

TJ: Yes.

PC: And out of fear too, okay. Anything you wanted to add Clay pertaining to that time frame.

CJ: No, the only thing is just like Mrs. Stubblefield tried to tell them, you know, they can't stop it you know. If you want to play sports let him play but when the fight broke out everybody else ran but Mrs. Stubblefield stood right there with us. Like she said you know, it's going to come a time when we are going to have to deal with it and going to have to play with each other and sleep with each other and like that there. But like she said we have to deal with it.

PC: Okay, that is great. Now, Clay what stood out to you most when you first attended the Diboll white school? You know, were there any major differences in the facilities in comparing that?

CJ: No.

PC: Okay, anything for you Thomas that stands out to you as far as the books, the facilities, anything...equipment or anything?

TJ: Not really.

CJ: Our books, like you said, when you compared the books, I think our books were in better shape than their books was because like I said, they didn't care. When they leave out the classroom they leave their books all tore up but before we integrated...

TJ: You couldn't tear up a book.

CJ: ...you couldn't tear up a book, you know.

TJ: A black student, no, no no, that book is for you to learn and you walk in and throw that book, no you just couldn't throw that book. That book had to be in a certain place.

CJ: Before we did integrate the page was missing or it had been cut on or it would be ripped but, we had to deal with it though.

PC: So, what I'm hearing is that you were taught in the classroom to respect that book.

TJ: No, from home!

PC: Oh from home, okay.

TJ: That book is a tool for you to learn, don't tear that book up.

PC: Okay, that is good, that is interesting.

TJ: You had to bring those books home from school. You had to bring your books home. That is one thing you go to school to learn and anything other than that you are going to pay for it when you get home.

CJ: That is right.

PC: So that was coming from your parents, good morals and values.

CJ: Like my mom said they gave that book new and when you return it it's going to be new. The only time you can write in it is when they open the book said write your name on that book right there and that is all you better write. You better not write nothing else on it.

PC: That is great! That is great! Now, before I forget, backing up, tell me your parent's names, who your parents are?

CJ: My mom, her maiden name before she got married her name was Annie Lee Gipson.

PC: And your father's name?

CJ: My father's name was Clay Joshua.

PC: Okay, just for the record so we will have that. I forgot to ask that earlier. Now, tell me about Mr. Massey.

TJ: Uh-wee!

PC: And, James can probably jump in here too because you would have had Mr. Massey too.

TJ: He was a math teacher.

CJ: That is why I say the majority of those old pictures out there of us in '66 and '67 his wife I think they got them from her because she kept everything at her house and it was right across the street from the school.

PC: Mrs. Massey kept everything, pictures and stuff?

CJ: Yes, between her and Mr. Massey they kept all the pictures.

PC: Now, Thomas you would have started to school your first grade you would have been under Mr. Massey.

TJ: Oh yes, oh yes!

PC: Anything you want to share with me about Mr. Massey and your time under him?

TJ: When you got to his class it was all about math and nothing else mattered. You were going to learn it or else. Like, whew, that man used to just golly.... (laughter)

CJ: He made you learn.

TJ: You had to learn under Mr. Massey.

CJ: You had to.

TJ: There wasn't no if and or buts about it.

CJ: Say like you feel like you were going to leave school, when you did come back he still had that problem, that same problem he asked you.

TJ: You were going to get it.

CJ: You were going to get it right. He didn't care if you come back to school two or three months from now.

PC: He didn't forget it huh?

TJ: Oh no. (laughter)

CJ: When you get down to that problem that was it. You know, but you had to learn in order to be somebody. And if he had to whip it in you, you learned.

PC: Now what about as a principal?

CJ: He was a good principal.

TJ: Oh, a good principal. He didn't take sides, you know, if you are wrong you are just wrong.

CJ: That is right. If you are wrong you are wrong and if you didn't want no paddling you go home and you stay and like I say, when you did come back if you didn't bring your parents with you, you didn't go to school.

PC: Oh, you had to bring your parents back with you?

CJ: Oh yes or you didn't go to school.

PC: What for him to have a discussion with them about why you left or what?

CJ: No, instead of sending a note home if you didn't bring your parents you didn't go to school. He wanted to see your face and tell you what went down because he feel like you go home and tell your parents one thing and then they send a note out here he want to know what was said. If he sees your parent face to face then he can tell you what really went on.

PC: Okay. That is just the way he handled the discipline side.

TJ: Your side couldn't be different from okay just say he be somewhere and you walk in the store and see your parents, "Well did Thomas tell you what happened at school?" No, (laughter) what you told him the first time your parents better tell him that same thing 'cause when you got home, "Mr. Massey say you did such and such." You say, "No, I didn't." "Oh she lying." No, I didn't say that. "Well that is what you said." So the stories had to match. If not, you were going to get it at school and you sure going to get it when you got home.

PC: Okay.

TJ: It all had to match up or else.

PC: Do you remember at any point Mr. Massey having an assembly at the black school and maybe talking about the upcoming integration?

CJ: Every Friday.

PC: Every Friday you had an assembly?

CJ: Every Friday.

PC: Was there ever a discussion just about integration coming?

CJ: Yes.

PC: Okay, can you remember anything about that you want to share with me?

CJ: Yes, the first deal it was that he said what we were fixing to go in that we haven't been in before. He said we might have some problems but we got to stick with it. He said violence ain't the key. He said once you get there you got to prove to them, you can't prove to yourself because you already know what you can do. Once we get over there and get off that bus and enter a new school he said bygones is bygones. The only thing now is you got to work hard because once we integrate it's going to be a whole new environment.

PC: So he really encouraged you to make the best of the situation.

CJ: Oh yes.

TJ: Oh yes.

PC: Did that make you feel more comfortable knowing that he was behind you?

CJ: Yes, and there was one thing about it, you couldn't go through them doors like people just get up and put on old wrinkled pants and wrinkled shirt, you couldn't do that.

TJ: You had to be presentable.

CJ: You had to be presentable.

PC: So, this is something he had an assembly and telling the whole school what he expected from you the first day?

CJ: Yes.

TJ: That is right.

PC: Okay.

CJ: Yes, he would look at you, like I said, and if the fellows didn't come up with their hair cut and shaved like this here, you go home or he had your stuff right there. Go in the bathroom and fix yourself up or whatever you want to do. The women had to do the same thing. The dress, if the dress was too short he was going to tell you. If your hair is not right he going to tell you, you got to come right.

PC: Wow that is great, that is wonderful to hear. I haven't heard that. That is wonderful.

CJ: You can't come dirty, you know, you can't come dirty.

PC: So he really wanted to make sure that his students... he could be proud of his classes and his students. That is wonderful.

CJ: Oh yes!

PC: And, did that stick with you?

CJ: Oh shoot, man that is all that counted.

PC: You didn't want to disappoint him did you?

TJ: No, no.

CJ: You couldn't, you couldn't.

TJ: You couldn't disappoint him.

CJ: Mr. Porter wasn't going to let you. He is still living today. He wasn't going to let you.

PC: Now, Mr. Porter was there during the early years and during the integrated years too. I believe still substitutes and teaches today. That is great! Anything else about Mr. Massey or Mrs. Massey that you care to share before we move on?

TJ: She had a strap called yappy! (laughter)

JJ: Oh lord!

CJ: That is right and she like we are sitting right here, she wouldn't stand up and whip you she would sit you right here...

TJ: She made you sit down.

CJ: ...right across right here. Women, it was a different ballgame, you know.

TJ: But the guys, yappy was... (laughter)

CJ: They got to come with it. It was about that long, but it was like a deal that come off of some kind of a motor like a...

JJ: It was a gin belt.

TJ: A gin belt, that is what it was.

PC: It was about 2 foot long.

CJ: Enough for her to put her hand in it and like she said we learned.

PC: You learned.

TJ: "You don't want to talk to yappy today do you?"

CJ: "No ma'am."

TJ: All she had to say was yappy, and golly.

PC: She had a name for her strap huh? (laughter)

TJ: Yappy would make you come on with it.

CJ: Like I said, they had, we had, before we come there we had our own homemaking.

PC: Homemaking class?

TJ: Home Economics.

CJ: Home cooking, you know.

PC: Did the boys participate in that too?

CJ: Everybody. And then like I said when we got over there it took them awhile because I was back in the ninth grade, tenth grade that is when they start doing homemaking over there. See once we integrated and went over there we already knew.

PC: They did not have home economics the first year of integration?

CJ: No, see we already knew.

PC: One of the interesting things with home economics is that was one of the programs they implemented at H. G. Temple School to acquire accreditation and that was back in the forties.

JJ: Mrs. Gilbert was teaching then.

CJ: She was still teaching when we left.

PC: Okay, I want to ask James some questions in regards to your school days at H. G. Temple. Tell me what year you graduated?

JJ: 1958, May 29, 1958.

PC: Okay, and so that was before integration. Anything particular you want to share with me about your days at H. G. Temple?

JJ: Well back then the teachers they believed in putting leather on you if you didn't do what you was suppose to be doing. I'm telling you now, Mrs. Inez Sibley, Mrs. Ruby Simmons and Mrs. Massey would jack you up. (laughter) Mrs. Inez would use them fingers. I don't know how she would gather that meat up but, she would lay one on you.

PC: Pinch you, I remember that.

JJ: Lord how mercy! She was an English teacher and you were going to get your lesson. Mr. Massey, he taught math and I don't care if it was five minutes before the bell rang if he had been somewhere and he get there he'd sit down he'd say, "Let's sit down and have some math" that five minutes. I don't care what you said. If it wasn't but one problem he was going to do that. He had five yard rulers taped together, that is what he would chastise you with and he would say, "Grab that seat son, grab that desk son." He would knock dust from you but after he got through he was through. He would laugh and hug you, do what you gotta do son. But he did something one time, this was before integration, Mr. Latané. You remember Mr. Latané Temple?

PC: Yes sir.

JJ: Latané Temple brought a guy from somewhere; he brought him over to the high school we had that meeting there that night. He got up and was making his little speech you know. He wouldn't say Negro it was Negra and Mr. Latané just sat there and he wasn't saying a word. He leaned over and said something to Mr. Massey. When he got through and sat down he stood up there and he told that man he said, "I want you to listen to me real good." He said, "The word is not Negra; the word is Negro and if you got to say it you are going to say Negro or you don't talk." And, that man it looked like the blood went out of him. That guy left there and I never seen that guy to this day.

PC: Now what was this meeting about that Mr. Latané was there for?

JJ: They were talking about what was going to happen before integration. They were telling what was going to happen if we integrated.

PC: Okay, so this was after you got out of school you are talking about the years before integration?

JJ: Yes, they called that meeting that night and we was suppose to be there, the parents and everybody was there.

PC: So this was just a public community meeting?

JJ: Right.

PC: And, do you know what year this was?

JJ: I think it was somewhere around 1956, I think it was 1956.

PC: Oh that early?

JJ: That is right.

PC: So, you were still in school.

JJ: I was still in school.

PC: And, you remember this public meeting pertaining to integration?

JJ: That is right. Yes, that is right. See it was going to happen. I guess Mr. Latané saw it, you know, it was going to happen.

PC: Well you know the early law was passed in '54 or '55 somewhere in there but, it took a lot of years for it to come to play.

JJ: One thing I admire just before they integrated I came to Diboll and Mr. Temple had a trailer put on the 50 yard line at the football field.

PC: Are you speaking of Mr. Arthur Temple, Jr.?

JJ: Arthur Temple, yes. He said I want that trailer down there and I want everybody in Diboll, the parents to be at that meeting. He said, "Now it's going to happen." He said, "Now I own Diboll." I am listening really good. He said, "I own Diboll and I don't care if you are black, or colored if you start some mess you got to leave here. We are not going to put up with it." And the transition went over 'cause they knew he wasn't lying, they knew he wasn't playing.

PC: Now was that meeting that you are referring to at the football field years after the one you spoke of with Mr. Latane Temple being at?

JJ: Afterwards, it was afterwards.

PC: Do you remember what year this one was with Mr. Arthur Temple?

JJ: The same year they integrated, just before they integrated. It would have to be what...

PC: '68 was full integration. '65 was Freedom of Choice.

JJ: That is when he told them.

PC: It was about four years there, somewhere in there?

JJ: Yes, Mr. Temple got up there on that trailer and he talked and when he got through talking and they dismissed everybody went on about their way. It was a smooth transition really. You going to have little fights and little disagreements but it wasn't no major stuff like at some other schools, fighting and stuff going on. He didn't play that.

PC: So you remember specifically this community meeting at the football field right over here, Lumberjack Stadium, with him on a trailer making a public speech...

JJ: That is right, at the fifty yard line.

PC: ...at the fifty yard line to the community about integration?

JJ: That is right.

PC: Were there very many, how was the attendance? Was it white and blacks?

JJ: It was full, it was full.

PC: Were there very many black people from the black community there?

JJ: Yes ma'am they were there and after the meeting was over with and when it did integrate it was smooth transition. There wasn't no...you going to have some, I don't care what you say.

PC: You got a few bad apples in every bunch.

JJ: But when he told them what he said, 'cause that was the only job they had, this is my job and if you mess up you got to leave here.

PC: Okay.

JJ: We not going to put up with it, so it wasn't no problem you know. I was gone then; I left in '58 so I was gone but I came back down here to hear what he was going to say. I was really curious what he was going to say.

PC: That is what I was going to ask you, were you still living here during those years?

JJ: No, no, no.

PC: So you had moved after graduation?

JJ: I left Diboll in '68, the later part of '68 I had moved from Diboll to Lufkin. That is where I was but, I knew what was going on, you know.

PC: So after graduation from '58 to '68 you lived here?

JJ: Yes, I stayed here and I wanted to go to college but (emotional) my parents weren't able and two weeks after high school I went to work at the Fiberboard Plant in '58. And I stayed at the Fiberboard Plant and I worked at the mill then I worked over at Tex-Lam where Leroy Smith was. I left Tex-Lam and I went to the Fiberboard plant and after Fiberboard Plant I was in Lufkin at that time. But I was here ten years after I finished school.

PC: Now, tell me about the working conditions, you know, before integration, were there any problems at the plants among the black men and the white men?

JJ: No, no, I had one incident you know after I was working at the plywood plant right after integration went into full swing. They still had those signs up on the bathrooms, colored and white, and they didn't take them down. So I was in the bathroom there one day and I came out and started out the bathroom and this old guy...well anyway...he come in the bathroom and I was coming out of the stall and he looked at me and said, "Don't you know this restroom is for white only?" I looked at him, back then I was...

TJ: He was wild.

JJ: ...I was wild. I looked at him. I said, "What you say?" "This bathroom is for white only." I said, "Okay." I just walked out the bathroom and went upstairs and I told the man that was over the thing, Walter Steele, was over it. I said, "Look, I just came out the bathroom and this man going to tell me it's for white only." I said, "Now look the only reason he walking... I just refuse to get down on his level." I said, "You need to talk to him." So he came downstairs and told him to come upstairs and he said, "Why did you tell him?" He said, "Well I got my own opinion about things." He said, "At home you have your opinion, but out here you don't have one." And Mr. Temple came through, I don't know what went on but he looked up there and saw those signs still up there because he had told them to take them down at the water fountain, you know, but they were still up there and he said a few choice words that I can't say but in about five minutes those signs were off them bathrooms everywhere around there. He just walked on out the door. He didn't say nothing else, that was the end of that.

PC: That was the end of that.

JJ: That was the end of that. He didn't say nothing else. He told him, "One more time out of you and you can leave Diboll." He said, "I don't care where you go but you going to leave here." So it...

PC: That was it.

JJ: Before they ever integrated, you know, they had whites living across the track.

PC: Right.

TJ: We always got along, you know.

PC: That is good.

TJ: But, like you say, you had those few that are going to want to persist in that.

CJ: Mrs. Glass and them is still there.

JJ: Mrs. Corinne Glass and those people, those are the best people you ever seen in your life.

CJ: And, the meanest one of them around here, he is gone, was Jay Boren.

TJ: Jay Boren.

JJ: Oh Lord!

TJ: Mama said you not suppose to hate somebody but that is the only white man that I just didn't have no feelings for.

CJ: That man there, him and Fred Weeks was the police back then and they had people back then, they gambled a lot and Fred Weeks knew it because Fred Weeks used to gamble with us. And he never did see it every time him and Jay Boren came over there he would tell Jay Boren to leave and Jay Boren said, "No they are gambling Weeks and they going to pay." What he didn't know Fred Weeks that is what he came over there for, to gamble. And then Jay Boren said one day, "I'm going to take all y'all to jail." So he got us up and they had them sitting down and everything and when he went to the police car and call for back up Fred Weeks had told them to go on through the woods and go on back to the house he'd meet them tomorrow night. Then when Mr. Jay Boren got back he said, "Where did they go?" Fred Weeks say, "They pushed me down and they got away." (laughter) The next day I seen Fred Weeks I said, "Fred Weeks what happened?" He said, "Clay you know what happened don't you?" I said, "Boy Mr. Jay Boren, you keep on Fred, Mr. Jay Boren going to arrest you too." (laughter)

PC: Arrest you too. (laughter)

TJ: That guy he would cause the only problems between blacks and whites. Jay Boren would start it. It was just something about that man that I just could not make myself like him.

CJ: He said he was going to shoot you, he always had a rifle. He would always get a rifle out first thing. Instead of a pistol he always got a rifle. He told them one day he said, "You don't believe I'll shoot y'all?" And they were crying and he said, "You," he said, "What is your name?" I said, "My name is Clay Joshua." He said, "You don't believe I'll shoot you." I said, "You know, Mr. Temple?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Well I'm going to see what he going to have to say about this here." And he looked and I said, "By the way, you don't see me crying do you?" He said, "No." I said, "I'm going straight to Mr. Temple and when I get through I'm going tell him everything you done did." That son of a gun he got his rifle, got back in the truck and he told me, "Ain't none of this ever happened, you hear me boy?" I said, "We are going to see what Mr. Temple going to have to say about this here." He said, "You ain't scared are you?" I said, "No, my daddy always told us the only thing you fear is God." And I said, "That is the only man I fear." I said, "Mr. Temple is going to hear about this because I'm going straight to his house when I leave you." I went there and I told him what went down and the next thing I know Jay Boren was gone and Fred Weeks was the police then.

PC: He was the law enforcement at the time.

CJ: Then Ward Phelon come in.

TJ: I forgot about him.

CJ: Yes, Ward Phelon, he was the policeman. Mr. Cook, old man Cook.

TJ: Which one used to look like Barney Fife?

CJ: Mr. Cook.

JJ: Fred Simpson.

CJ: No, that was Mr. Cook.

JJ: No, Fred Simpson.

TJ: Yes, Fred Simpson.

JJ: They called him Barney Fife.

TJ: We called him Barney Fife. (laughter)

PC: Now, he had a reputation that is for sure.

TJ: Oh yes.

PC: I want to get back to you James and I wanted to ask you because you were graduated in '58 so your complete experience as a child was during segregated years.

JJ: That is right.

PC: I wanted to ask you as a child growing up what your experience was as far as being around the white community, the white people?

JJ: I really didn't have that much problem because we didn't interact with each other.

PC: You didn't have any interaction with anybody that you remember?

JJ: No, no more than as I said, Mrs. Glass, Mrs. Corinne Glass that stayed down that country road over there where the prison is now down there. But, see I didn't find out till later that we were staying on the same turpentine camp over in Louisiana. I didn't find that out until we got back and she stopped by the house and we got to talking. I said, "Wait a minute." I said, "Mrs. Corrine, didn't we used to come to your house and get tomatoes over at Hood's Camp?" She said, "You sure did."

PC: And that is the Hood's Camp over at the turpentine camp?

JJ: Yes, between Alexandria and Leesville, Louisiana.

PC: And your dad worked there?

JJ: That is right.

PC: What company was that for? Was that Southern Pine Lumber Company?

JJ: No, no, they called it Hood's Camp, old man named Hood owned that place and we had that turpentine, that rosin. Kids don't know that pine rosin makes turpentine.

PC: Okay, okay, turpentine camp.

JJ: After that my uncle had moved to Diboll and jobs came open so Mr. Temple sent that truck over there and moved my daddy and the Smith's, two families they moved on that trailer truck to Diboll. We got to Diboll that night.

PC: From Wiergate, I mean from Hood, this Hood Camp?

JJ: Yes, we got there in '47 and that is when we came here. Then from '47 till I finished school that is where I was. I went back to see my grandfather back in Louisiana but that is as far as I'd ever been. As far as interacting we had some white people that stayed over there. They were pretty good people.

PC: Okay, did your father retire with the company, from Southern Pine?

JJ: He retired in the bed. I had...he was 62 years old and I had to hold his hand to sign for my younger brothers to get social security.

PC: Okay so, he worked for the company until he was disabled.

JJ: 1965, he died.

PC: What division did he work for?

CJ: He died in '65.

TJ: He was 63 years old though.

JJ: Well he worked at the dry kiln most of the time but after the later years he went to work at the fiberboard plant. That is when he found out he had cancer and when he...that is the first time I ever knew my daddy to be sick. First time I ever known him to go to the doctor. When he got sick he was leaving here because he was 62 years old and he had this boy.

TJ: I was nine.

CJ: I was ten.

JJ: It was two boys and that one girl, my sister Bret and Joyce Ann.

PC: Your sister who?

CJ: Laverne.

JJ: Joyce Ann, she is dead now.

PC: Joyce Ann and Laverne, okay.

JJ: Laverne and Joyce and these two boys. And they called me and I said well and I told my momma, I said, "Daddy won't be here; in three months he'll be gone." She said, "Oh no." I said, "Oh yes." In three months after they took his lung off when they took his lung off it went to his kidneys and it just eat him up. I had to hold his hand for him to sign his name for these kids to get his social security.

PC: For them to do the retirement, I mean the disability papers.

JJ: May 29, 1965.

PC: Okay, now you would have started to school around 1946 would have been your first grade year. Who was the principal at H. G. Temple School at that time?

JJ: Mr. Bradley.

TJ: Yes, Bradley.

PC: Okay now, I know you were just a kid but do you remember anything about how the school became accredited and how he worked for that and when the name changed?

JJ: Well when I first could remember and Mr. Bradley was the principal and after he left there and went to Victoria, was principal down in Victoria, then a man named Kenyon came and was principal there and that didn't work out so that is when Mr. Massey came through.

PC: We know in '44, around '44 is when they...excuse me '42 is when they started working on the accreditation of the school and we know '44 was the first graduating class from H. G. Temple after they got their accreditation. It took them a couple of years. Mr. Bradley worked really hard on that but then our first newspaper is the Buzz Saw in 1947...

JJ: I remember that.

PC: ...and they are speaking of the H. G. Temple School and them changing the name and naming it after Mr. H. G. Temple who was the general manager then. But, we haven't been able to really confirm the date that they changed the name. I was just wondering if you remembered anything as a young child about that.

JJ: I can't remember because like I said we came here in '47. I can remember after that, after we moved there they got the Buzz Saw because Mr. Fred Lewis was the editor in that paper.

PC: I'm sorry Fred Lewis?

JJ: Fred Lewis, he was writing an article in the paper.

PC: Oh, yes he was.

JJ: I can remember that.

PC: Get Ready for Freddie.

JJ: That is it.

PC: Yes sir. Now, did you participate in sports at H. G. Temple?

JJ: Yes, well I started playing sports when I was in the eighth grade. We had a coach named Herbert Allen.

PC: Yes sir.

JJ: He told me he was going to make me catch baseball because he didn't have anybody smart enough. I was smart up here but my arm wasn't that strong, but when it come to baseball I knew it. I was about his size and was catching high school baseball in the eighth grade up until I finished high school in the twelfth grade. After that they had the community baseball team so I went to playing community baseball with Big Jim Hall.

PC: Okay, okay.

JJ: I was catching for them and I was about his size and I was catching to some pretty good pitchers back then. They couldn't figure out how that little boy, they called me that little boy, I'd catch them it didn't bother me.

PC: So, did H. G. Temple have baseball?

JJ: Oh yes ma'am.

PC: Okay, I don't know if I've seen any...I've seen football and basketball but I wasn't sure about the baseball.

JJ: Yes, we had a heck of a baseball team.

PC: Up until you graduated?

JJ: That is right.

PC: And y'all participated against other schools?

JJ: Yes, that is right, oh yes.

PC: Well tell me about that. Did y'all travel to other games just like the football teams did?

JJ: Livingston, Groveton, Chester, Camden, Lufkin...

PC: And, again these were segregated teams?

JJ: Segregated, back then. Like I said all of them...I left in '58 it was all segregated. The only time we played Diboll High School over in the park one time and we played them in basketball in the old gymnasium when, what's his name was on there, Bill Pate.

PC: W. F. Pate.

JJ: Yes, his son was playing and the Fenley's all of them were playing basketball. They had a good basketball player.

CJ: Dan Fenley.

JJ: So, they wanted to play us so we hooked up one day, one Friday, we hooked up down at the old stadium and it was cold and they had big old pot heaters. They had to make a fire in them heaters to keep the gym warm.

PC: Are you referring to the old gym, the big green gym at the Elementary School then?

JJ: That is right.

PC: So the H. G. Temple boys were playing the Diboll boys?

JJ: That is right, and they beat them.

PC: Y'all beat them, H. G. Temple won?

JJ: We beat them by three points.

PC: And this was in basketball?

JJ: Yes ma'am, in '57. I remember that well. Who was coaching then at high school, Diboll High School? Who was coaching then?

CJ: Baseball?

PC: In '57, you were saying?

JJ: Who was coaching?

PC: Was it Mr. Franks, Bennis Franks, or Mr. Ramsey?

TJ: Yes, Bennis Franks, Mr. Franks.

CJ: Eckie Franks' daddy.

TJ: It was Eckie Franks' daddy.

JJ: Okay, well they were coaching and we played with Ramsey and all and we didn't have no problem. I mean, we just played ball.

PC: Everybody attended.

JJ: That is right.

PC: Community people attended, parents attended.

JJ: They tried to keep it quite. They didn't know how it was going to go over but they found out about it some kind of way and they came up in there. Mr. Temple was there.

PC: Okay, were there any problems?

JJ: No, he sat up there with that cigar in his mouth.

PC: That was in the fifties then, in '57 okay.

JJ: That is right. Vernon Burkhalter came through, they was all up there and there was no problem.

CJ: I think H. G. Temple got their name changed in the fifties because I was born in '55 and it was changed then.

TJ: When I started first grade it was H. G. Temple then.

PC: Yes, they renamed it by '47; it is in the Buzz Saw. Well we know by '47 it was renamed because in one of Freddie Lewis's column or Mrs. Eddie Mae Bradley's column she is kind of giving a history of the school and how Mr. Bradley worked on the accreditation and who some of the first seniors were. That is in the first Buzz Saw of '1947, the first paper.

JJ: The H. G. Temple sign, Jim Ligon painted that sign.

PC: Yes sir, he painted that sign.

CJ: Like I told them I said. "It ain't but one white man ever been buried over there in the black cemetery and that dude is still there, Mr. Ben Bivens."

PC: Mr. Ben Bivens, okay.

JJ: That is right. 0

CJ: He is the only one. And then once they did that they built a shed, a deal over it where he couldn't get wet and I asked them why and he said because Mr. Ben Bivens, if it wasn't for that grave, cemetery right there we wouldn't even have it.

PC: Mr. Ben Bivens, was the white man buried in the black cemetery and you remember that as a child.

CJ: Yes.

PC: And they built a little shed over it.

JJ: Yes, it's still over there right now.

CJ: Yes, if it's not peeled off it's still got Ben Bivens right there.

PC: Now, you were still here, I know this happened in 1962 and you graduated in 1958 but, we know that Coach Allen and Coach Willie Ross resigned from H. G. Temple, did you know anything about that situation?

JJ: Yes, yes, it was a sad situation.

PC: Anything that you care to share about it? If not, that is okay I was just curious.

JJ: It was a situation where Mr. Massey had to do what he did. He had to for what went on. It was hanky-panky.

PC: Oh, okay.

JJ: And that is what happened there. That is when we said we wasn't going to play ball no more.

PC: After that, okay.

JJ: After that because when they got rid of them they didn't want to play no more because that was the winningest coach they ever had.

PC: Coach Allen?

JJ: Oh yes, he was some kind of coach. In fact he's in the hall of fame now for winning them games. He was good, he was good.

PC: We just knew from the Free Press records, you know, that they had resigned. I think they had asked for a raise or something and it was declined. I wasn't sure about that situation.

JJ: That wasn't it. It may have been a part of it but there was some more went on and it wasn't going to leak out. It wasn't going to get out.

PC: Right.

JJ: But anyway those are the two best coaches that ever came other than Mr. Bradley, the principal. He was the coach and that basketball coach and everything else back then. But Coach Allen and Coach Ross was the best two coaches that ever came through that school.

CJ: Coach Seals was one of them.

JJ: They changed everything.

PC: They really changed the program up.

JJ: Yes, we were wild, you know, we walk around with our collar all pulled up and our pants down here. That wearing pants didn't start here lately that was going on back then until Mr...

PC: Your generation huh?

JJ: They started back then.

CJ: They were big though, you know, like they talking about sagging I told them I said man that sagging that is old to us. They say why, I say because we didn't wear them, because we put them out most of the time our pants were just too big, you know. You can pull your belt up to the last loop but they still going to come down. But, you always have to put them up. These kids now they...

TJ: I never have understood that.

PC: I know.

CJ: You got some grown folks, you got some grown men doing it.

JJ: That started in prison.

PC: So what you are saying is that before Coach Allen and Coach Ross came to H. G. Temple, you know, the boys, the discipline or the way y'all dressed you are saying, but then when they came they turned everything around.

JJ: Oh Lord! Your collar was turned down and our pants was up here and you got a clean hair cut.

PC: Okay.

JJ: We called it a Joe Lewis hair cut back then. When he came the first time he came he had all the boys meet him at Charlie Little's barber shop that Saturday morning.

PC: And, who is this you are referring to?

JJ: Coach Allen.

PC: Coach Allen, okay.

JJ: He told Charlie Little he wanted them peel headed. We used to wear them high right, low left.

TJ: High right, low left.

JJ: He cut that out. He peeled that head just like 'cause his head was peeled, no mustache no beard and you going to wear them pants like you supposed to and you are going to get that shirt collar down and button that shirt up.

PC: So, he had all the boys come to the barber shop for a hair cut?

JJ: That is right.

PC: Okay.

JJ: He was sitting right there.

PC: So then he encouraged everybody to participate in the sports and really turn the program around.

TJ: No, it wasn't no encourage, he made you play!

JJ: He made you play.

PC: He made you, okay. (laughter)

CJ: If he knew you were good in something you were going to play.

TJ: You are going to play and participate.

PC: Okay.

CJ: It's just like me when we integrated we got over there and started running track at the school and me I had never ran track, you know, I never was...I was a baseball freak and he said that Mack Mitchell couldn't nobody out run Mack Mitchell because of his height. And Coach Wyatt bet me and I told him I said, "I tell you what" I said, "If you give me \$20 and buy me lunch I'll catch him." Back then they was running 330's, you

know, they called it 330's that half way across, you know, they run 50-59-60 and he tied me and Mack up. When he blew that whistle there go me and Mack, you know. He was running right down on the side. He said, "Run Mack, get him Mack." And then we got on around and then when we got in that straight away I broke away from him and when I broke away from him he blew a whistle at me and he stopped and then he looked at his watch, he looked at his clock and he said he looked, he ran over there and he said, "Are you human?" He said, "What are you?" He said, "Are you human?" He said, "They were running 50's and 60's and you ran a 31.1. He said, "Can you do that again?" I looked over there and Mack was throwing up. He said, "Can you do that again?" I said, "Yes." He clocked me again and I ran a 29.9 and he said, "Do you want to play sports?" I said, "Yes, I'll play." He said, "Can you catch a ball?" I said, "I'll go get it." He said, "Do you want to play football for me?" I said, "Yes, I'll play."

PC: That was your junior high years you are speaking of when you ran track?

CJ: Yes, but back then in the seventies, I can tell you right now back in the seventies I was the fastest ever come through Diboll.

PC: Wow that is wonderful.

JJ: I know in '58, '57 or '58 when Herbert Allen was there it was two of us, my first cousin Melvin Taylor, called him Buddy, and me, we were the two fastest in high school.

PC: In high school at H. G. Temple?

JJ: That is right. We could run...back then they had that hundred yard dash, now it's the hundred meters now. I could run it in 9.8, sometimes a 9.7 that is how fast I was and if he got out of the hole before I did I couldn't catch him. If I got out before he did he couldn't catch me. We could fly.

PC: Wow you were good. Now, I wanted to ask you James if you remember anything about the school colors changing during the time of your school term.

JJ: Yes, because we were getting hand me downs during that time. The band uniforms and stuff and when they got through with them they would send them to us. Mr. Massey started the first band over there and they took the uniforms they had and brought them to us. He taught us how...we could out march the Diboll High School when Mr. Massey got through with us.

PC: Oh really.

JJ: We were tough.

PC: So what were the school colors when you graduated in '58?

JJ: Kelly green and white.

PC: So, before that was the purple and white then.

JJ: Yes, that is right.

PC: And, it changed because of these band uniforms?

JJ: That is right and the football uniforms, when they ordered them they was Kelly green and white.

CJ: Basketball too, green and white.

JJ: When I left there that is what they were using in basketball, football and track.

PC: Okay.

JJ: That is the way it went.

PC: Okay. Anything you care to share with me about the facilities, the school itself? When you started in '46 you were at the old school, the Diboll Colored School and we know they got the new school in I believe in '53.

JJ: Was it '53?

PC: So, can you share with me the conditions of the early school like when you started first grade?

JJ: Well when I started first grade we had those old buildings with them old wood heaters in them and them desk, you know, with the little...you know, two to a seat. When I started to school you had a desk where two people sat and we had to get there, the old man had to get there in the morning and make a fire in all them heaters so it would be warm when we got to school. But in that little building I don't see how all those students were in that building in there 'cause in the sixth grade they cut out the seventh grade. They cut out the sixth grade and I had to go from the fifth grade to the seventh grade.

PC: What was the reason for that?

JJ: I don't know why that happened. If I had went through the grades like I was suppose to I would have finished school when I was fifteen because I started when I was five. But they didn't know so after that happened we stayed in there until when they built that school that new school we were still packed up, you know, the teacher might have two or three grades in there and stuff like that. They had to teach some of them had the first and second grade in that one class. Third and fourth in another class but, when I got to twelfth grade the seniors had one building they were in, in the evening time, during that time but, all the rest of them was packed up in there like pack rats.

PC: Okay, so like your early grades, your elementary grades, ya'll had more than one class in a room.

JJ: Yes.

PC: Can you remember your first grade teacher, and some of your early teachers?

JJ: Distinctly, Mrs. Inez Sibley.

PC: Okay, she was there then, okay.

JJ: She was there then, Mrs. Inez Sibley, Mrs. Ruby Simmons, Mrs. Aurtherine Gilbert and who else was there.

TJ: Mrs. Massey.

JJ: They were there, and let me tell you something they instilled in you that you were going to learn. Do you hear me? You were going to get your lessons. They wouldn't argue with you.

TJ: Mrs. Simmons.

CJ: Mrs. Sibley and Mrs. Simmons.

PC: Mrs. Simmons, okay.

JJ: Up until the eighth grade and in the eighth grade when I went out of the eighth grade to high school...we had done moved into the new school then.

PC: Okay, so what about when you got the new school, you were a student who came from the old building into this new building, anything that sticks out in your mind that first year in the new building?

JJ: Yes, because I went there looking for a chemistry class. Now, the whites had a chemistry class and we didn't. We had the room, we had the chemistry room but we never used it. The only thing we used we had...

TJ: Sure didn't, sure didn't, they had a chemistry class but you couldn't go into the room.

PC: Are you referring to the new school? They built a chemistry lab but they never used it?

JJ: Right, they had everything there but they never used it..

TJ: They never used it.

PC: Oh okay.

JJ: The only thing they used they had a big old tank with formaldehyde in it and we would go out to that old mill pond and catch them big old moccasins and bring them back and dump them off in that formaldehyde and that is where they died and we'd take them out and dissect them.

PC: For science projects?

CJ: Biology now.

JJ: Mr. Allen started that.

PC: So they just didn't offer chemistry although they had maybe prepared for it?

JJ: They never did offer it, it never was done. Just like the gym, they poured the concrete slab out there but, they never did build the gym. What year did they build that gym?

PC: It was later in '60 or '61, somewhere in there.

JJ: I remember Big Jim Hall, and Herbert Allen and Mr. Massey they got together.

TJ: I remember we used to play on the dirt.

JJ: We played on the dirt and then we got that gym, they didn't build the gym they just poured the slab.

PC: So, your high school years you started out playing on the dirt.

JJ: That is right.

PC: And then they built the...then they poured the slab?

JJ: When they built the school they poured the slab but they just didn't build the gym.

PC: Oh, they just didn't build the gym but they poured the slab. So you got to play basketball on the slab, your high school one year.

JJ: One year, I played in that gym one year and they got together and went to Mr. Temple, that his how they got it. I don't think Mr. Temple was even aware of it. He really wasn't thinking about it but, when they told him he told them to get over there and build that gym and I mean now. It didn't take them long to build that gym.

CJ: That floor is still the same.

JJ: That is right. I stood there and watched them and I was amazed at how they took a concrete slab and put a hardwood floor on it and it didn't buckle up.

PC: And, they are still playing on that gym today.

CJ: See that is the only floor to me in the state of Texas that is made of oak. That is oak. You know when oak gets wet...

TJ: It's still there.

CJ: Its' still the same. The floor hasn't never been touched. It's still there. The only thing it's been waxed. It's still there. They never took it up.

JJ: I played on it one year, that is when I left you know. They had the goals and everything but it wasn't no top on it. It wasn't nothing. I mean if it went to raining that was the end of that.

PC: Now do you remember anything about the books you had, your elementary years, or anything about the material you had to use?

JJ: I hate to say it but, we got hand me downs.

CJ: We did.

JJ: When you got the book it had two or three names in it. The two books I got were one and two were in Geometry we got them after the whites had used them. We were maybe a year or two behind them because they got the new books and we had the old books and when they got through with them they sent them all to us. That is how that came about but in a sense it was a blessing in a sense because when they sent them to us, they had the teachers to do it with but, they didn't have the books. But when they got the books that started to change it. Everything started to change but it came out all right because when I finished school that gym caused me to get a D on my final exam. I was an A student and we had twelve books and one of them came up missing when we got ready to take the test and Mr. Allen, Herbert Allen, said if that book don't come up by the time to take the test I'm going to give you all a D and he done it. That is why I finished school with a B+ average. I'd have been an A.

PC: Oh okay, so one book was missing and everybody got punished for it.

JJ: One book was missing, that is right. He said that is how it is so I went to the Principal Mr. Massey and Mr. Massey, you know...

TJ: There wasn't too much he could do.

JJ: There wasn't much he could do, but when it happened. When I finished school in '58 I had one class and that was algebra.

PC: Algebra, okay.

JJ: We had to have eighteen credits during that time and I had three more credits than I was suppose to so I just had to take one class and that was algebra and I was through.

PC: And, then go home.

JJ: Go home.

PC: Okay, that was neat.

JJ: Wait till two o'clock to go out for athletics. At two o'clock that is when we would practice for whatever we was doing, basketball or baseball that is when it happened.

PC: Well that was a pretty good senior year then wasn't it?

JJ: I had one class really, just one class and I finished school with a B+ average, you know. I got mad because I was suppose to have an A. That D caused me to get a B+ but, I said it didn't bother me, just so I didn't fail, you know.

PC: Yes, that is right. That is great. I want to quickly move on, I know we've been over an hour here and I want to quickly move on and not keep y'all any more. I love hearing all these stories but I want to ask about segregated Diboll Day activities quickly. Anything you remember about the early Diboll Day activities?

JJ: Oh yes, the first one.

PC: The first one was 1953 and can you remember anything about segregated events? And, did they have a black Diboll Day queen in those early years?

JJ: Yes, they had them. The first one was Jo Ann Rodgers, I remember that distinctly.

TJ: I can't remember.

JJ: I know you can't.

PC: Now, what year would that have been?

JJ: That was in '50 what?

PC: The first Diboll Day was 1953 but would she have been the black queen that first year or do you think it would have been later?

JJ: They had them, they had them at the school but it wasn't recognized, you know.

PC: Oh okay it was more like through the school queens but it was for Diboll Day.

JJ: That is right they had a queen riding in a car.

PC: In the parade?

JJ: Yes, that is when we got all them band uniforms and we were a marching band then. We didn't have no horns we were just a marching band.

PC: Did y'all march in the parade?

JJ: Yes, right down 59 right out here.

PC: So Jo Ann Rodgers she was the first queen?

JJ: That is right.

PC: And would she have been in the parade representing the school then?

JJ: That is right.

PC: Not as a Diboll Day Queen?

JJ: No, no, just for the school that is all.

PC: Did the black community participate in the fundraising in any way? Do you remember anything about that?

JJ: I don't think so. I can't remember it but, I really can't. If it was I don't know anything about it.

PC: So Mrs. Rodgers would have been sometime between '53 and '58 when you were in school, somewhere in there?

JJ: Yes.

PC: Anything else you remember about the early days, parade, activities, you know, now was the parade one parade?

JJ: Just one parade.

PC: Okay and were the entries from the black community mingled in or were they at the end of the parade?

JJ: No, no, no we were mingled in. Temple didn't play that.

PC: Okay, that is good.

JJ: No, because they had from Lufkin and they came down to be in the parade. It was real nice back then when it started off. It was real nice.

PC: So really no different today than anybody signing up for the parade you weren't treated any differently as far as your parade entry?

JJ: No.

PC: Okay, what about events especially in your years, the fifties, after the parade did ya'll go to Walter Allen Park?

JJ: We separated, we went to Walter Allen Park and they went to wherever they were going. They were sent, like they had an act come in they would send them over there to Walter Allen Park.

PC: They had what come in?

JJ: Those guys come in, they had three or four guys they were swimmers, professional swimmers and they had a swimming pool they would show that diving and all that stuff and we had a big old greased pole.

PC: Oh, so they had those kind of events there and they had these professional swimmers like a competition thing and they performed for ya'll?

JJ: That is right, they would come over here first and then they came over to Walter Allen.

PC: Oh, okay.

JJ: It was a nice transition, it wasn't no problem because everybody was going to get along because they wasn't going to have it. Everybody got along and then something the whites would come over there to see what was going on.

PC: Oh okay, so y'all had the greased pole. What about food, did y'all have the barbecue, is that when they did the barbecue?

JJ: Mr. Temple had that brought in and one year it made everybody sick. I don't know if you can remember that but they brought that stuff and that stuff...Lord how mercy. That stuff liked to kill us. People were going in the hospital and I think one guy died from it.

PC: What year was that? Was this when you were in school or was this after you got out?

JJ: We were in school.

PC: This would have been in the fifties then.

JJ: That is right. That happened and I said my god! They were sending them in them big old things like that, that barbecue was already cooked and everything but, something happened.

PC: Well we know before actual Diboll Day they had the July 4th company barbeques that they had.

JJ: 19th of June was the big thing.

PC: Do you remember anything about that? That would have been the precursor to Diboll Day.

JJ: Yes, but we always back then black folks was 19th of June was their day.

PC: Right. Anything you remember about Juneteenth celebrations in the early years?

JJ: Yes lord! We had them red soda water and watermelons. (laughter)

PC: Now do you remember the guys cooking the food? We have got some photographs of them making those pits in the ground.

JJ: It was a big old...right there at the school, at the H. G. Temple High School, Temple had them build this big barbecue pit and Mr. Joe Cobb did all the barbecuing for the 19th of June. And it was just really a lot of fun really.

PC: A lot of fun.

JJ: But we really didn't do too much on the 4th of July, all ours was on the 19th of June.

PC: Okay, now what about early Diboll Day segregated activities for you guys, anything you remember specifically about a black Diboll Day queen, a competition, raising money? And, this would have been...

TJ: I really can't remember.

CJ: The first Diboll Day queen was Debra Ann.

PC: Debra Washington was the first black Diboll Day Queen after integration. She was in the seventies some time. But we do have photographs of Diboll Day queens in '62 and '64, one of which is Johnnie Mae Gambrell and Minnie Faye Jones. I was just wondering if ya'll had any memory of how that went about or anything you remember about segregated Diboll Day?

JJ: I remember that.

TJ: Oh whee!

PC: Any activities or anything at the park that went on.

CJ: The same thing he would. Well watermelon back then wasn't an issue it was like, barbecue, sodas, the pole and then you had that log.

PC: The log rolling?

CJ: Yes.

PC: Did they do that in the black community?

CJ: No, no, no.

PC: Oh this would be after integration, okay. So once integration took place and Diboll Day activities were all, you know, one, did ya'll go to the Old Orchard Park for activities?

CJ: Oh yes.

TJ: Yes, it was fun, it was all...we participated in everything.

PC: So that first year is there anything you remember about the first year ya'll came to Old Orchard Park for Diboll Day activities?

TJ: Just fun!

CJ: But see back then that bridge wasn't there. That bridge they cross now it wasn't there then.

PC: Do you remember anything about being encouraged to participate?

CJ: No, no, no, we just went along.

PC: Was there like...you just knew that the Diboll Day events were all one and they were not going to have anything at Walter Allen?

TJ: It was just all one.

PC: You don't remember anything about it being an issue or anybody complaining about it not being separate?

TJ: Once they came together it was just fun.

PC: Everything just followed.

CJ: If it was at Walter Allen Park both parks combined they would leave there and go over here and we would leave there and go here and like it wasn't no issue there.

PC: Okay, so you felt welcome to go to Old Orchard Park that first year?

TJ: Oh yes.

PC: Okay, just real quickly to wrap it up I want to give each one of you an opportunity to share anything particular, a memory or anything you want to add that I haven't ask you about.

CJ: The only thing I want to say is that I was just glad that Charlie Havard, Sonny, and Mrs. Stubblefield just really gave me a chance to start out with baseball. Because like I told them if it wasn't for me there wouldn't have really been no black to play baseball because they kept telling me no, it ain't going to happen. But like I told you I let them know it happened. And like Big Jim Hall said, he gave me the raggedy glove they could get. He said if they let you play ball you do it and that is what I did and I loved it ever since.

PC: Okay.

CJ: And Sonny Neyland, I ain't going to leave out him.

PC: He is wonderful isn't he?

CJ: And Mr. Leroy if it wasn't for him, Skeeter and Roy, we combined. Really we combined then because like he said Bobby Murray all of us once we got combined didn't nobody beat us in baseball. That is where they had their problem at. Like I told them if ya'll want to play we can play and if y'all want to lose we can lose but I said, "I ain't going to lose." I said, "Ya'll want to win, we can win." We can do anything we want to do and we took it and we won.

PC: So you looking back your overall experience of Diboll and those integration years, you have good memories and a good experience from it?

CJ: Oh yes.

PC: That is great. What about you Thomas, anything you want to add?

TJ: In 1968 I met this white man and the first thing he said to me was, "You are going to be my full back." And his name was Joe Wyatt and that changed everything for me. (emotional)

CJ: Is he still living?

PC: Yes, I had the opportunity to interview him recently.

CJ: Oh, he came down too. I sure missed him, though.

TJ: That changed everything for me. (emotional)

PC: He really helped you with your school days and you have a lot of admiration for him, I can tell. He was a wonderful man. We really think that him and Coach Simmons really set the stage with the athletic program and the boys.

TJ: Yep, he was. When I met him everything changed. (emotional)

PC: Was it just the encouragement to hang in there and to finish your education?

TJ: See with me it was just, with me my dad, you know, we hunted, fished and camped and then after he passed, you know, it really wasn't a guy that I could cling to and...

PC: Okay, your dad had passed away by this point?

CJ: Our uncle raised us.

TJ: Yes.

PC: Okay, well that is wonderful then. He just kind of became that mentor to you. That is wonderful.

TJ: Yes. (emotional)

PC: Well that is a great story. I appreciate you sharing that with us. I can tell...

CJ: In other words we were raised at home but I put it like this, the streets raised me.

PC: In what year did your father pass away again?

TJ: 1965.

CJ: I was ten, and see like once...well see from '65 on my momma raised us.

PC: So, that was before integration.

CJ: My momma's sister raised us. From then on in '69 we moved out of the projects in '69 and moved up there by the school on White Oak and my momma raised us then. My momma and her sister raised us then and like I tell anybody if you got a momma, shoot they better praise her because we did ours.

PC: That is wonderful. Now is your mother still living?

CJ: No, no she died in '96.

PC: Okay, James anything you care to add.

JJ: Well, you know, mostly I didn't have the chance to get in the sports like I wanted because we were segregated then but I got a chance to see my brother do it. And that boy right there...there is some records out of Diboll High School that will never be broke.

PC: With Thomas?

JJ: With Thomas, he set some records that will never be broke.

PC: Oh okay.

JJ: He was on the front page of two high school magazines and all that stuff.

PC: Oh, that is wonderful.

JJ: He was a heck of a football player.

CJ: It took them 33 years to break my records. I didn't even know I had a record.

PC: That is wonderful. Now Mr. Charlie is the one that kept up with all those records back then. Okay, one quick question for James quickly, y'all mentioned his name several times, is Big Jim Hall. I know he was a great baseball player and I believe he was on the semi-pro Negro League with Mr. Jellie Samuel and some of those others we were looking at earlier with the Eagles. Anything you can share with me quickly about that?

JJ: Well Big Jim was one of these type of guys, what he went after he got. We didn't have no uniforms and he went to Mr. Temple and said, "I need some uniforms for my team." He said, "Well get them" just like that. So we went up there and signed our name at the personnel office and they ordered uniforms.

PC: Was this for the Eagles Team?

JJ: That is right.

PC: Did you play on that team for a little while?

JJ: I was the catcher.

PC: Oh okay, you were the catcher.

JJ: I was the catcher until it dissipated and then if we needed some baseballs or baskets and stuff remember old, the hardware store that used to be over here. What is it?

TJ: What is the name of that place?

PC: The hardware store?

JJ: Western Auto.

TJ: Western Auto, yes.

PC: Oh yes, that is all we had.

JJ: You got the baseball bats and all that stuff they would order it for us and we didn't have to worry about all that.

PC: Now y'all traveled around to these games and what years are we speaking of that you played on the team?

JJ: This was after...well we played in '58. They had a team and the high school boys played with the old men because there wasn't enough old men to play to make a whole team so we got together.

PC: Okay, so you had the H. G. Temple High School baseball team but then y'all also filled in and played with the Eagles?

JJ: That is right.

PC: The Semi-pro team?

JJ: No, the Tigers, the Diboll Tigers because Big Jim had it.

PC: It wasn't a school team it was a community team?

JJ: No, no, no, it was a community team after '58.

PC: And, he called it what, the Diboll Tigers?

JJ: Yes, we went to Louisiana and everywhere and played baseball.

PC: So that would have been after the Eagles?

JJ: That is right.

PC: Was he the coach?

JJ: Big Jim, oh yes he was chief cook and bottle washer. He ran it all.

PC: Okay, okay. So, y'all had a good time traveling and playing ball. What kind of record did y'all have?

JJ: Well I didn't keep up with it but if you beat us you didn't beat us by one or two scores. We were hard to beat.

PC: Okay, but some of the school boys also played on the community team?

JJ: That is right. Leroy Spencer was one of the original baseball players.

PC: Okay.

JJ: Yes, sure was. They all came from Nigton, you know. They didn't have a high school at Nigton so they transferred from Nigton to Diboll. They were going back and forth every day.

PC: Mr. Massey would bring them on the bus.

TJ: Take a bus and go pick them up, bring them back and then after school take them back to Nigton.

PC: And that was during your school time as well. And for you James in the fifties did Mr. Massey do that then to?

JJ: He sure did because they didn't have no high school in Nigton.

TJ: He had a farm in Nigton.

PC: Right.

CJ: Then for us when we integrated we had our own bus when we came over there. When we come from the black school to high school we had our own bus.

PC: So, he would bring the students?

CJ: All that wanted to ride the bus but most of us walked.

TJ: The majority of us, we walked.

PC: Okay.

CJ: That bus was so long I think he got two still out at Nigton right now if they haven't tore them up.

JJ: I remember one distinctive thing when they integrated they had the movie picture right across over here.

PC: Yes sir.

JJ: Okay, when they got ready to integrate the blacks would go down stairs then if they wanted to or they could sit upstairs, so to keep from being a problem I don't know my mother got this picture and Jay Boren was sitting right out there with his legs crossed with a double barrel shot gun and a little league baseball bat.

PC: At the theater?

JJ: Sitting right where the ticket booth was, he was sitting right there so it wouldn't be no problem. Everything went fine.

PC: This was after integration, or the first integrated years?

JJ: That is right.

PC: Your mother had a picture of that?

JJ: I think my mother had a picture of that because Aunt Key and them said we are going to get a picture of this. I don't know who took the picture but I can't find that picture. He was sitting there with his leg crossed.

PC: Oh that is interesting.

CJ: What year were you born?

PC: '58.

CJ: Do you remember when the Car Wrecks come through Diboll, do you?

PC: No, no I don't. Let me ask you quickly, did you go to the theater after it was integrated and did you sit downstairs?

JJ: Yes, I sit downstairs one time.

PC: So that was a big deal.

JJ: I sat down there one time and after that I said, "Now what is the big deal about it." I would rather been upstairs.

TJ: Because we had fun upstairs. Downstairs you had to sit there and nobody...upstairs oh man, we could cut up.

PC: That is what someone else shared with me, they liked it better upstairs, you know.

JJ: Sometimes they would throw things down there and just doing something, you know. But there wasn't no fights or nothing like that. It wasn't no problem after

everybody said this is what it's going to be and you can't stop it. You could try to put a block on it but it wasn't going to stop it.

PC: Good, well that is great!

CJ: I had my fun in Diboll.

PC: Well that is great, that is great. Hey guys, I really appreciate y'all coming today. I have thoroughly enjoyed this interview and listening to your stories and this will conclude our interview.

TJ: All right.

END OF INTERVIEW