HEAVERD DOBBS OXENDINE, JR.
The Old Foundry Restaurant – Lumberton, NC
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Date: July 29, 2014
Location: Dobbs Enterprises – Lumberton, NC
Interviewer: Sara Wood
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Length: Fifty-four minutes
Project: Work and Cook and Eat: Lumbee Foodways of Robeson County, NC

[Begin H. Dobbs-Oxendine Interview]

00:00:00

Sara Wood: I just want to get it for the record, I'm just going to introduce the tape. So it is July 28, 2014. I'm sitting here with Mr. Heaverd Dobbs Oxendine, Jr. We're on 5th Street in Lumberton at one of his businesses. It's Dobbs Enterprises, is that correct?

00:00:19

Heaverd Dobbs-Oxendine: That's correct.

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SW: And this is Sara Wood with the Southern Foodways Alliance. So Mr. Oxendine I'm wondering for the record if you wouldn't mind saying hello and introducing yourself for the tape.

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HDO: Yes, my name is Heaverd Dobbs Oxendine, Jr. I live—I have a business and my headquarters for my enterprise is 2502 West 5th Street, Lumberton, North Carolina. That's where my main operation comes out of.

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SW: And for the record Mr. Oxendine, will you tell me your birth date?

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HDO: December 25, 1938. Turn that off—[*Mr. Oxendine asks me to pause the audio recorder so that he can correct me with the proper date.*]

00:01:06

SW: That's okay, so this is a correction. It's actually July 29, 2014. It's Tuesday.

00:01:12

HDO: The reason I know that—okay.

00:01:15

SW: So Mr. Oxendine, you were telling me when we had a visit last time that you are from Fairmont and I'm wondering if you could talk about kind of describe Fairmont for people who have never been there and what it was like for you growing up there. What do you remember about it?

00:01:30

HDO: Of course I was born in Fairmont and I left Fairmont probably when I was around ten—ten years old. But my experience as—as a young man, as a boy growing up in Fairmont, yeah you got to keep in mind, we have in Robeson County and—and Robeson County, North Carolina, we had—in the [19]'30s, '40s, '50s, and '60s we had three races of folks here. And so I grew up as an Indian and I—my opinion I didn't have the same privileges as my white friends.

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For an example we had a theater in Fairmont that had—you—there's three races, the—the whites went downstairs, the blacks and Indians went upstairs. But I always had a feeling that I was just as good as anybody else based on the fact that I can do what I want to just like anybody else would do.

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And I—I'd go to the theater and I would go downstairs but I was kind of afraid I'd get caught, but anyway I thought that I was as good as anybody else. But anyway growing up as a little boy I—I come from a family where the—my father left at an early—when I was at a very early age, so my mother, she kind of had taken care of me or—and I had a sister. There was two of us, my sister and myself. And I kind of was the—as a young man kind of thought I was head of the house as a man. And so I went to work early. I was—I was about seven years old. My uncle had a garage and a service station in the city limits of Fairmont. So when I got out of school I'd walk to—to work at his—at his business. He—he—he would pay me, he said he'd buy me a bicycle if I worked the whole year for Christmas.

00:04:16

So that encouraged me to, so when I—I had to walk about a mile, a little over a mile to get to the business and when I got out of school. I probably started there when I was six years old. And I also went when I was seven years old I got a job during tobacco season with this guy that made pictures of individuals and we would—we would set up on the streets there and when people would come by we would make their picture. And my job was to help develop the

pictures as they waited—waited on the picture to develop. And that was my job for the summer, and I was like seven years old.

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And I remember going to the bank and opening me up an account. I remember looking up and when I'd fill out the papers and open me up an account at the bank. So that—and also I had a job through the—in the wintertime I would—I had a wagon, what I called a tin wagon and I'd go around picking up copper, steel, iron and stuff off the railroad tracks and wherever I could find it and I'd gather it up and then I'd go sell it, so I always was—seem to like business and—and I always worked it seemed like.

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And my mama she was a school teacher and I—I helped my mother by washing the clothes, cleaning up the house 'cause that would be less work for her to do. My sister also—I was older so she'd also help. And—and this is my experience as—as growing up in Fairmont.

00:06:14

SW: So I don't forget could you tell me the names of your parents and your sister's name for the record?

00:06:20

HDO: Yeah, I'm a junior and I'm—I'm named after my father and my mother was Prebble Lowery Oxendine.

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SW: How do you spell her first name?

00:06:32

HDO: P-r-e-b-b-l-e, and my sister was named Bobbie Ann and um—

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SW: Is it B—o-b-b-i-e?

00:06:47

HDO: Uh-huh.

00:06:48

SW: Is it A-n-n?

00:06:49

HDO: Uh-huh, yes.

00:06:49

SW: And the name of your—you mentioned your uncle's shop, you said he put you to work, could you tell me the name of your uncle and the name of the shop in Fairmont?

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HDO: Well I don't remember it really having a name but he had this—this shop and a service station and my grandmother, she helped run it, but my uncle decided to move from Fairmont to

Lumberton. And that was in 1945—'46. He I think he thought it was a better opportunity for his business 'cause he picked the location that's in Lumberton which is—which is on 301. It is West 5th Street but in the '40s it was—it was known as 301 and that's where all the tourists from North and South would come right by his place. And so he—first the building he built here started off was a restaurant. And he called it Old Foundry Restaurant and why he called it that is because it was a foundry here, iron foundry here and it—it was torn down and so he bought this property and that's why he called it the Old Foundry.

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And the first business he had here was a restaurant and this restaurant he had a—curb service. He had fine foods, like he specialized in chickens and steaks and milkshakes, hotdogs, and this kind of thing. And like I said, 301 ran right by here and the tourist people would stop in here. We had a great business. And what's so unique I think about the Old Foundry is as I said earlier, we had three races of people. And the Indians couldn't go to a theater or a drugstore or other restaurants and—and sit down and feel comfortable or it was against the law for them do it anyway. But those who did didn't feel comfortable. And the Old Foundry it was welcomed to Indians 'cause the Indians—my uncle ran it and we welcomed the white folks. And they—they patronized it as well as the Indians, so had a great business.

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And when the Indians—when they wanted to have a function they would come to the Old Foundry 'cause they had a large facility here who could—where they could have these functions. For an example if someone wants to get married or after ballgames, it's all—also economic development, there weren't any jobs in this county. The time I'm talking about is you either farmed—share farmer or you—they didn't have any industry so—. And during this time

Robertson County was known as the moonshine of—of this United States. They made more liquor here in Robertson County than anywhere else. So—so you either you was a farmer or you made liquor or—and you sold liquor, that's—that was the economic development we had here.

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But I'm leading up to this, at the Old Foundry it was—we worked a lot of folks, young girls, young ladies who was going to school. They'd work here part-time and some full-time, so it was economic development. And also my uncle he had the restaurant part and shortly after the restaurant in 1945—'46 he also had—he also was in the automobile business. He had a—he sold some—I knew him to sell some new vehicles, but he had a body shop, a garage, wrecker service, salvage yard, he had all of that. So he was a real—a sharp businessman. So as a—as I was growing up I spent the summer working here with my uncle in these different capacities I just mentioned and as well as the wintertime on weekends I worked here as well, so—. I got a lot of experience by working here with my uncle and—and—and meeting a lot of folks all over this county because this was the center of a—seemed like where the Indians could go and have a good time 'cause we had—we later on had a facility for banquets and entertainment on weekends and so forth and so on.

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SW: Can I ask you a couple follow-up questions? Your uncle, was that Mr. Hilton Oxendine?

00:12:35

HDO: Right.

00:12:36

SW: That's his name?

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HDO: Yeah, my uncle was Hilton Oxendine and he had a brother who worked here with him named Hubert Oxendine, as well as my father is—is Heaverd Oxendine. My uncle Hilton, he—my—my daddy—my father and my Uncle Hubert they went into the Military. Hubert Oxendine was in the Army and my father was in the Navy. But Hubert, he—he got hurt while he was in World War II but he was under General Patton's—as everybody probably knows General Patton, he—he was right in his Unit and so—. And my father was on the *New York, New York Battleship* and he—that was during World War II.

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SW: Mr. Oxendine, I have a question about that, you know you talked about segregation affected the Indian communities in the county here. And I imagine at that time with your uncles and your father you know with them serving the country coming back here and being treated you know what that restaurant meant for people who you know served the country and weren't even considered part of the country when they came home.

00:14:00

HDO: Yes, you know a lot of Indian folks during World War II per—per population-wise we lost more Indians or—now we call Lumbees than any other group of people. I'm talking about population-wise. But what is—is real bad about this I think is our folks, our Indian folks, we lost a lot of them in the War and when they went off to fight for our country and some would say hit

Robertson County they could—they were denied going to a theater with everybody else. They were denied going to a restaurant where it had white only. They were denied going to a drugstore and—or ice-cream and Coke and sit down on the stool there and eat it. You could order it but you had to get out, you couldn't eat it in there. And as I look back on it I think that is terrible. A lot of folks now wouldn't hardly believe that I imagine.

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SW: So I'm wondering you know so the Old Foundry Restaurant was the first place in the county that Indians could go and sit down and have a meal together. Is that correct?

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HDO: Yes, but Pembroke now is known as the—as the Indian town. They had some—they had a restaurant going outside of Pembroke where they could sit down. But for this county-wide you take Fairmont, Magnolia, Roland, these areas, they would come to the Old Foundry. They would—they could on Sundays you'd see them with their family. They'd come in and sit down and have meals. They—you know like I said, they'd have functions. The—during the—the governor's race or the senate race and all they'd meet here at the Old Foundry to discuss politics. This was kind of the headquarters of—when they were politicking. And you'd see a lot of people all over the State coming in here at the Old Foundry having meetings and—and that kind of thing.

00:16:37

SW: And you mentioned at you know around the time that the restaurant opened in the mid-'40s Lumbee Indians were not considered Lumbee. There was a different name, what—what—can you talk about the different names and how that—?

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HDO: Well the names is the—were called Cherokees, that was one of our names and then we was called the um, pause this.

00:17:14

SW: Sure.

00:17:16

HDO: Yeah, we had several names and I don't know if I can think of all of them but we—we were known as the Cherokees and also we was known as the Croatans and then we were known as the Lumbees, but that's our name today. In 1956 my uncle Dr. Fuller Lowery and some rest of committees we—I think it was made up of about seven people, they went to Washington, DC and they got our name changed to the Lumbees. At that time, all we—all we wanted from Washington, DC is a name and the—we wanted the name Lumbee because we settled down around the Lumber River. That's kind of where we got our name from.

00:18:09

And we just wanted a name. We didn't want any giveaway programs, anything like that. We didn't ask for anything but just our name. But it's kind of since then it's I think come back to

haunt us that we're now—we're federally recognized—see we want to be federally recognized. We are federally recognized with name only. Now we're looking for different programs that—that we'd like to have that's free, for an example healthcare, economic development for housing and so on and so forth.

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We have come close to be federally recognized as—as for these—these different programs but I don't know in my lifetime that it would ever happen. But—but we'll see.

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SW: Mr. Oxendine can I ask you one more question about that?

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HDO: Yes, just interrupt me any time Sara 'cause I'm—yeah.

00:19:24

SW: You're fine.

00:19:24

HDO: Okay.

00:19:26

SW: You're fine. I wanted to ask how—I mean without going into—I know that you could go into great detail about this but how—how having the name change how did—from your experience how does that affect a people when you're told—you're called this thing and then

you're told that you're this—this like the so many name changes. I wonder what that does, what does that do to a community?

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HDO: Well I don't think it matters so much to—to our folks what our name was. I think this committee wanted to get a good—instead of getting all these name changes just wanted to get one that would work for everybody. And but—some Indian folks they—it didn't really matter so much. But you know we have the Tuscarora that's made up of a small group here, but—.

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SW: Sorry about that.

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HDO: What's—

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SW: Next question? Okay, I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about—I mean you grew up here basically working and what from your perspective it was like to see what was the—the significance or the impact the restaurant had on the community here.

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HDO: Well the impact that it really had on me is—it—by working here with my uncle and—and his brother and my father it kind of taught me about business and—and coming up as a very young man going into business—business. I had some problems when it comes to—when—in

business you got to have money. You got to be able to borrow money, to—to help you with your business, and being with a—tri-racial and—and the banks was owned by the white folks and they didn't—I've known you couldn't even get a car financed unless you had been a teacher for a number of years. They—they controlled the money and when they controlled the money they kind of control your business, starting up a business and making your business work.

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I had problems being an Indian and I think this—that it's needing operation money and being an Indian and trying to borrow money from—from the banks they didn't want me to have it or wouldn't let me have it. I did get a co-signor with my uncle and for a couple loans and he—he didn't want to do that anymore, but I got—I knew how the system worked. When you borrow money and get notes, how it works you need to pay it back on time. And so I knew how that worked and so I would—even though I had a co-signor, my uncle, I'd pay it back early so—so it would make me stronger. And I know I got where I could go to the bank on my own but I was still limited in what I could borrow.

00:23:16

But what changed things in—in this county is when the Lumbee Bank opened in the [19]'70s. That gave the competition to the other banks and the other banks started loaning money when they seen that the Indian folks was going to the Lumbee Bank borrowing money. This is my opinion, I think this is what happened. And so they opened their doors to the Lumbee people and then it made it easier for everybody to borrow money and so on and so forth. I know for an example at how hard at what I'm talking about is—my uncle he had this business and doing very well. He wanted to buy a Cadillac and he had the money to buy it but he went across town at the

Cadillac place to buy a Cadillac and they wouldn't sell him one even though he had—he had the cash money because he was an Indian. They didn't think an Indian ought to be driving a Cadillac. That's—that's some of the things that happened here in this county that's—that's so wrong and—.

00:24:33

SW: And you know I just have one more question about that Mr. Oxendine in terms of you know you mentioned the county was tri-racial so we had blacks, whites, and Indians. How—how did you know—you're talking about a lot of the dynamics, you know the impact of segregation here but how—how did the blacks and the Indians interact from your experience? I mean at that time you have a couple races that are being pushed down and I just wonder how the relationship between those two races looked like here in the county at that time.

00:25:09

HDO: Yeah, the—the blacks they kind of—they kind of were only sit out by themselves. They worked you know—they—their community, they—they worked together. The Indians was over here, they—they wasn't so much intermingling so much but later on they started working together. But Martin Luther [*King, Jr.*] you know Martin Luther King [*Jr.*] when he was segregated, you know he brought in the—doing away with segregation I believe in 1963 or 1964, things the Indians and blacks it seemed like started working more together than they did before.

00:26:01

I would give credit to the blacks, Martin Luther [*King, Jr.*] for changing, helping—that also brought in changes for the Lumbee people as well. That's when we used to for an example,

in our education we had buses that would pass by the road here three different buses, one for blacks, one for Indians, and one for—for whites and going three different locations, some transporting kids like thirty miles for—to an Indian school. And when they had a white school right within walking distance, and that—and this double voting thing, this Dexter Brooks, I think he had—he sued the lawsuit and won where we had the—did away with the double—double voting.

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SW: I wanted to ask you about double voting because I went back when Malinda Maynor Lowery, she did interviews during—about the civil rights era and a lot of those civil rights leaders talked about the double voting issue and how the restaurant was a really great place for people to meet and—and work on this. Can—so I'm wondering if we could back up, for people who aren't familiar with the double voting issue here in the county can you explain what was happening at the time.

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HDO: Well yeah, what you had—you'd have the city and the county. The city can vote for the county and the—and that's what they called double voting. The city would vote and then the county would vote and they'd vote together and say—and the board of education you couldn't beat that system. So when we come with one system we cut out double voting and then that—that changed things. And—and of course this was even though I forgot what year they did away with double voting, but Martin Luther [*King, Jr.*], even though we wasn't segregated but we had to work this out, this double voting and then meet here at the Old Foundry and they worked on that for quite some time.

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And I remember the—the—I remember when they had to—after double voting they had to choose different leaders in the community to be on the board of education.

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SW: So the city was—was—was it predominantly white and then the county—? I'm wondering what the racial makeup, like did the board of education before double voting—or at the time of double voting was predominantly white, is that correct?

00:29:03

HDO: That's—that's correct. Yeah, that—that's—that is correct.

00:29:13

SW: Do you remember anything, I mean you know growing up here and being in this place when all these events were happening I wonder if you have any other memories or stories you want to share about the restaurant and its place in—in the civil rights era here in Robeson County. Anything I forgot to ask you about?

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HDO: Well that's pretty well um, of course as it comes back to me there are all kinds of stories to be said about the Old Foundry. But I—my uncles, my father, all of them died and—and they closed the Old Foundry and then it was put up for sale. And with the history that's—of the Old Foundry among—for our people and especially with me growing up there—here, I purchased it so that no one else would have it. And one day I'd like to see it be a historical site. And I'm

thinking about starting working on that because there's so much history of the Old Foundry that I wished that I would have—would kept a—would know more about it.

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SW: And Mr. Oxendine, I'm wondering you know you talked about this but I just wanted to kind of re-ask you the question, you know you talked about how a lot of Indians for jobs came in the form of being—going to school and being a teacher or a lot of people were sharecroppers. So I wonder what it was like in your experience to have your family you know start these businesses and sort of set an example and—and you know to—. I wonder if that's—maybe I'm misconstruing it but it seems like there was a lot of great leadership here in a time where people needed it. And I wonder if—how you feel about that.

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HDO: The—talking about the how tough it was to be in business and stay in business, my uncle like I said he—he built this restaurant and he was in the automobile business. And so he wanted to be—he wanted to get into the new car business, so he applied for the Toyota dealership and he—you had to have so much money to—to be—have in the bank in order to apply and—and qualify to be a Toyota dealership.

00:32:12

So my uncle, he—he—he went to the bank and he said—he **[*Laughs*]**—he said, "I have to have so much money and I don't have this." And he said—he made an arrangement with the bank for them to deposit x-amount of money in his account. So when he filled the papers out when they checked he had this money in the bank. And as soon as they checked he give the

money back to the bank. **[*Laughs*]** And he is the first Indian that I know that was in a—in a new car—had a new car dealership and—

00:33:01

SW: And this was Hilton correct?

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HDO: This was Hilton yes, this was in the [19]'70s. So he had it tough being an Indian coming up and—and having a business like he had. He had—he had it kind of tough but he—he made it work. He was a—he was a successful businessman. And he also was into politics. If anybody was running for any kind of office they'd want to come see him. He was also the [a] city councilman here in Lumberton a number of years, and a very strong man.

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And I—he—if I'd say I was amounting to anything I'd say he—I—I got it from him. I'm also in the car business and been in the restaurant, I kind of followed in his footsteps and I give him a lot of credit for me being successful, so—.

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SW: And could you tell me in terms of the three brothers was Hilton the oldest or was Hubert or your father?

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HDO: They were Hilton, he was the oldest and then my father and then Hubert. Like I said, my uncle Hilton he didn't—he never—he didn't go into the—he didn't go into the military but the other two brothers, they did. They fought for this country. And yeah—

00:34:49

SW: And before I forget to ask you Mr. Oxendine you talked about this being economic development for employing people but what—I mean in terms of the restaurant who worked here? Was it blacks, whites, and Indians or was—was it mostly Indians who were employed? I'm just curious as to like what the makeup of the kitchen looked like?

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HDO: It was all basically employed by Indians and had a few whites.

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HDO: Yeah, we're talking about the Old Foundry and—and you know it was built in the [19]'40s and—middle '40s and we were talking about segregation. The—the blacks kind of they kind of—they had their own thing sort of going to churches and their—their culture as well as the Indians and—and the white had theirs. But with the Old Foundry and it being on 301 and all the tourists coming by, we had a lot of tourists coming in and we catered to tourists as well as the local people. But the blacks, we—they didn't come in like the Indians or the white folks. They was served in the back and they got their food and—and they would take it with them.

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That stayed like that up to I believe the early [19]‘60s I believe. But I—you know as I look back that wasn’t right, that was—we were practicing what was practiced against us with—with the white folks but if—if it could have been changed then I would have loved for it too because I—I believe everybody is created equal and they should have the—the same privilege as anybody else. I don’t believe in first or second or third classes of people. I believe everybody should have their own ideas, their own beliefs, and their own work habits, religion and so on and so forth.

00:37:20

SW: Mr. Oxendine I have one more question about that. At the time back in the day when you know the [19]‘40s, ‘50s, we’re talking—‘60s you know you said that this was one of the first restaurants that Indians could go to and have a nice meal. But whites were also welcomed. What—did—did—was there—did whites and Indians mingle in the restaurant or was—did they kind of sit off by—? I’m just wondering at the time we’re talking pre-civil rights here.

00:37:47

HDO: Yeah, but like I said the—the—this was an Indian restaurant and it’s where all the Indians come to as well as being on 301 where the tourists. They’d stop in, they were basically white folks. We—what was that question?

00:38:12

Yeah, the—the whites out of Lumberton here, the—the Mayor of Lumberton, the people who ran this city, the—the—they would come out here and—and have dinner and the—the—a

lot of them would come here and they—they felt at home coming here. They intermingled with the Indians. It—it was—if you wouldn't never know—during the breakfast, lunchtime and all you wouldn't never know it was just an Indian place. But it—it—we catered to the whites, catered to the Old Foundry as well as the Indians, did. But the whites didn't have church functions or have birthdays here but they'd come—. The food was real good. They'd come out here and they enjoyed the food. And the whites, they—like I said they just enjoyed and felt at home here.

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SW: Mr. Oxendine I want to talk about the food one more time. You mentioned a little bit about the menu and I'm wondering if there are specific dishes that you remember, specific meals that were served here that tie into the Lumbee traditions. Was food at home made here that really gave people a sense of—of home?

00:39:47

HDO: Well it—the Old Foundry Restaurant was kind of known for its broasted chicken. Folks just loved that and their—their potatoes, for their french fries. Of course they also in curb-service, they sold a lot of vanilla Coke, milkshakes, as a matter of fact I used to work curb-service here when I was in the early teens. But—but the Old Foundry was named for having great, great steaks and they catered to having real good steaks and they had—we had a real good business here.

00:40:43

SW: Where did some of the recipes come from? Were they family recipes or the people that were hired as cooks, I mean do you know?

00:40:49

HDO: Well we—we had a buffet here and we had local cooks who was used to cooking country food and the folks just—you know they just loved country food and that worked here.

00:41:10

SW: Do you have any stories you want to share about working curb-service that you haven't mentioned **[***Laughs***]** because I know you told me that before but I forgot to ask you about it? What was it like working—and you worked in the—you worked with the cars but you also helped in the restaurant and what was it like for you?

00:41:25

HDO: Well I worked like six days a week curb-service and I really didn't like it 'cause you had to put that—that try, you had to roll the window down about all the way to the bottom to about three inches and then you put that tray on there and milkshakes and Coca-Colas and stuff you—it was heavy and then I was about eleven years old, twelve and I'd try to get that just right and I dumped a many milkshakes in somebody's lap. And that was terrible. I'll never forget that. But I worked real hard and I made—I made $18 a week working curb service. But some of the young ladies would give me a tip so it worked out all right.

00:42:14

SW: And then you—I just wanted to ask you one more thing about the business. You worked here since you were young. I mean was it natural? Did it just feel as though the next step after you know getting done with school was to be here and be part of the business? How did that work?

00:42:30

HDO: Well at the time it didn't have any economic development here in this county so I—I come on my mama's side is—comes from an educated family. Her brothers, sisters, her uncles, everybody on the Lowry side at one time was I call them—I call it the—the Lowery(s) was a head of the education system at one time and I'm saying in the [19]'50s and on past that. But they were principals, school teachers, and everything. And I thought as a young man that I needed to be a school teacher. You know that would—I was sure of a job. My uncles and all them, they were school teachers. And when I—so I said I want to be a school teacher. I was guaranteed that I would make a living teaching school. But I tried that for three years and like to have starved. And so I went back to my—what I was used to is cars and I love cars even to today.

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I got all kinds of cars today. I—I just love cars and when you love your job then it takes a lot of work out of it, too. But anyway I come back—I went to Washington, D.C. in the—in the [19]'63 and then I moved back down here in the—in '66 and I've been here ever since and I've been in the motel business, car business, all kinds of different things that I've been in or—or in.

00:44:22

SW: And Mr. Oxendine I just wanted to ask you this because I—you know in the last several months driving around especially around Lumberton I'd see the name Dobbs on certain businesses. Are most of those—when it says Dobbs can we associate that with you?

00:44:36

HDO: Yeah, that's—yeah.

00:44:37

SW: Could you—?

00:44:38

HDO: Yeah, I'm kind of as I get older I'm cutting back on it somewhat on—I'm selling a lot of—I sell a lot of real estate and salvage yard. I had a great big salvage yard on [Highway] 74 so and sold it. I just sell out a lot of some of my stuff, but yeah I'm—I'm—. I stay—stay busy.

00:45:00

SW: I just want to ask you two more things and one is you know you talked about wanting to start doing the work of getting the Old Foundry registered as a historic site and I'm wondering why do you want to do that. What does this place mean to you?

00:45:18

HDO: Well it means a lot to me 'cause I grew up here and I—I ended up developing into a great big business and—and it's—and like I have been talking, to me it's the center of Indian folks at

one time. And everybody knows about the Old Foundry. If anybody wanted entertainment they'd come here—good food, everything, they would come to the Old Foundry. And like I said they could—they didn't feel comfortable going other places because of the segregation part. But since the segregation it's—it's been somewhat different and so—.

00:46:01

SW: How has it changed? How is it different?

00:46:03

HDO: Well now you can go anywhere you'd like. You can—you know the—the politics here in this county is I'd say it's kind of controlled by the Indian folks. You know the clerk of the court, register of deeds, and—and everything—a lot is—is—our voting has got us—got us power.

00:46:35

SW: And I know we talked about a lot of stuff this afternoon Mr. Oxendine. Is there anything else you want to add that you think is important that I didn't know to ask you? Oh I'm going to let that go, sorry. **[***Clock Chimes***]**

00:46:48

HDO: I just talk. I don't know that I have—.

00:46:52

SW: We'll let this go. And because I want to take a couple pictures and I—is that okay?

00:46:56

HDO: Yeah, that's good.

00:46:59

SW: I think you did a great job. I'm still recording but I just want to—

00:47:02

HDO: Well I just—are you going—when are you coming back down here again?

00:47:07

SW: In September.

00:47:12

HDO: Are you?

00:47:12

SW: But Malinda and Jeff will probably come next time.

00:47:15

HDO: Maybe could we spend a couple minutes maybe talking again?

00:47:19

SW: Yeah, absolutely. It'll be the middle of September, but can—is there anything else you want to add right now?

00:47:25

HDO: Well I was going to talk a little bit about the Ku Klux Klan coming here, but we'll wait to later.

00:47:31

SW: Do you want to do it now?

00:47:33

HDO: I'll wait later.

00:47:34

SW: When they came to Maxton?

00:47:34

HDO: Yeah, did you—do you know about that story?

00:47:37

SW: I read about it. I saw a copy of *Life Magazine*.

00:47:40

HDO: Yeah.

00:47:41

SW: Do you have five minutes to tell that story on tape?

00:47:44

HDO: Well um, I—I think this—I might be got the year mixed up. It was either—I think it was [19]'58 but anyway the Ku Klux Klan came into Maxton and set up there for a meeting and I think the purpose was so that the—I think the Indians was marrying some whites and they wanted to stop that so they come into Maxton which is in Robeson County to have a grand meeting there—what they call it, so the Indians found out about it. And I went up there myself along with a lot of other Indians and—but I went on a Friday night. I thought it was on a Friday night and it wasn't on a Friday night. It was on a Saturday night.

00:48:46

So I—I didn't have my driving license so I didn't go back Saturday but it was on a Saturday night. And a lot of my friends was there and what they were planning on doing as I understand it was in a field and they were going to wait 'til it got started and going to set the fire, a field of fire around it and burn them. But before that happened some of the Indians started shooting the lights out around their podium and—and they—they—they—those Klansmen they had pearl pistols and their hoods and stuff. And the—we folks, I wasn't there but the Indian folks taken all that from them and put it up there in Pembroke and displayed it. And but it was on—they had the sheriff was up there and they had the radio station representatives and they—there's a tape made of where all the shooting and people running and making noises and that kind of thing.

00:49:53

And as I understand it this is the first time in history the Ku Klux Klan was defeated. I—that's what I understand. I don't know if that would be true but we did. And they never come back here anymore. They didn't want any part of the Indian people, the Lumbees.

00:50:11

SW: What did you think of that? You were a teenager at the time?

00:50:15

HDO: Yeah, I think I just—either I was about sixteen—seventeen, I think, just getting my license I think. But anyway um—

00:50:28

SW: How did you feel about that? What was it like for you?

00:50:31

HDO: Well I mean I just thought it was a great thing to be able to run them out of town. Who are they to come here and tell us or frighten us, you know?

00:50:43

SW: Well it certainly made the news.

00:50:46

HDO: Yeah, everywhere, all over this—this country.

00:50:53

SW: Is there anything else you want to add Mr. Oxendine?

00:50:55

HDO: I don't think so. But we'll talk—we'll talk again and I'm going to be thinking about some stuff that I maybe didn't mention that might be worth something.

00:51:10

SW: Well I thank you for being so generous with your time this afternoon.

00:51:14

HDO: But we—let me just tell this right quick.

00:51:18

SW: Yeah, sure.

00:51:18

HDO: What—what makes the Lumbee people so great, we—we are—we got lawyers, doctors, farmers, we got everything here. I mean we live good here in this county even though unemployment it a little slow. But what makes this Lumbee people great is one thing I think. It's that university in Pembroke, which used to be Pembroke College [*It's now the University of North Carolina-Pembroke*]. That's where I went to and the purpose of that college is—was to educate folks to be teachers. And so that school, educated us to be teachers where we can go out and teach our folks, all over this county and—and other counties, states, and so on and so forth. And I give a lot of credit for this Pembroke College when I was over there. We had 300-some students in that whole college when I went over there in the [19]'50s—'57 I believe it was. And that's what I believe and I—I don't—I don't know if that's—. But anyway I believe in kind of

putting it back to that college because it educated so many of our folks including myself that you know—. I got a building over there named after me and so I just wanted to put back—a little bit back into that school, so I'm proud of that school.

00:52:55

SW: I understand that there's a great sense of pride in that school.

00:52:58

HDO: Yeah, yeah and like I said it—it educated—. And I think we're different than other tribes 'cause they don't have—they don't have that. And I think that's why they're not as educated or as grown as—as much as we have 'cause we're the largest tribe east of the Mississippi I believe.

00:53:19

SW: Mr. Oxendine is there anything else you want to talk about today?

00:53:23

HDO: Not today, I think that's it.

00:53:26

SW: Thank you for your time.

00:53:27

HDO: Okay, thank you.

00:53:29

[End H. Dobbs-Oxendine Interview]