

8404785

Jones, Rosalyn Jacobs

UPWARD MOBILITY: A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE. THE JOHN W. JACOBS
STORY

Middle Tennessee State University

D.A. 1983

University
Microfilms
International

300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Copyright 1984

by

Jones, Rosalyn Jacobs

All Rights Reserved

PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark .

1. Glossy photographs or pages _____
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print _____
3. Photographs with dark background
4. Illustrations are poor copy _____
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy _____
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page _____
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages _____
8. Print exceeds margin requirements _____
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine _____
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print _____
11. Page(s) _____ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) _____ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered _____. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages _____
15. Other _____

University
Microfilms
International

Upward Mobility: A Historical Narrative
The John W. Jacobs Story

Rosalyn Jones

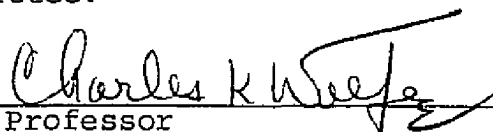
A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts

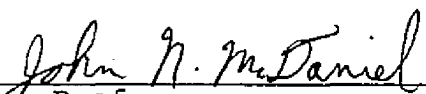
December, 1983

Upward Mobility: A Historical Narrative
The John W. Jacobs Story


APPROVED:

Graduate Committee:


Major Professor


Minor Professor


Chairman of the English Department


Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract

Upward Mobility: A Historical Narrative

The John W. Jacobs Story

by Rosalyn Jones

This narrative is a result of a folklore research project which was conducted in southeastern North Carolina in the predominantly African-American rural community of Armour. Oral sources are used both to document local history and to preserve the culture of this particular ethnic group between 1852 and 1925. The family stories are about the Jacobs family and cluster around the legendary figure of John William Jacobs, who was a local teacher, principal, justice of the peace, surveyor, preacher, and farmer. He was also the father of nineteen children.

The information was derived primarily from oral interviews and informal conversations with local people. Official documents such as land deeds, marriage records, and census reports were also used to achieve the full narrative.

Specifically for the Armour community, this narrative documents and records the story of the founding of Armour school. Generally, it denotes African-American education

Rosalyn Jones

within Columbus County, North Carolina, and America. Traditional occupations of this era such as justice of the peace, surveyor, and local preacher are examined, and it is shown how important these occupations were to the community.

In the stories dealing with the Jacobs family, the direct bloodline is established between them and the Lumbee Indians and the notorious folk hero of the Indian people, Henry Berry Lowry. Lowry and his gang of outlaws terrorized Robeson County for over a decade, and his mysterious disappearance makes him a unique part of North Carolina history. The family narrative, anecdote, and rhyme are critically analyzed in the final chapter to reveal their literary characteristics. The "holistic" culture of the community is observed through the recording of certain family customs and folk architecture.

This folklore project documents the culture and history of this specific ethnic group. With a thorough examination of this culture, certain dominant trends may be denoted that run through the current of American life. The residents remember this particular era of American history as consisting of "hard times." Through these oral interviews the residents of the community and the members of the family tell their own story in their own words, and their story has transferred life into art.

This book is dedicated to my father, who has always inspired me to pursue high goals, and to the memory of my mother, who always had faith in my ability to succeed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of the Jacobs family and the Armour Community for permitting me to document their lives and share their richness with others. I would especially like to thank Jessie Mae Byrd for supplying the bulk of information concerning Henry Berry Lowry.

I would also like to thank my advisors, Dr. Charles Wolfe and Dr. John McDaniel; my original typist, Delphine Fisher; and my husband, Hiram Jones, for his assistance in research.

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
I. The Folkloric Significance of Community and Family Research	1
II. Dear Armour High	26
III. Leadership Roles	64
IV. Family Saga	76
V. Family Lore	100
Works Cited	127

List of Illustrations

Figure	Page
1. Townships of Columbus County as of 1979	27
2. Direct Ties of Mary Margaret Lowry's Family	78

Chapter I

The Folkloric Significance of Community and Family Research

This folklore research project was conducted in Armour, North Carolina, and it centers on the stories that have grown up there around the figure of John William Jacobs. The second two chapters deal specifically with local history, and the last two with family stories about the Jacobs family during the years 1852-1925. J. W. Jacobs founded the first school for African-Americans in Armour. He was a surveyor, justice of the peace, preacher, and teacher. This lore reflects the values and beliefs of a people and an age and reveals the significance of "oral" literature. During this era, a great transition was taking place in the lives of African-American citizens.¹ Men who had once been slaves became free men who had to learn to make their own living.² The major theme of all the stories about this particular time period from the residents of this community and about

¹ Inez Moore Parker, The Biddle Johnson C. Smith Story (Charlotte, N.C.: Observer Craftsman Co., 1975, p. iii.

² Parker, p. iii.

this family is hard times. These people liked to talk about their family heroes, especially those who fought against their oppression. The study also reflects the events that were occurring in American history during this time. The facts that Dolly Shaw was a slave and her son, Archie, was "bound" out, and that there were only a few schools that would educate African-Americans put this folklore study into perspective with the national character.³ The study also has sociological and psychological implications in that it shows how oppressed these African-Americans felt they were and how proud they were to be able to achieve upward mobility. Thus, by recognizing the way that they have been treated in the past, we can better understand how African-Americans feel about themselves and therefore act as they do.

In describing the significance of such feelings and actions in the scholarly realm of folklore, Jan Brunvand concludes:

Folklore is the traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understandings, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples. Many of these habits of thought are common to all human beings, but they always interact with and are

³ Interview with Douglas Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

influenced by the whole cultural context that surrounds them.⁴

Although this type of research has been a respected academic specialty in Europe for generations, in the United States the field of folklore is relatively new, and it tends to be narrowly understood.⁵ According to Brunvand, the word folklore was coined by a nineteenth-century English scholar, W. J. Thoms, to supply an Anglo-Saxon word to replace the Latin term "popular antiquities," or intellectual "remains of earlier cultures surviving in the traditions of the peasant class."⁶ Although modern folklorists have tried to avoid the peasant connotations of the word, they still use it partly in the original sense to signify that portion of any culture that is passed on in oral or customary tradition.⁷ In the Old World tradition, hero legends often belonged to non-folklore literature, and in the New World these legends belonged more to what was termed "fakelore." "Fakelore," coined by Richard M. Dorson in 1950, was a term invented to disparage "professional writers' contrived inventions and rewritings."⁸ Such a story as the one about

⁴ Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 2.

⁵ Brunvand, p. 1.

⁶ Brunvand, p. 2.

⁷ Brunvand, p. 2.

⁸ Brunvand, p. 2.

Paul Bunyan is presented as a genuine example of folk traditions but has very little basis of real tradition underlying it.

The study of folklore encompasses a wide variety of studies. According to Brunvand,

Folklore comprises the unrecorded traditions of a people; it includes both the form and content of these traditions and their style or technique of communication from person to person. The study of folklore attempts to analyze these traditions (both content and process) so as to reveal the common life of the human mind apart from what is contained in the form records of culture that compose the heritage of a people. Only by turning to the folklore of peoples, probing into its meanings, patterns, and functions, and searching for the links between different bodies of tradition, may we hope to understand the intellectual and spiritual life of humanity in its broadest dimensions.⁹

The materials and manifestations of folklore are extremely wide-ranging, and their genres may be either ethnic or analytical. The three main classifications for folklore are oral, customary, and material.¹⁰ Until recently, oral folklore had been the most commonly studied type in the United States. This category includes folk speech, folk proverbs, folk riddles, folk rhymes, folk narratives, folk songs, and folk ballads. Customary folklore, which involves both verbal and nonverbal elements, includes folk beliefs,

⁹ Brunvand, p. 1.

¹⁰ Brunvand, p. 4.

superstitions, customs, festivals, dances, dramas, gestures, and games. Material folklore traditions include architecture, crafts, arts, costumes, and foods. Individual items collected in research may be sorted into these three categories on the basis of their mode of existence. The ideal study, of course, is the one that takes into account the entire traditional event and makes use of all three of these classifications.¹¹

According to Brunvand, there are five qualities that generally are associated with folklore:

- (1) its content is oral (usually verbal), or custom-related or material;
- (2) it is traditional in form and transmission;
- (3) it exists in different versions;
- (4) it is usually anonymous;
- (5) it tends to become formularized.¹²

Folklore is oral or custom-related in that it is passed on by word of mouth and informal demonstration or imitation from one person to another and from one generation to the next. It is never transmitted entirely in a formal manner through written materials. Folklore is traditional in two senses: it is passed on repeatedly in a relatively fixed or

¹¹ Brunvand, pp. 4-6.

¹² Brunvand, p. 5.

standard form, and it circulates among members of a certain group. Traditional form or structure in folklore allows us to recognize corresponding bits of folklore in different guises. The characters in the story, the setting, the length, the style, and even the language may vary, but we still call it the "same" story if it maintains a basic underlying form.¹³ The hero legend or the "rags to riches" story is a good example of this basic form. Although there are certain major folk groups in America that support major bodies of tradition, according to Brunvand, "any group that has distinctive oral traditions can have folklore."¹⁴ Thus, as Brunvand says, folklore may be defined as those materials in culture that "circulate traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form or by means of customary example, as well as the processes of traditional performance and communications."¹⁵ Folklore is usually anonymous because authors' names are seldom part of texts that are orally transmitted. Most folklore also tends to become formularized in different countries and for different reasons.¹⁶

¹³ Brunvand, p. 6.

¹⁴ Brunvand, p. 7.

¹⁵ Brunvand, p. 7.

¹⁶ Brunvand, p. 7.

In this particular project, the material collected adhered to these specific qualities. I examined the folklore of the African-American ethnic group, and I examined its oral, material, and customary traditions. Most of the material has basic underlying forms and expresses similar themes (the "self-made man" or the hero who rises up against oppression). For the folk architecture that I examined, the originators were anonymous; and most of the stories were formularized, inasmuch as they were expressed in cliches, set phrases, and patterns of repetition.

As a rule, American folklore focuses on specific folk groups. The reason for this, according to Brunvand, is that "the acceptance of traditions by these groups usually implies some degree of conformity with group tastes and values."¹⁷ There are four major kinds of American folk groups--occupational groups, age groups, regional groups, and ethnic or nationality groups.¹⁸ According to Steven J. Zeitlin in A Celebration of American Family Folklore,

America's diversity shapes its folklore: stories told in New England have their own distinct style and subject matter, as do the tales of Texans or Jewish Americans. Whereas third-generation Americans often tell of perilous escapes from the old country, westerners recall their ancestors' journeys across the Oregon trail. Appalachian families often tell stories of long-standing

¹⁷ Brunvand, p. 28.

¹⁸ Brunvand, pp. 29-33.

feuds, black Americans of heroic action taken against oppression, and urban dwellers of poverty-stricken lives in ghettos and tenements. There may be individual topics which recur in particular ethnic groups and regions; yet the general patterns and themes are national. As citizens of this country we share similar experiences. We also share a common language, a similar way of telling a story, certain ideas about what sorts of episodes are humorous or dramatic.¹⁹

Certain ethnic groups have been studied for different reasons in America. The African-American is a group that has been of special interest. According to Brunvand,

There has been very active folklore collecting and research among American Blacks, both in the Deep South and in the northern ghettos and other Settlements, as black folk music, then tales and other lore have interested scholars. The early studies were concerned with tracing African survivals in America, but now folklorists are increasingly dealing with the psychological and sociological functions of folklore among blacks.²⁰

This research project helped me to understand how the residents of the Armour community viewed themselves, in the context of what they remembered about their past. Perhaps they liked to reminisce about their hard times and exploits because it made them feel as though they had accomplished something with their lives. Because they had "made it through," they had earned the right to look back with

¹⁹ Steven J. Zeitlin, Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker, A Celebration of American Family Folklore (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 12.

²⁰ Brunvand, p. 31.

laughter and nostalgia on their trials and to tell good stories about hard times.

Chapters Two and Three of this work both center on local history, which derived primarily from oral sources. According to Barbara Allen and William Montell in From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research,

Orally communicated history is a valid and valuable source of historical information, as oral tradition and formal history complement one another. Each body of knowledge possesses qualities that, taken together, form a fuller historical record.²¹

These authors assert that the focus of Western historians has been on documenting the past of large political units and that the nation has traditionally been regarded as the smallest meaningful historical unit.²² They add that "there has also been somewhat an attitude of scorn directed against historians who have demonstrated an interest in the history of local communities whether such communities are minority or mainstream."²³ But in spite of this prevailing attitude,

²¹ Barbara Allen and William Lynwood Montell, From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), p. 3.

²² Allen and Montell, p. 4.

²³ Allen and Montell, p. 5.

in recent years increasing numbers of historians have shifted their attention from political to social history, from the national and international scene to the local level.²⁴ In Families and Communities: A New View of American History, David Russo contends that people live simultaneously in a hierarchy of communities ranging from the local neighborhood to the nation. He views American history as progressive nationalization of life and life styles originally organized at local levels.²⁵

The term "local history" usually refers to the study of entire political units, such as counties.²⁶ In Chapter Two the origin of Columbus County is documented as the political unit of the people of Armour. The history of the county is documented back to the time when it was contained as parts of Brunswick and Bladen counties up until the last land was annexed to the county in 1877. And in order to capture the total picture, the project focuses on the county, the community, the neighborhood, and the family.

²⁴ Allen and Montell, p. 5.

²⁵ David Russo, Families and Communities: A New View of American History (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1974), pp. 14-19.

²⁶ Allen and Montell, p. 6.

According to Allen and Montell,

Orally communicated history has a distinctive set of characteristics and occurs in a variety of settings. These characteristics include disregard for standard chronology; emotional association of accounts around significant events or persons; reliance on visual imagery and striking detail; compression or telescoping of historical time; displacement or original actors in a historical event with others; migration of dramatic narrative elements among historical accounts; and patterning of oral accounts of different events along similar lines.²⁷

Most of these characteristics became apparent as I was conducting my research. For instance, people made very little reference to a specific year that anything happened, and for specific dates I had to depend on written documents such as court records and census reports. Instead of dates, participants were more likely to remember epochal events such as the "year the school burned down" as reference points for specific time periods.²⁸ At the center of my investigations were the exploits of a local strong man around whom a series of stories were related. Such clusters of tales are explained this way by Montell:

Certain events or persons in the past may, for various reasons, take on particular significance for a community. When that occurs, a cluster or

²⁷ Allen and Montell, p. 6.

²⁸ Interview with William D. Robinson, Armour, North Carolina, 6 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

complex of interrelated narratives develops, each dealing with a different aspect of episodes within the larger event of the person's life.²⁹

Thus, when people tended to talk about J. W. Jacobs, there was no particular ordering principle; they simply related different incidents that occurred in his life with little reference to chronology.

The use of visual imagery became apparent on several occasions. The most striking example comes in the interview with Elsie Woodard about her father, Professor D. P. Allen. When she recalls how the old school looked, she relates, "It was a two-story frame building with wood steps on the inside; there were trees planted in the yard, but it was very clayey and there was no grass in the yard."³⁰ This description brings to mind how the Whitin Normal School actually looked, and one can easily visualize it from her description.

I also found that in talking about events that actually happened some years or months apart, people tended to omit any mention of intervening occurrences. For example, when Douglas Shaw retells the story of how Dolly came to live in Armour, he says, "They built a little house there and they remained there; they didn't get no further. And that's

²⁹ Allen and Montell, p. 29.

³⁰ Interview with Elsie Woodard, Charlotte, North Carolina, 22 March 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

where she died at in that little one-room house."³¹ Because Douglas Shaw remembers when Dolly died "like it was yesterday"³² and because her arrival was of prime significance to him, he telescopes the day of her arrival in the town to the day of her departure. These two key events in the past are brought into direct association with each other in this case and form a compressed cause and effect relationship between the two events. According to oral historians, this phenomenon has been noted for orally recited traditional genealogies in Africa.³³

In certain instances in my oral history research, an action or event became the main concern of the person interviewed rather than the particular personality. For example, in Jesse Shaw's narratives, it is Archie Shaw who miraculously escapes from the sheriff, but when the same story was retold by another relative, Archie was replaced with Henry Shaw, Archie's oldest son. Thus, it became apparent that what was important to the oral culture of the community was the act itself and not the person who had done the deed. This coincides with Montell's belief that "when what

³¹ Douglas Shaw interview.

³² Douglas Shaw interview.

³³ Allen and Montell, p. 36.

happened is more important than who was involved, minor characters may have their identities changed."³⁴

Especially true to the stories found within this story was the patterning of oral accounts. According to Montell, oral accounts tend to fall into patterns in which the same features are emphasized.³⁵ The informants in this study tended to focus on their hard times, their family heroes, trauma-inducing occurrences, and major transitions in their lives.

During the course of this study, I occasionally had to document certain people's life history. Because J. W. was so inspired by Professor D. P. Allen, it became necessary to investigate his history as well. The general premise behind collecting and analyzing a life history is that any individual is in many ways typical of the society and culture in which he lives.³⁶ In documenting this life history given to me orally by his daughter, I conclude that D. P. Allen's life was indicative of other African-American leaders who sprang up during this era. He was one of those who "had enjoyed a certain deal of freedom during the bondage of his fellow man, and who assumed a leadership role in order to realize increasing dimensions of freedom

³⁴ Allen and Montell, p. 37.

³⁵ Allen and Montell, p. 39.

³⁶ Allen and Montell, p. 63.

for his fellow men."³⁷ He went North to receive an education; while there he enlisted the support of some wealthy white families who gave him financial support to start a school for his people. Even after his death these families continued to support members of his family and other struggling African-American institutions.³⁸ His life history is yet another document of American history, adding another name to the list of African-American heroes who went North to receive an education and who returned to the South to help their people.

After the interviews for the project were completed and the tapes transcribed, the information was classified to see which data would qualify as oral history and which as folklore. William Montell's Saga of Coe Ridge served as a model for classification, inasmuch as this book gives ways to test oral material for its validity.³⁹ Most of the historical information was then confined to the first two chapters, and the folklore to the last two. There are several instances, however, where the two do tend to overlap. Chapter Three especially contains a combination of

³⁷ Parker, p. iii.

³⁸ Woodard interview.

³⁹ William Lynwood Montell, The Saga of Coe Ridge (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1979), p. 12.

family history and family stories, and the two are woven together to achieve the full narrative.

Chapter Four consists of what is known as a "family saga." According to Boatright, a family saga is "the body of lore that tends to cluster around families, which is believed to be true."⁴⁰ He believes that while varying from one family to another, these sagas frequently deal with similar themes, such as hardships on the frontier, family misfortunes, the exploits of eccentric relatives, and the family's experiences during such trying times as wars and economic depression.⁴¹ The central theme of Chapter Three revolves around the hard times faced by the Lumbee Indians of Robeson County. The direct bloodline is established between the Jacobs family and the Lowry family of that community. The saga is the story of Henry Berry Lowry and his gang who terrorized Robeson County for over a decade. He later became a folk hero of that Indian community, and his mysterious disappearance has captivated historians for years.⁴² Today in the Pembroke area Henry Berry Lowry's story is retold in the outdoor drama, Strike At the Wind.

⁴⁰ Mody C. Boatright, "The Family Saga as a Form of Folklore," in The Family Saga and Other Phases of American Folklore (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1958), p. 1.

⁴¹ Allen and Montell, p. 48.

⁴² Adolph L. Dial and David K. Eliades, The Only Land I Know (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1975), p. 173.

The hardship theme dominates the chapter as it focuses on the unfair treatment of the Indians during the years before and during the Civil War.

There is a distinct difference between a family history and a family story.⁴³ The Jacobs family history was compiled and written by Jessie Mae Byrd in 1982. The family history deals more with family genealogy and the chronological listing of descendants than with actual recapping of the stories that surround the family. This history was very useful to me because it served as a skeletal document which provided me with areas that would yield profitable research results. It presented me with key events in the life of J. W. and the family such as "J. W. founded Armour School in 1881," "He became a magistrate, a surveyor, a counselor, a preacher and a teacher," and "His brother Archie and J. W. bought together the land of the farms for twenty-five cents per acre."⁴⁴ My study is a result of the full exploration of each of these areas. The family stories supplied the "meat" to the bones and filled in the gaps.

Family stories have only recently earned a respected place in the field of folklore. Today their usefulness is

⁴³ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 2.

⁴⁴ Jessie Mae Byrd, "A Partial History of the John William Jacobs Family," unpublished personal compilation record, Armour, North Carolina, 4 July 1982.

attested to by modern folklorists.⁴⁵ Zeitlin defines such stories this way:

Family stories are usually based on real incidents which have become embellished over the years. They are relevant to American history not only because they convey some factual information, but because they often capture the ethos of an era. A family story may epitomize a certain time period even if the details are false. They also tell us much about the storytellers and how certain episodes in our national history bear upon their lives today.⁴⁶

Some of these stories tend to focus on the character of a certain relative. Of course, in this case, most of the stories tended to focus on J. W.'s character. In the last chapter, for example, William Jacobs recounts a prank that he once played on J. W. while he was in school. He remembers that he pinned a tail onto J. W.'s coattail when he caught him napping at his desk; when he lost his nerve and decided to take it off, J. W. woke up and gave him the whipping of his life.⁴⁷ The characteristic that is pinpointed here is J. W.'s tendency to fall asleep in public (as he was often known to do).⁴⁸ The structure of the anecdote is common in that it begins by A getting the better

⁴⁵ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Interview with William Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 31 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

⁴⁸ William Jacobs interview, 31 January 1983.

of B, and then the tables being immediately turned and B getting the better of A. In American family stories, the incidents which describe a character and pinpoint his character, as this tale does, are known as character principles.⁴⁹ These stories also tend to stereotype characters.

The tendency to retain incidents surrounding radical changes in their family history is known as the transition principle in family stories.⁵⁰ Such stories contain events and episodes which mark upheavals and sharp cycles in family history. It has been found that families, just like individuals, have a life cycle marked by stages of transition which are often celebrated in story. These include courtships, great fortunes lost in the family, migrations, catastrophes, and family feuds.⁵¹ Dolly's migration story falls into this category, as do most of the stories found within the last chapter. There is a family courtship story here which tells how J. W.'s daughter managed to meet and marry a Harvard graduate. The most common type of narrative that expresses the transition principle is the personal experience narrative. Through this narrative, people convey social, natural, and family history. For instance, in his narrative, Henry Shaw recalls what a traumatic day voting

⁴⁹ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 15.

⁵⁰ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 15.

⁵¹ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 15.

day was for the people of the community during the 1800s.⁵² These narratives are important for their historical function as literature.

In the final chapter, the stories are critically analyzed to see how they function as literature. Elements such as setting, character, point of view, structure, tone, imagery, symbolism, and meaning are examined in the material to see how these stories exist as a distinct literary mode. Included there are examples from the three different types of folklore: oral, customary, and material. It contains examples of narratives, and anecdotes, rhymes, family customs, and folk architecture. It is in this chapter that the entire culture of the family is examined.

As a whole, my study is infiltrated with short episodes which speak for many years of family and local history. It is sprinkled throughout with heroic efforts of certain family members who fought successfully against hard times. These events then become a "distillation of experience," and serve to represent the entirety of this family's history. As suggested by Zeitlin,

Families are selfish in what they choose to remember and pass down. They are willing to remember incidents which come to epitomize the character of a particular family member, and they are willing

⁵² Interview with Raymond Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 23 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

to remember an occurrence which marks a turning point in their own life or their family history. In this way, each narrative becomes not a rehash of an event, but the distillation of experience. A single episode comes to represent the entirety of a relative's personality; a whole family history is symbolized by a few dramatic turning points. The stories stand for much larger quantities of experience and families have at their disposal a heightened form of communication which holds the family together and acts "as a kind of glue."⁵³

The dramatic episodes contained within this project serve as a good example of what Zeitlin says about family history. Some family members are rarely mentioned, while others appear time and time again; similarly, some events that took place within the family are never mentioned while others are recalled more than once. In most cases the whole of the family and community history is symbolized by one or two dramatic turning points.

The idea for this research project came to me on July 4, 1982, at the first annual Jacobs family reunion. It was at that time that I first became interested in exploring both some local and family history. There had already been a very successful founder's day program held at Armour School on November 27, 1981, where a monument was unveiled in honor of Professor John W. Jacobs, and I felt that the story of a local leader and family patriarch should be recorded. This is what I set out to do. Very little of

⁵³ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 16.

the community's past had ever been recorded, so I set out to do what had never been done before. The project necessarily involved extensive research and investigation on my part, most of which has proved to be worthwhile. Much material was collected on family gatherings such as Josephine (Grandma Jo) Jacobs' birthday party on October 8, 1982, where family members gathered in their customary tradition to socialize and to talk about their past. The two kernel narratives that I was initially supplied with were that J. W. had founded armour School and that he had been the father of nineteen children. The following pages have spun from those two bits of information. Since I was an "insider" researching my own community and my own family, I worked with a distinct advantage.⁵⁴ I knew basically where the written records could be found, I knew the people whom I needed to consult, and I knew the general background and context of the subject that I was researching. My general intuitive feeling about the subject and the fact that I was of the same culture as the people that I was researching served as distinct advantages for me. Because I was familiar with the community and its people, I knew there were certain sensitive subjects that required investigative tact.

⁵⁴ Allen and Montell, p. 11.

In numerous instances information has been recorded here that has a great deal of relevance to the family, to the local community, and to American history. The events recorded during this era of turmoil for the African-American in Armour serve as samples of the type of treatment that the African-Americans as a whole were receiving on a national scale. For instance, Armour School is representative of other schools which were started for the African-American when no others schools would educate him. A great many of these schools no longer exist, yet they are important to the history of the African-American's struggle to receive an education in America. The events surrounding the founding of Whittin Normal School are also significant because they stand as examples of how several other institutions were started for the African-American, through the philanthropic gifts of white families.

Most of J. W.'s occupations are indicative of the job possibilities in the African-American community at this time. He served in the traditional occupations of surveyor, justice of the peace, preacher, teacher, and farmer. Because very few African-Americans were educated enough to serve in all of these capacities, his is a testimony to the various roles that existed in the community.

How the residents of Armour community viewed their past is also significant. The stories they chose to tell are

usually about how they triumphed over economic and social difficulties and how they "don't see how they made it." They are proud people whose desire to move upward in their economic and social classes becomes increasingly apparent.

Pertinent bits of information are also contained in the chapters which deal with the family. First of all, I was able to establish the direct bloodline between the Jacobs and the Lumbee Indians, showing the Jacobs to be a family of mixed ancestry. Although some living relatives knew that they were related, they did not know exactly how. Also, the Jacobs family of this time grew up under the firm guidance of the family patriarch, J. W., who outlived both of the mothers of his children and many of his children. He maintained several leadership roles in the community and still kept his family together over the tough spots.

This study has been a worthwhile one because of its folkloric value. The individual and the communal details recorded here are merely illustrative of certain important folkloric, cultural, and literary phenomena. The trends recorded here coincide with the national ones while providing insight into a local character and a local community.

The African-American historian Carter G. Woodson once wrote that "you look back in order to look forward."⁵⁵ It

⁵⁵ Carter G. Woodson, "Chronicles of Black History," Ebony, February 1983, p. 31.

was his faith that the "achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human progress and a maker of modern civilization."⁵⁶ The achievements that I have set forth here bear testimony to these beliefs.

⁵⁶ Woodson, p. 35.

Chapter II

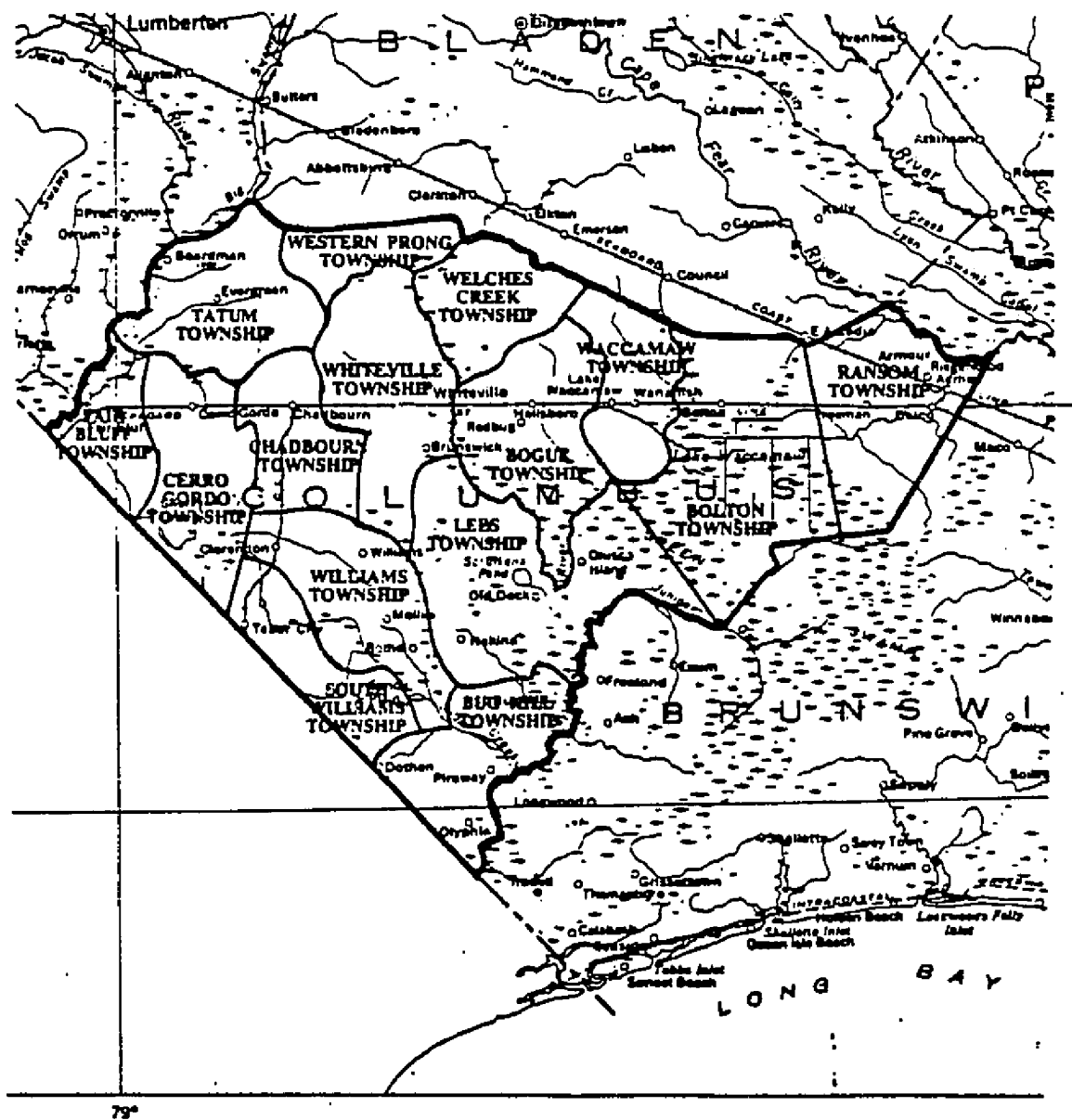
Dear Armour High

The county in North Carolina which was named for Christopher Columbus lies a short distance from the Atlantic Ocean, in the fertile lowlands of the coastal plain. It is flanked by the South Carolina line, by Brunswick County to the east, Robeson County to the west, and Bladen and Pender counties on the north.

Although this 959-square-mile expanse of North Carolina is rarely mentioned in historical writing, it has witnessed many major episodes in American history. The Indian presence, the Colonial period, the Revolutionary War, the establishment of railroads, the Civil War, the Reconstruction--all have involved the county. Throughout the years, developments in Columbus County have reflected familiar themes of state and national history.¹

The land and its heritage have been shaped by several geographical features (fig. 1). Lake Waccamaw, the largest natural lake between New York and Florida, was the site of

¹ Ann C. Little, ed., Recollections and Records (Raleigh, N.C.: Fishers Harrison Corp., 1980), p. 353.



U. S. Geological Survey map.

Fig. 1. Townships of Columbus County as of 1979.

Indian habitation long before the arrival of the white man. The western parts of the county are defined by the swift, dark waters of the Lumber River. The Cape Fear River comprises a section of the northeastern border, in Ransom Township. Access to the Cape Fear River and the Port City of Wilmington has been a major factor in the settlement and commercial development of the county. Before the construction of roads, the Cape Fear, Lumber, and Waccamaw rivers were the main arteries which penetrated the dense woodlands of the area.²

The history of Columbus County necessarily includes events which occurred in Brunswick, New Hanover, and Bladen. Settlement was delayed by the reluctance of the Lords Proprietors to grant land in the Cape Fear Region. There are also several factors which hindered early colonization: hostile Indians, pirates, and a greater interest in other sections of the colony. Also there was confusion over the southern boundary of North Carolina. South Carolina claimed the west bank of the Cape Fear River as its northern border and issued land grants in the area.³ Because of the expansion of boundary lines and population growth during the century, it became necessary to frame and subdivide Columbus

² Little, p. 355.

³ Little, p. 355.

County into fifteen townships. South Williams, Western Prong, Waccamaw, Bolton, Ransom, Chadbourne and Cerro Gordo townships now exist in addition to the original eight. Five Commissioners now serve Columbus County (see fig. 1). In its early existence, Columbus County underwent several land annexations with both Bladen and Brunswick counties. In 1810 Whiteville was laid out on James B. White's land and the public buildings were ordered to be erected there. Whiteville is the county seat.

Early social life and activities in Ransom Township often coincided with work. Among the white population logrollings were held when people wanted to clear land. The logs were rolled on huge piles and then burned. Dinner was usually offered by the landowner, and a little homemade wine added an incentive. Fishing was enjoyed by both men and women. Boys trapped small animals and sold the skins. Hunting was engaged in mainly for food. Cornhusking and honeyhunting also brought crowds. On Saturday afternoons, baseball games provided recreation and entertainment.⁴

Located in the extreme eastern part of Columbus County, Ransom Township was originally part of Brunswick County. On January 26 1877, it was annexed to Columbus as the result

⁴ Little, p. 357.

of a petition presented to the General Assembly.⁵ The soil is light, fertile, and excellent for growing crops such as soybeans, tobacco, cotton, and corn. The flora of the area includes coniferous trees, loblolly and shortleaf pine, and heavy undergrowths of plants which are common to the semi-tropical zone. Summers are hot and humid; winters are cool and wet.

One section of Ransom Township found within Riegelwood is Armour Community. Armour's name derived from the French name (amour) for the Love family. Richard Love was appointed postmaster of Armour on May 11, 1876, and later Amanda Love held that position.⁶ Presently, the Armour Community is predominantly occupied by members of the African-American race with only a few white families residing in the community. The Love family is still within that number. Most of the families that live there now are related and most of them have a strong pride in their community, family, and way of life. The community is composed mainly of the following family surnames: Jacobs, Shaw, Brown, Bryant, Sutton, Porter, Graham, Hall, Waddell, Bowen, and Salter. Most of these families are linked by birth or by marriage. According to the most reliable source of

⁵ David Corbett, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943 (Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1969), pp. 72-73.

⁶ Little, p. 358.

information, Armour was once owned by George Simmer, and many of the ancestors of the present residents bought their land from him.⁷ Also, according to William Jacobs, "Old man Warehorn owned a lot of the land and a lotta people bought land from him."⁸ Warehorn was a German. He used to have a blacksmith shop where Douglas Butts presently lives.

Those settlers who settled and bought land there were pleased at the fertility of the land because it bore them extremely good crops. The railroad, which was built from Wilmington to Hamlet, came directly through the middle of Armour, giving the town both commercial activity and access to markets for their crops. Many residents built their homes overlooking the railroad tracks, and the activity of the trains became a part of their lives.

Most of the settlement of the community took place during the Reconstruction. At this time the status of the African-American was quite low. Although he had legally been given his freedom from the oppression of the white man years before, the freedman's stomach was still victim to the white man because he had to eat. Some residents recall

⁷ Interview with Raymond Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 23 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

⁸ Interview with William Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 31 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

that many slaves fared better than the freedmen who were often hungry and homeless. According to Thomas C. Parramore in Carolina Quest,

The missionary spirit of the North died with the assurance that slavery was permanently outlawed. Federal troops were withdrawn from the Southern states in 1877, ending the era of Reconstruction. A long bleak night now closed around the black population of North Carolina.⁹

He adds:

These dark-skinned people had rarely known any of the advantages of education. They were without experience in political matters. They could not all at once make up for these shortcomings. Even with the willing support of white people, it would have taken generations to overcome the poverty created by more than two hundred years of repression. They were faced with what often amounted to bitter opposition by those in power. Nonwhites faced the post Reconstruction era with hope.¹⁰

According to Carlene Young in her essay "The Legal, Social, and Ideological Forces That Influenced the Development of the Black Community,"

Black codes were enacted immediately after the Civil War and were aimed at restoring the antebellum relations between the races. They were models of the restrictive measures resorted to in the face of threatened equality. The harshest codes were found in Louisiana, Mississippi, and

⁹Thomas C. Parramore, Carolina Quest (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 289.

¹⁰Parramore, p. 290.

South Carolina. The South Carolina apprentice law, for example, stated, "A child over the age of two years, born of colored parents, may be bound by the father . . . or mother as an apprentice . . . a male until . . . twenty-one years, and a female until . . . eighteen."¹¹

She adds that

. . . the colored man was free in name only in many cases. The apprentice, vagrancy, and other provisions of these statutes forced the Negro into situations where he would be under the uncontrolled supervision of his former master or other white men who were willing and ready to exploit his labor.¹²

This was also the era which spawned the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights of the White Camelia, the White Brotherhood, and similar secret organizations. Burnings' murder, and other forms of violence and intimidation against the black man and his supporters were aimed at the maintenance of white supremacy. Lynchings reached their peak at this time.¹³ At the end of the Civil War, jubilation and shouts of joy over the gift of freedom went up from the freedmen. But little did they know that some were soon to be in jails, to be hungry and sick as well as homeless. They were taking part in a social revolution of which they had been the cause

¹¹ Carlene Young, "The Legal, Social, and Ideological Forces That Influenced The Development of the Black Community," in Carlene Young, ed., Black Experience (San Rafael, Calif.: Leswing Press, 1972), p. 289.

¹² Young, p. 289.

¹³ Young, p. 289.

and of which they were both the victor and the victim. Tarheels who had fought for the cause limped home from the vermin-infested camps and prisons to mend their plows. Approximately 40,000 North Carolinians did not come back, many of them lying in unknown graves. Like other slaveholders, their investment in the more than \$200,000 in slaves in the South was a total loss. They suffered the loss of other uncounted millions of dollars in property, and economic collapse seemed inevitable.¹⁴ There was stamina left in the Southerners, though, and they faced the political and social upheaval with determination. Farms became more numerous with less acreage as the sharecropping plan replaced the plantation system of farming. Although Tarheels as a whole resented the Freedman's Bureau, and although it was in truth infiltrated with numerous scoundrels, much good was accomplished with this agency. More than \$1,500,000 worth of food was distributed, 40,000 patients were cared for and hospitals were opened, and 431 schools for freedmen with 439 teachers for over 20,000 pupils were started by the Bureau.¹⁵

¹⁴ Parramore, p. 290.

¹⁵ D. L. Corbitt and Elizabeth Wilborn, Civil War Pictures, 6th ed. (Raleigh, N.C.: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1979), p. 46.

Most African Americans in the South faced the future with little hope and tried to find their way upward as best they could after they had gained their freedom. Some left the land of their former owners in search of a new home and land of their own. They set out with their horses and carts and the children loaded in to seek out a new beginning. More specifically for the Armour Community, a former slave named Dolly Shaw was passing through on her way to Texas when she was forced to make an unplanned stop in Armour, North Carolina. According to her grandson, Douglas Shaw of Armour,

The reason that they were here was because they had started to Texas but one of the children got sick and they were driving a horse and cart and she got sick up here across the railroad, one of the children got sick and they built a little house there and they remained there they didn't get no further. And that's where she died at in that little one room house.¹⁶

Dolly is significant to this study because she is the mother of John W. Jacobs. It is believed that it was her daughter's illness which forced Dolly to make this unplanned stop in Armour.

Born in 1806, Dolly was named after Dolly Madison, the wife of President James Madison, who was born in Guilford

¹⁶ Interview with Douglas Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

County, North Carolina. When Dolly was born, her famous namesake was especially well-known for her gracious hospitality as the official hostess for Thomas Jefferson in the White House; she later became hostess in her own right when her husband became President in 1809. Later, in 1814, when the British attacked Washington, she managed to save a number of state documents.¹⁷ At the time of Dolly's birth, Dolly Madison was a main American figure, but, unlike her namesake, Dolly was born a slave. It is not known where Dolly was coming from en route to Texas, but her grandson also remembers that as a slave Dolly was a cook:

Yes, I think Dolly was a cook and she got out easy because she was a cook. But a cook always had a better chance than the rest of them. She'd get all that she wanted to eat because she cooked.¹⁸

Dolly was supposed to have been married three times, but it is not certain whether or not she ever married the last time. Douglas Shaw remembers it this way: "What they told me was she married old man Sandy Shaw first so he died and then she married Jack Jacobs so he lived his time out and then she married old man Mose Robinson."¹⁹ Nora Shaw

¹⁷ "Madison, Dolly," New Age Encyclopedia, 1974 ed.

¹⁸ Douglas Shaw interview.

¹⁹ Douglas Shaw interview.

of Armour does not believe that Dolly ever really married Mose Robinson and adds that "illegitimate children automatically took the father's name back during Dolly's time."²⁰ Dolly had, in all, four children--three sons and one daughter. Dolly is still a part of the oral culture of the Armour community today. Dolly's sons were named Archie Shaw, John Jacobs, and William "Billy" Robinson. Traveling by horse and cart with her husband, Sandy Shaw, who was originally from Wilmington, Delaware, Dolly was forced to stop in Armour and try to make a living. According to Nora Shaw, "free people fared worse than slaves and parents would 'bound' their children over to whites to work; for pay they would receive hoghead or some other type of food and then they would be left on their own."²¹ This is the fate that befell Archie, the oldest of Dolly's children, as he was bound out to a white man in order to help feed his family at that time. Archie's escape from the man and ultimately the sheriff is retold with pride by his descendants today. According to his grandson, Jessie Shaw, the miraculous escape went this way:

He said he was bound out working for an old white man and he ran away to join the army; the man hired the sheriff to bring him back. The sheriff

²⁰ Informal conversation with Nora Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983.

²¹ Nora Shaw conversation.

caught him at the Old Turner Mill and tied a rope around him. And as they were crossing the water the sheriff was riding a horse and he was walking on a footlog and pulled the sheriff off the horseback and he fell in the water and he got away and joined the army and came back later.²²

Archie supposedly hopped a freight train and hoboed his way to Philadelphia. Though less adventurous than his older brother, John William (or J. W., as we will refer to him) was not bound out as a child; therefore, he had no reason to imitate the exploits of his older brother. He was thirteen years younger than Archie, and, according to Jessie Shaw, he was a "free issue" (his father was not a slave). "People often called him lazy, and he looked reddish like an Indian."²³ But fortunately for J. W., he did not face the hard times that his brother faced. J. W. and Archie were quite different; while Archie became known for his prowess, J. W. became known for his intelligence. Even as a young boy, J. W. was interested in getting an education. He was a thinker, endowed with intelligence and enlightenment. Though his idleness was often mistaken for laziness by those who observed him, J. W. was far wiser than other boys his age.

²² Interview with Jessie Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

²³ Jessie Shaw interview.

J. W. was born in 1852, and as soon as he became of age he began to seek out a boarding school in Lumberton, North Carolina, which was about seventy miles from his home. The school that J. W. heard about and eventually attended was Whitin Normal School. The founder of this first boarding school for African-Americans in Lumberton was Professor D. P. Allen. D. P. Allen turned out to be the most influential man that J. W. would ever meet. Years after his schooling days there were over, whenever he tried out a new pen, he would always write "Professor D. P. Allen."²⁴ The story of this leader in education for the African-American is yet another remarkable story well worth the retelling. D. P. Allen's youngest daughter, Elsie Woodard, recaps the story of her father in this way:

I do not know when he was born, but he was born in Danville, Virginia and as a young boy he drifted North. I'm pretty sure that his father was a slave. He drifted North and went as far as Massachusetts where he eventually attracted the attention of the Whitin Family and the Fanning Family. He finished his undergraduate work there and eventually enrolled in Westfield Memorial Teachers College in Newton Upper Falls, Massachusetts. It was a normal school, a teacher training school. For years we had the graduating picture. He eventually drifted South. I don't know whether he was looking for his former family or just interested in starting a school. Of course all schools then were parochial; there were no public schools and certainly nothing

²⁴ Interview with Jessie Mae Byrd, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982.

beyond grade school. He started the school and for years it went on. I do not know how many teachers there were, but I do know that as soon as his daughters came of age and finished, they in turn worked at the school so it was somewhat of a family institution. Although I do not know how many of them did this, I know that there were several who did work there at the school and this went on for years. There was a boarding department; I think there were frame houses which men lived in and frame houses where women lived. The school was located on Walnut Street in Lumberton and this is where I was born and reared until I was six years old. I can just remember as a child it was a two-story frame building with wood steps on the inside; there were trees planted in the yard, but it was very clayey but there was no grass in the yard. I remember that as a little child we used to play in our little wagon and play in and out of the trees.²⁵

And although Elsie was a mere six years old when her father died, as she was the youngest of his second set of children, she is still able to remember the most notable characteristics that D. P. Allen possessed:

He was very well educated. He was a person who was interested in helping mankind, black people in particular. Because he had spent all of his young growing up years with this white family and by his reading he had the best of backgrounds so he was very exacting in his ways. For example, I never saw him in a colored shirt; he always wore a white shirt with a collar. Even if he gardened he still wore a white shirt. He never allowed us to eat on a colored table cloth, but it had to be spotlessly white. Always, there was his training and background. He was very exacting in many things and he reared his family in that strict manner. He spoke perfect English

²⁵ Interview with Elsie Woodard, Charlotte, North Carolina, 22 March 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

and wrote a beautiful hand. He really acquired all of the training of the rich white family but this certainly did not in any way make him want to stay there because as soon as he finished his work he came South.²⁶

Such stories as these recapped by Elsie Woodard function as literature and history. They consist of the literary elements that make for intrigue, suspense, and conflict.

The people with whom he stayed were very closely allied to him. They had a Fanning Printing Establishment. They became interested in him and soon the Whitins because the Whitins became the first to donate money for the school which is why it is called Whitin Normal. Mrs. Fanning became interested in him while he was there and even after his passing and after the school was discontinued she wanted to help the children, and Mrs. Fanning was the one who paid for the schooling of David and George (my brothers) to go to Johnson C. Smith University, which at that time was Biddle University. After my father passed, my mother was just a teacher. She was a student at Whitin Normal when she met him. He had been married before and he had seven children. So he was a widower with a lot of children. . . . For years after my father's passing the Fanning family would send boxes of clothes down and we all laughed and called it the "missionary barrel." . . . They were interesting and struggling years and sometimes I wonder how in the name of God we lived with all those children.²⁷

²⁶ Woodard interview.

²⁷ Woodard interview.

Mrs. Woodard also remembers what an important part the school that her father founded played:

The school went on for years and practically all of the people who were teaching in Robeson County and surrounding counties were graduates of Whitin Normal School. It was just about the only place one could go. While there was another school in the town, a Baptist school, it was called Thompson Institute and was run by Professor Knuckles, and there were a few cases where some of the girls went to Barber Scotia Seminary. . . .

They spent a lot of time getting the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic until they became very secure in those things. . . . Penmanship, teacher training and it was very good training because in Westfield Normal in Massachusetts they were giving good training, exceptionally good training for a Black to receive at that particular time, and certainly he was the epitome of what he had learned. . . . I would say his impact was very great at that point. . . . But when his time expired, he had to stop and he did retire and the school was torn down and the boards of the school were used to build a home that I moved from which is standing right now, on Meadow Road off Elizabethtown Road in Lumberton.²⁸

So it was that J. W. was able to attend Whitin Normal School and develop under the influence of Professor D. P. Allen. He was thoroughly impressed by the man. After leaving Whitin Normal and having been so inspired by his teacher, J. W. returned to his hometown of Armour and there started the first school for African-Americans in that part of Columbus County. He was only twenty-nine years old.

²⁸ Woodard interview.

Norris Ebron, the principal of the school that J. W. founded (presently Acme-Delco Elementary School), recently compiled a history of the school. In it he writes:

According to the most reliable source of information, Armour School was the first black school in the present Acme Delco School attendance area. It had its beginning in the year 1881 in a small structure of logs, located near the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on State Road 1815. With one teacher, Professor John Jacobs, and without federal or state assistance, this area had its first elementary school, with Columbus County and the Armour community sharing the financial responsibility.²⁹

When the school first opened, there was no separation of the age groups, and a student attended as long as he wanted to because there was no compulsory attendance. In his school, J. W. taught mainly the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Penmanship was also an integral part of the training. The students who were able to attend the school often had to walk long distances over the most treacherous of muddy and bumpy roads. Josephine Jacobs, who is now one hundred years old, remembers attending the school. She relates,

It used to be right over there beside the cemetery, I went to it when he used to teach out

²⁹ Norris Ebron, "Acme Delco Elementary School," in A Historical View of the Columbus County Schools 1808-1977, ed. Jerry D. Paschal (Whiteville, N.C.: Columbus County Board of Education, 1977), p. 17.

there, back long then chillun didn't have much sense no how, they didn't know nothing, they couldn't see nothing except the woods and things like that, we didn't know nothing!³⁰

Such ignorance is what J. W. set out to combat.

A testimony to J. W.'s knowledge and teaching ability comes from his grandson, William, who remembers that

. . . he knew everything; he found two mistakes in the arithmetic book and had it changed. He really knew some arithmetic. He wouldn't pass over nothing. I know when I was in the seventh grade we stayed on arithmetic about two months and it was just as simple as anything. I didn't ever have to study, I could work the problems right out.³¹

J. W.'s nephew, Douglas Shaw, also remembers that "he was a good school teacher; he taught me in school a good many years."³² Douglas' wife, Blanchie, adds, "Uncle John taught me a little while, I often wondered where he got all his brains from."³³ J. W. had received the best of training for the time, having attended Whitin Normal School and Fayetteville State Normal. According to his grandson, William,

³⁰ Interview with Josephine Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

³¹ William Jacobs interview, 31 January 1983.

³² Douglas Shaw interview.

³³ Informal conversation with Blanchie Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1982.

J. W. looked forward to attending summer school each summer so that he could learn more himself.³⁴

It was J. W.'s humanness and love for the people that soon made him become fondly called "Professor Jacobs." He was proud to bear this name because it made him sound even more like the man whom he had tried to emulate, Professor D. P. Allen. Elsie Woodard reminds us of exactly what "Professor" meant at that time:

"Professor" meant at that time anybody who taught, especially a man. Today we think of it as being a college title, but at that time most principals were called Professor, especially one renowned as being a very good person interested in the community. In fact whites would call you a Professor when they wouldn't say Mister because Mister would put you on the same level with them and so that was only for whites. So it was not surprising that whites and blacks as a means of respect called you Professor because that's what it meant, a teacher.³⁵

In order to assess the value of the school that J. W. started, it is necessary to look at the educational system in North Carolina as a whole. According to E. E. Page,

In the year 1789, North Carolina ceded to the United States government title to the lands that now comprise the state of Tennessee, in order to aid the Federal government in clearing its war debts of the American Revolution. . . . By 1837, sale of such lands had paid off these debts and

³⁴ William Jacobs interview, 31 January 1983.

³⁵ Woodard interview.

created a large surplus. In 1837 this surplus was divided among the states, to be used to establish public schools. North Carolina received one and a half million dollars. Two years later, North Carolina passed a law providing for public schools, on condition the voters, by counties, would vote a tax on real estate to supplement these Federal donations. Most of our counties in this election voted for public schools. Seven counties voted "no school." Columbus County was one of the seven. It was several years later that Columbus complied with this law. . . . State records could not supply the date of the first public schools in Columbus County. The southeastern part of Columbus County was at that time a part of Brunswick. Therefore, the Acme-Delco section was entitled to schools, as Brunswick voted for schools.³⁶

Although passage of this school bill had little effect on the African-American, who was not considered in such matters at that time, schools came to the Acme-Delco area in 1866 near the home of Sidney Jones Sykes, and a few years later a long schoolhouse was built under the large oaks at the old W. C. Page residence northeast of Acme.³⁷

During Governor Vance's tenure in office as Governor of North Carolina, he enhanced the efforts for education of the African-American by making the following recommendation to the legislature:

³⁶ E. E. Page, "Notes on Education and History of the Local Schools," in Material Concerning the Beginning of Public Schools in Columbus County, Vol. I (Raleigh, N.C.: State of North Carolina, Department of Archives and History, 1952), p. 1.

³⁷ Page, p. 4.

There are in the State several very respectable institutions for the education of black people and a small endowment to one of them would enable it to attach a normal school sufficient to answer the present needs of our black citizens. Their desire for education is an extremely credible one, and should be gratified as far as our means will permit. In short, I regard it as an unmistakable policy to imbue these black people with a hearty North Carolina feeling, and make them cease to look abroad for the aids to their progress and civilization and the protection of their rights as they have been taught to do, and to teach them to look to their State instead; to convince them that their welfare is indissolubly linked with ours.³⁸

Governor Vance's recommendations were not without effect, for two important laws were passed by the legislature early in 1877. One of these acts established two normal schools, one for each race, and the other gave to towns of a certain size authority to raise additional funds for school purposes.

The normal school for colored teachers was established at Fayetteville and opened in September 1877 with an enrollment of forty. In a short time the attendance numbered fifty-eight, twenty of whom were women, who were admitted on equal terms with the men. The work of the school continued eight months and was successful beyond the expectations of the board.³⁹ The following is an example of the kind of training the teachers received:

³⁸ Edgar W. Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1916), p. 300.

³⁹ Knight, p. 301.

Each student teaches one class, at one recitation, daily, under the eye of the principal, and thus has an opportunity to put in practice the instruction obtained in the normal class. Theory and practice thus go hand in hand. Evidence of skill and faithfulness on the part of the teachers, and of diligence and perseverance on the part of the scholars, was exhibited in every branch of study pursued during the term.⁴⁰

The residents of Armour, North Carolina, directly benefited from the Fayetteville State Normal School because it was approximately only sixty miles from there and J. W. was able to attend summer school there. According to Jessie Byrd, J. W.'s granddaughter,

J. W. furthered his education at Fayetteville State Normal in the summer. The last two summers that he attended the president drafted him to become an instructor of the teachers in summer school because J. W. exhibited all the qualities of a competent teacher.⁴¹

It is interesting to note that after J. W. took the initial step in bringing education to this area of Columbus County, several other schools for African-Americans began to spring up in the surrounding communities. In the neighboring Sandy Field Community, Paul Saulter conducted classes in his home before a school was built there. A school was built in Delco in 1894, and classes were held in the Evergreen Church before they moved to the schoolhouse. J. W.

⁴⁰ Knight, p. 301.

⁴¹ Byrd interview.

also taught at this school. A school was started in Bolton in 1886 by Mrs. Maggie Boone, and in the early 1900s one was opened at Acme by Mrs. Julia Fields. The last school which was opened in the area was in Freeman, across from St. John's Church. But of all the schools mentioned, the only one to survive was Armour School, with all of the others being totally consolidated into Armour by 1968.⁴²

Several years after its inception, Armour School was relocated some four hundred yards northwest of the present school site. This move made the enrollment increase because the school then became more accessible to the children who lived in the surrounding communities. Twelve years later the school was moved again to the southeastern side of State Road 1740, where it remained until 1924. During each of the moves, J. W. was there supervising and envisioning new dimensions for his school, although there were ten principals who served Armour during this time, and up until 1924 Armour still consisted of one or two rooms housing grades one through seven.⁴³

During the 1915-1916 school term in Columbus County, some notice was finally given to the progress that the African-American schools were making. The following statement came from the Superintendent's office:

⁴² Ebron, p. 18.

⁴³ Ebron, p. 18.

The colored schools have not made as great progress as they should have made; still in some sections much has been accomplished and the outlook for future development is exceedingly hopeful. The great need among colored people is better prepared teachers. Too many of their schools are in the charge of incompetent instructors. It is noticeable that where a good teacher is found the signs of progress are seen. We have a few colored schools in which some very excellent work is being done.⁴⁴

A review of the statistics available for this period shows that the attendance steadily dropped as grade levels rose and that there were no African-Americans at all enrolled in any of the high school grades. The decline in attendance for both races is owed to the fact that this is a strictly agricultural county and the decrease in male attendance is largely due to the fact that they were needed at home to work in the fields. Too, some of the people did not feel that the education that their children were receiving would adequately equip them for their future and the life they were to lead. They did not feel that the courses they were being taught bore close enough relationship to the real world.

According to Norris Ebron, Armour experienced a number of transitions after being relocated in 1924. Built in the "old Rosenwald tradition," this six-room school was heated by a "pot belly" stove. In 1930 Armour became a junior high

⁴⁴ Annual Report of the Public Schools in Columbus County 1915-1916 (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1916), p. 33.

school with the addition of grade eight, and also at this time the school term increased to eight months. It was also during this time that an old bus was purchased by members of the community to help aid in the transportation problem, but it was so old and worn that the parents were not financially able to keep it running. Armour became a high school in 1938, with other schools serving as feeder schools. In 1939, however, the school was destroyed by fire, and classes had to be conducted in the local Baptist and Methodist churches until a new school was built in 1941. In 1942, the school was again partially destroyed by fire. Yet, in spite of all these mishaps, the school held its first high school graduation exercise in 1942 and there were fifteen members of the graduating class. The school term was then lengthened to nine months. Armour continued to be a union school, housing grades one through twelve, until integration and more consolidation came. Armour High School came to a close at the end of the 1968-1969 school term. In order to implement the United States desegregation laws, the Columbus County Board of Education saw fit to pair Acme-Delco High School and Armour High School in order to make one school unit in District 13. Armour High School then became Acme Delco Elementary School to accommodate grades K-6, while Acme Delco High School retained its name

to accommodate grades 7-12. At the time of integration, Armour had a total of 550 students.⁴⁵

The consolidation of Armour High School with Acme-Delco School marked a new day for education in the Armour community. For the first time both races were able to compete on an equal basis for educational opportunities. The school that J. W. had founded had grown from a one-room log cabin on State Road 1815 to a modern brick structure with twenty-eight well-equipped classrooms, a gymnasium, a media center, and a lunchroom on a five-and-one-half-acre site. The birth, struggle, and growth of this school bears testimony to the strong foundation on which it was built.

In 1981, one hundred years after its founding, a founder's day service was held and a monument was unveiled at the school in honor of its humble beginnings. At this time, the alumni and friends of the school bore witness to the fact that one man could make a difference in a community and also to the fact that a man's good work lives on long after he is dead. John William Jacobs passed away in 1925, but his memory will remain in Armour Community because of the foresight that he showed in establishing a school for his people--people who would have otherwise gone uneducated.

⁴⁵ Ebron, p. 22.

The following oral testimony given by W. D. Robinson, who was principal of Armour School from 1932 to 1935 and teacher there for a number of years, bears witness both to the importance of Professor Jacobs to the community and to the kind of atmosphere that pervaded the celebration activities of that November day in 1981:

When I came here it was in 1932, I believe. I came here to serve as principal. All that I know is that when I came here Professor Normille was principal then. I just heard names of the other principals but way back behind all of them was Professor Jacobs. Normille had been fired and so I came here. I didn't come here to take his place but Jo Harris and I worked together and he had lost his job and come to Columbus County. He had been principal up at Mt. Olive and he was supposed to come here and I was supposed to go to Whitesville but I was smaller so the supervisor said that he was going to bring me here and your granddaddy [John Henry Jacobs] was a committeeman at the time. Those first three years that I spent here all I could hear was "Professor Jacobs, Professor Jacobs, Professor Jacobs!" I was living in the house which used to be right there and which also used to be one of the schools where he taught. That was a school house before I moved in and I had to put petitions up in it. . . . Back then Professor Jacobs taught everything and those came who could, walked or come by wagon. The first school was over there by the cemetery. At that time Professor Jacobs was also a surveyor and he drew up deeds; I have actually seen some of the deeds that he drew up. His name was behind everything. He really was a legendary hero because all you could hear was his name. He's listed as the first of the principals of the schools in this part of Columbus County. I felt kind of honored to stay in that old house and I wanted to preserve it. Professor Jacobs must have been a brainy person to have done all that he did.

In our community people are too far behind documenting things and the parts played by people

in the community; then the old people die out and the young ones come up and they don't know anything about their heritage. Now I thought when they put that monument over there I said then that isn't actually the proper place for it. It should have been back over here somewhere because that's where the school was but what they did you see they went from over here to over there with the schools. So I thought they should have marked all the spots where they had the schools to actually establish documentary like they do in Wilmington. There should be something over there beside the cemetery.

The day they had that founder's day service [November 17, 1981] was a most exciting day for me. I didn't realize it would be as big as it was and I felt highly honored because Paul [who delivered the address] really laid it on me. My philosophy of education has made it so that the children that I taught never forgot me and that's really been wonderful. Paul comes nearer to me of exemplifying his grandfather than any of the others. I recognized this when I had him in school. But I think that every community should have its history but it seems like that everybody that comes to us they just come in here and they go out and others come and get everything they can get out of the community and leave the community in poverty, but I think they should preserve those people who helped to establish and lay the foundations here. I wish I could have known the old gentleman; maybe if I had been a little earlier I would have met him but Paul has simply brought his spirit right on down.

I just enjoyed that day and I enjoyed meeting and seeing everyone. It made me feel so good when they asked all of the graduates of Armour to stand up. Lord, I'm going to tell you the truth I just felt like breaking down and crying. The gym was just full of people everywhere and then I couldn't get off the platform because they were coming up there. One girl came up and grabbed and kissed me; it just overwhelmed me. I couldn't get down because they were coming at me from all sides. I was trying to get out there for the unveiling of the monument but I couldn't move; the children were just coming with cameras. I felt just like a celebrity. They got me outside

by the monument and they were taking pictures. Oh Lordy, it was just a high day and I really appreciate them getting it together.⁴⁶

This is the recorded interview of one of the leading citizens of Armour community and one of the past principals of Armour School. The day that brought him so much pleasure was implemented by the North Carolina Idealist Club, which is located in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was this group that originally thought to sponsor the founder's day program and to place a monument on the front lawn of the school to commemorate the efforts of those pioneers who brought education into their community. The Idealist Club consists of graduates of Armour School, who, although they have moved away from their hometown, still bear a great pride in their heritage and have not forgotten where they came from nor the efforts of those who helped to bring them there. The members of this group were aided by Clemmon Jacobs, grandson of J. W. Jacobs and one of the civic leaders of the community. A resident of the community, he spearheaded the efforts to make November 27, 1981, an unforgettable day in the history of the Armour Community. Those who attended the founder's day service came from across the country back to their homeland to pay tribute to

⁴⁶ Interview with William D. Robinson, Armour, North Carolina, 6 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

their humble beginnings, many of them perhaps realizing that without the help of Armour School they would not be where they are today. On that occasion, the man that Robinson feels exemplifies the spirit of his grandfather more than any other was asked to deliver the address. This man was Paul Cooper, who traveled from his home in New York City and delivered an address that both recalled the old and looked forward to the new. He hailed his illustrious grandfather as one who "paved the way for others to follow."

The following speech, included in its entirety, was given by Paul Cooper on founder's day at Armour School. It is a speech filled with local history and local imagery that takes us back to the year the school was founded.

On an occasion such as this it is difficult to focus on the purpose and intent of this program, because thoughts and memories of yesteryear--some great, some small--assail the mind, perhaps crowding out so many words and ideas of more importance. Yet, being human, I cannot resist the temptation to briefly reminisce as I stand here today in surroundings where I last stood as a gangling young man with a 27-inch waistline some 43 years ago. Thus, it should come as no surprise that my senses are being bombarded by imagery of past events, and I am being beset by a range of emotions associated with memories deeply rooted in the early days of my own life and experience here at Armour School.

I crave your brief indulgence as I share some of the memories which are now leaping at me. In no special order of significance, they are:

Walking to school on the railroad track . . .
 school-closing programs, with drama and song . . .
 Professor Robinson's production "My Laughing

Death"--a real scary play with flashing lights, explosions and an assortment of weird sound effects representing the antics of a mad scientist. . . .

Mr. Robinson's purchase of a microscope out of his own funds (and we lined up by the hundreds to take turns discovering the wonders of a magnified oak leaf--a sight which our youthful eyes had never beheld before) . . . Professor Normile's strap with a hole in the end, which was sometimes referred to as his "Black Jack" or "Shot Gun" . . . my first banquet, as the guest of Mr. Normile at what was then known as Fayetteville State Normal School . . . Professor Pridgen introducing us farm boys to the game of basketball. . . .

Being awed by Mr. Pridgen's typewriter . . . mottos and slogans on the classroom walls ("We learn to do by doing," also, "Before us lies the timber, let us build") . . . noon time recess raids on Mr. Jim Bryant's pecan orchard . . . an unauthorized "field trip" to the brick yard . . . first dance . . . first love note . . . first crush on a teacher . . . the old hand pump where we gathered for water and some sly winks at the girls. . . .

The "outhouses"--the larger ones for girls . . . pot belly stoves . . . the rattle of drafty windows against the wind in winter time . . . bicycles, mules, horses, wagons and an occasional ox and cart . . . large pictures of Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglas on the wall . . . my first home run, and a big hug from my teacher as a reward. . . .

Thank you for listening. I suspect there may be one or two out there who are old enough to recall some of those events.

Now briefly, if you will give me your further attention, I would like to talk about the significance of this monument.

According to that very scholarly and interesting history compiled by Mr. Norris Ebron, Armour School was the first black school in the present Acme Delco school attendance area. It had its beginning under the direction of my grandfather, Professor John W. Jacobs in the year of 1881, who served as its only teacher in a small

log cabin near the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on State Road 1815.

So, today this monument helps mark the end of the first century since that very humble beginning. What induced this man to face the challenge of that day in order to bring teaching and learning to black children? I wonder what would have happened if he had not dared to lead? How often was he discouraged? What kept him going and enabled him to prevail against the odds of that period?

If we step backward in time to 1881--one hundred years ago--we find that this nation had just celebrated its centennial five years earlier. The Emancipation Proclamation was only eighteen years old. Our neighboring state of Tennessee passed a "Jim Crow" railroad law, which set a trend for other southern and border states. Booker T. Washington founded Tuskegee Institute.

Thus, Armour School was born at a time of dynamic change in this nation, in a period of "reconstruction" where the black struggle to survive was encumbered by unfavorable socio-economic conditions of that day, in a culture where the education of persons of color tended to rank lowest on the scale of priorities in this area.

Yet, a study of history reveals that there has been a steady parade of heroic figures, who, in the face of adversity, dared to lead and make the difference. My illustrious grandfather, Professor John W. Jacobs, certainly belongs in that select company of those whose work paved the way for others to follow.

It takes little imagination to hear some of the words which he must have ignored. For instance: "Conditions are not ripe," "It's never been done before," "Too risky," "Too costly," "Too dangerous," "Let's go slow," "It cannot be done," and "Don't rock the boat."

I thank God today that Professor Jacobs had the vision, the courage and the requisite skill which enabled this school to evolve out of his felt need to bring knowledge and learning to

black boys and girls one hundred years ago. The fact that we are here today participating in this ceremony certainly does attest to the effectiveness of his endeavors.

From that humble beginning in a log cabin by a cemetery one hundred years ago has come a succession of devout, dedicated and skillful administrators, teachers and other school personnel. But as we reflect on the development of this school, we cannot avoid making some comparisons with the then and the now. When the educational climate and budgetary support were rooted in negative perceptions of need, it required the versatility of teachers as advocates and politicians in order to successfully preserve and build on the foundation which was so nobly begun in 1881.

Yes, these teachers were firm believers in the tried and true concept that children learn by precept and example; they were great role models, and it was by mastery of their craft that they opened up new vistas and helped expand the horizons of countless pupils whose thirst for knowledge could only be temporarily satisfied in the face of new discoveries which these professionals so expertly unfolded before their eager eyes, despite the glaring lack of modern teaching--and even the lack of such fundamental tools as up-to-date books. They gave liberally of their time, talents and resources, and the fact that many had to supplement their incomes by menial part-time summer jobs while simultaneously attending graduate and post graduate schools, did not deter them from their avowed intent to excel.

Truly, Professor Jacobs and all who have followed him, including the present outstanding faculty, have not labored in vain nor spent their strength for naught, and they have our abiding gratitude for transmitting unimpaired this priceless heritage that we so proudly celebrate today.

In the midst of our joy and thanksgiving, let us pause to salute with humble reverence the sacred memory of all those departed pioneers whose dedication helped improve the quality of life for all.

As we celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of this school, we are nearing the end of the second year of a new decade, drawing ever closer to the twenty-first century. It is quite befitting that this should take place during one of the most momentous times in the history of man. While it is true that history repeats itself, yet, never has there been an age exactly like the present. Voices of the Third World which were muted for centuries are demanding to be heard--laws of science, physics, chemistry, mathematics and nations which were deemed to be absolute yesterday--are absolute no more. The inquisitive mind of man has soared beyond the wildest dreams of most who lived one hundred years ago. He has split the atom, harnessed nuclear energy, transversed the globe through the air and under water, developed instantaneous visual communication with all parts of this earth, photographed and landed equipment on remote bodies of space. Even the moon escaped not his footsteps, and he has created commonplace intricate marvels of technology which seemed only a product of sheer fantasy just a few years ago.

Yes, it is in this age of opportunity and challenge that we celebrate one hundred years of education progress, and we will well to recognize that it is we who are the pioneers of the second hundred years, and while we give thanks to our founders, our greatest tribute will be reflected by our willingness and ability to relate ourselves to the needs of the community individually and through the collective efforts of this school. Such constructive action speaks more eloquently by far, and does truly attest to the sincerity of our praise.

Conclusion

The lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance and the devastation of war and the ravages of age have laid waste and destroyed many valuable monuments of antiquity upon which the utmost exertions and creativity of human genius have been employed. The Bible tells us about the splendid magnificance of Solomon's temple, yet this edifice, which was constructed by so many celebrated artists and craftsmen, could not escape the unsparing ravages of barbarous force. All man-made objects

must ultimately disappear but notwithstanding this well-settled truth, the significance and inspiration of their handiwork lives on. The symbolism of this monument will grow in grandeur as younger and more nimble minds yet unborn seek to probe its meaning, thereby transmitting through a succession of generations a vital knowledge of birth, struggle, growth, development, collaboration, good will, community pride and progress which this proud moment in time represents today.

Finally, if we, the current inheritors of this legacy, will but strive to improve upon the opportunities for enhancing the quality of life--if we will remember that the barriers to achievement do not confront us today at the same level of intensity which our illustrious forefathers struggled with one hundred years ago--if we will never forget that their faith was rooted in the strong belief that knowledge and learning could make a difference--and if we will harken to the message of their lives, then we will give renewed support on behalf of our most priceless possessions--our children.

Many years ago the poet, Longfellow, noted that "Lives of great men all remind us that we can make our lives sublime, and departing leave behind us footprints on the sands of time." Today, we stand surrounded by their footprints, which really represent the impact of their deeds of our culture, society, and perhaps, even more importantly, on our goals and our dreams for ourselves and those yet to travel this way.

But we dare not bask in the proud glory of an illustrious past, instead, let it be an ever-present reminder of our own need to successfully meet the challenges of the present age. That will be the greatest tribute to those whom we have memorialized today. May the grand architect of the universe sustain each of your noble and lofty endeavors.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Paul Cooper, "Founder's Day Address," speech delivered at J. W. Jacobs Founder's Day Service, Armour, North Carolina, 27 November 1971.

In this speech Paul recalls vivid images from his past that are no longer existent in the community. He speaks of American history in relationship to local history as he reminds us of what was happening on a national scale at the time that J. W. founded Armour School. He gives the audience the meaning of the monument as he tells them what it symbolizes to the Armour Community.

The story of Armour School is a universal story because its fate has been the same as many other institutions like it. It was born at a time when other institutions refused to educate the African-American, and it stands as a symbol of pride for the community. It has withstood the test of time and has helped those who entered there achieve upward mobility. Given below are the school song, school colors, and school motto:

Dear Armour High
(School Song)

Dear Armour High, the school to which we'll loyal be.
 Maroon and Gold, your colors nobly fly;
 You stand for truth; the right you always aim to see.
 To humbly praise your name in earnestness we'll try.
 We bow to thee beneath your walls on bended knees,
 Unreadiness and lack of thought confess.
 To do our best we've striven hard and stood the test,
 But from within we know you'll care for us somehow.

Our hats we raise, when of your colors we shall sing,
 To think how hard you've toiled for us to know,
 That in each color of your flag to us shall bring
 the fact that loyalty remains the highest score.

Where'er we be from us this motto you will see*
Be what you are; climb upward to a star.
But if we fail, our flag will fall upon the rail.
We'll make it fly, the flag of dear ole Armour High.

School colors: Maroon and Gold

*School Motto:

To better prepare boys and girls to meet the
challenges of a democratic society.

Chapter III

Leadership Roles

There were not many African-Americans suited for leadership roles during the time between 1852 and 1925. This was a time when good leadership was especially needed in a community in order to make it thrive. J. W. Jacobs came along at just the right time to assume various responsibilities within the community; he assumed these roles with the greatest of ease because he was ably qualified to fill each of them. First, and most importantly to the people, he was a justice of the peace; second, he was a land surveyor; and third, he was a preacher. People would call on him whenever someone wanted to get married, whenever someone needed to have some land surveyed, or whenever someone needed a pastor to fill in or preach a funeral. J. W. was a man whom the people trusted to look out for their best interests, and they had no fear of being cheated at his hands. He helped citizens order their lives by knowing they could depend on him.

As a justice of the peace, J. W. was authorized to do far more than perform marriages, although this was the one duty that usually occupied him the most. During this time

people who lived in the community had many offspring, usually more than ten or twelve; this meant that there was a great need for a justice of the peace. He performed church and home ceremonies and even performed marriages in his parlor at his home.¹ The marriages he performed are listed in the Columbus County Courthouse in the Marriage Register, 1867-1899, in the Colored section.

There were also other official duties associated with being a justice of the peace during the time that J. W. served in this capacity. The African-American had recently acquired enough respect in the eyes of society to perform this function, and, in many ways, he was a first.² During J. W.'s time, the justice of the peace exercised sweeping local executive and administrative powers. Often he drew up the tax levy, collected the tax, appointed road commissioners, and supervised road construction. He had the power to appoint guardians for children, and he was able to grant certain types of licenses. He had the power to investigate crimes and to commit persons suspected of criminal acts. He was a local officer more or less vested with judicial powers for preventing breaches of the peace and for bringing

¹ Columbus County Courthouse, Whiteville, North Carolina, Marriage Register, 1867-1899, pp. 227-376.

² Interview with Elsie Woodard, Charlotte, North Carolina, 22 March 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

justice to those who had in any way been violated by another.

D. P. Allen, J. W.'s great educator and master whom he so wished to emulate, had also been a justice of the peace, and he had considered it a high honor to serve in that distinctly noble capacity within the community.³ He served the people justly, and it was such leaders as he and J. W. who led the people upward in their struggle for economic and social mobility.

Certain areas of knowledge put J. W. in touch with and reflected traditional life styles of the community. This is the reason that service-oriented occupations were important to the people of the community.

Although marriages played a significant part in the lives of the people, and their need for J. W.'s services were therefore great, he also served in another capacity that was linked closely with their lives. He was a surveyor. He "ran off" the land and wrote up land deeds for the people.⁴ Proper execution of this job required skill, knowledge, and accuracy. It was only a wise man's labor. It was the surveyor's duty to determine the location and boundaries of a tract of land by measuring the lines and

³ Woodard interview.

⁴ Interview with Jessie Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

angles in accordance with the principles of geometry and trigonometry. There were certain instruments that were necessary to his trade. First of all there was the transit, which consists of the sighting device. This is composed of a telescope, circles, eompasses, and spindles in order to bring the transit to a horizontal plane. The supporting piece of equipment is the tripod. Perhaps the most important piece of his equipment was the chain which consisted of 100 links, totaling 66 feet in length. He also had use for surveying tape which was made of steel and resisted expansion or contraction occasioned by temperature changes; it is 100 feet in length and is tightly wound on a reel.⁵

Whenever he was surveying comparatively level ground, distances were measured by pacing or by chaining. Sometimes pacing proved too inaccurate, so most of the measurements were made by chaining. When starting is from a point of known location, the transit is placed over the land in order that the plumb line, which is inside, hangs down from the transit to a spot directly over the starting point. A line is then sighted from the starting point to the object point on the vertical hairline of the transit telescope. After this line has been sighted, the distance measurement is taken through use of the chain or tape. When that straight line

⁵ "Surveying," New Age Encyclopedia, 1974 ed.

distance has been made, the transit is then moved to that point and the second objective sighted. The distance is then measured as before, and the procedure is repeated for each new objective until the survey is completed.

When J. W. completed his careful measuring of the land, he then turned his attention to the matter of writing these measurements carefully in a log book. He had to record every additional note if the survey line crossed some permanent terrain feature such as a railroad or stream.

J. W.'s mathematical and verbal skills came in quite handy when it was time for him to "run off" land and write out deeds.⁶ His surveying skills were very much needed during this time because local citizens bought a lot of land then.

During the first years after it was built, the railroad, which cut its way through the middle of the community, became a part of the people's lives. They looked forward to the passing of the train and waved at the conductor as he passed by. J. W. and his brother Archie bought a great deal of land from the conductor on the train, J. C. Hankins. They paid only twenty-five cents an acre for their land.⁷ They used the railroad tracks as a dividing line for their property. Archie's land was on one side of the tracks, and

⁶ "Surveying."

⁷ Interview with Jessie Mae Byrd, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982.

J. W.'s was on the other side.⁸ They built their homes overlooking the tracks and sat on their porches observing the activity on them. Archie used the timber that he gathered from his land to supply crossties to the train company. Because he had a contract, people from the train company would stop at his station at appointed times. Archie had thirteen children; he induced his sons to work hard, and he worked hard himself.⁹ He was a respected member of the community because of his skill in making a good living for his family.

Booker T. Washington, whose teachings were prominent in the 1880s, had told the African-American that "nothing else as soon brings about right relations between the two races in the South as the commercial progress of the Negro."¹⁰ Several other African-American leaders of the time had believed that the economic development of the African-American would begin in the South. They believed that the opportunities for advancement for them in this region were greater than in the urbanizing North, because of the underdeveloped nature of the region relative to its

⁸ Interview with Douglas Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

⁹ Douglas Shaw interview.

¹⁰ William L. Henderson and Larry C. Ledebur, "Black Economic Philosophies," in Carlene Young, ed., Black Experience (San Rafael, Calif.: Leswing Press, 1972), p. 213.

material resources and potential for further development.¹¹ More specifically, Washington had felt that he should use his land to improve his economic condition.¹² Land ownership became a realistic goal for most of the residents of the community because at this time it was both plentiful and cheap. And it was steadily being bought and sold.

Farming was far more than a pastime to the people because in most instances they had to subsist solely off of the land. Although the fertilizer mills and paper plants had brought industry and jobs to the residents of the community, their land was still their chief means of a livelihood. They used their land to grow food to feed their livestock, which in most cases consisted primarily of pigs. A few cows were to be found in the area, but not very many. Some residents did have chickens, and a prosperous merchant in the community raised squabs and sold them to markets.

In the early years of the twentieth century, tobacco was the chief money crop for the area, and most farmers planted several acres of their land in tobacco. They took loads of tobacco to Whiteville and Fair Bluff to sell to the highest bidder. Members of the community worked as "hands" when it came time to "put in." They saved their money in order to buy school clothes for the next year.¹³

¹² Henderson and Ledebur, in Young, p. 212.

¹³ Jessie Shaw interview.

Because tall pine trees grow densely within the area, a paper company is located nearby. It came to the area when land was plentiful; and there was a policy which, in some instances, was called "entering the land," whereby a person could just claim an unclaimed piece of land.¹⁴ One man in the community remembers how J. W. lost land to the paper company.

Once J. W. was running off some land right back here behind my house, and he came to a certain point where there were some real thick briars and since he insisted on seeing every inch of the land that he was running off, rather than try to get through those briars, he said, "Stop right here, stop right here," and he stopped right there and drew the line and just a few years after that the paper company came right in behind him and gained a lot of acres that way. People in this community lost a lot of land when the paper mill moved here and started marking off the land.¹⁵

Land disputes often occurred; indeed it was the major cause of disputes among local citizens. Some families probably still bear grudges today because of some land transaction that took place during this time. In some cases, breaches in family relations have occurred because of a boundary or ownership dispute. Sometimes deeds were not filed in the courthouse for a piece of property, and sometimes more than

¹⁴ Jessie Shaw interview.

¹⁵ Jessie Shaw interview.

one person claimed the same piece of property. Records such as these were in disarray because the bookkeeping of the late 1800s was not of the best.¹⁶

In some instances J. W. was in possession of the land document, and it was kept at his house as well as marriage certificates and the like.¹⁷ He did what he could on behalf of his people to settle disputes that had arisen because of land. And, in general, people trusted his judgement.

Already functioning as a peacemaker, a surveyor, and a farmer, J. W. had yet another profession that kept him visible in the public eye. He was also a preacher. His teachings were not confined to the classroom; rather, he entered the outer confines of the community so that his message could be heard by all his brethren. He believed that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."¹⁸ He was a God-fearing man who stood up on Sunday morning to tell his people how they might attain the riches of heaven. He taught them that material riches honestly obtained and possessed and used in the proper way result in good; he taught them to "refrain from" doing anything that worked an

¹⁶ Jessie Shaw interview.

¹⁷ Interview with William D. Robinson, Armour, North Carolina, 6 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

¹⁸ J. F. Rutherford, Riches (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1936), p. 33.

injustice on another; to avoid pride and arrogance, because both of these things are displeasing in God's sight.¹⁹

J. W. was never the permanent preacher at any one particular church; rather, he was what was called a "local preacher."²⁰ This meant that he traveled around and preached at many different churches. In this way he was able to reach a greater segment of the population and spread his views and his wisdom to more numbers of people, thereby enabling more of them to see his humble example.

He was closely affiliated with the Mount Pleasant African Episcopal Zion Church in the community, and at that church he helped to establish a sense of decorum for the worship service; teaching the people the rules and regulations of the church, he enabled them to achieve a sense of pride in their church service. He also served as Sunday School superintendent for many years at this church, and his thorough knowledge of the Bible preceded him wherever he went.²¹ He knew the Bible well, and he constantly read God's word.²² Though D. P. Allen had never been a preacher,

¹⁹ Rutherford, p. 30.

²⁰ Informal conversation with Nora Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983.

²¹ Interview with Paul Cooper, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

²² Interview with William Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 31 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

he was, throughout his lifetime, a very religious man. He never missed church, Sunday School, or prayer meeting. He feared God in his heart and read God's word to keep himself renewed. His mastery of the Bible amazed many.²³ The church was an especially important part of the community, and good leadership was quite important.

J. W. insisted that every member of his household attend church; he made certain that his own house was cleared out on Sunday mornings before he left to teach others. He taught his family that God has a permanent place in his home and that Sunday was a sacred day which should be kept holy. His nineteen children personified the father's teachings through their faith. Their father was a minister; therefore, they, too, had their parts to play. For many years this community has had a strong religious base, and local residents looked to their preachers to lead them up from their oppression.

He often would sit on the pulpit with another pastor at a church that he was visiting and lend that pastor support. It is also remembered that if a pastor's sermon got quite boring, he was known to take a nod or two; and since he always already knew the Sunday School lesson, he was known to doze off there once or twice.²⁴ In most cases,

²³ Woodard interview.

²⁴ William Jacobs interview.

though, when the older residents are asked if they have ever heard him preach, most of them say that they have and most of them also add that he was "a good preacher." They attest to the fact that "he really knew some Bible," and many of them watched him as he made his way to the church in his mission to serve God and His people by leading them to Him.²⁵

All of these were leadership roles that J. W. played within the Armour Community, not forgetting, of course, that he is the same figure that was discussed in Chapter One--a chapter which showed the part he played in bringing education to that part of Columbus County. Because he was able to play so many different and important roles within the Armour Community during this time, he functions as somewhat of a legendary hero of that community.

²⁵ Interview with Raymond Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

Chapter IV

Family Saga

John William Jacobs (July 15, 1852-July 19, 1925) was the son of Dollie Shaw Jacobs (1806-1899) and Jack Jacobs, whose birthdate is unrecorded and who died by drowning. It is believed that Jack Jacobs came from somewhere in the neighboring Pender County area because there are some Jacobs that still live there that claim to be related to him. His hair was a reddish brown, and he also had a reddish complexion. He walked with a slight limp, and he looked very much like an Indian.¹

J. W. had two brothers and one sister. His brothers were Archie Shaw and William "Billy" Robinson; his sister's name is unrecorded.

In 1877 J. W. married Mary Margaret Lowry (July 28, 1860-November 15, 1892) of Lumberton, North Carolina. A Lumbee Indian, she was seventeen years old when she married J. W. She brought with her to the Armour community a proud Indian heritage: her uncle had been the notorious Henry

¹ Interview with Jessie Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

Berry Lowry, who fought for the Indian people, and her father, Tom, had been a member of the Lowry gang. Mary Margaret became known as the most beautiful woman in Columbus County at that time.² (See fig. 2.)

Mary Margaret had one sister, Sarah Jane Lowry, and two brothers, Haynes P. Lowry and Olin H. Lowry. Her parents were Frances Wilkins Lowry and Thomas Lowry. Her uncle, Henry Berry Lowry, had been the hero of the Indian people, for he had almost single-handedly fought for the Indian people against the unfair treatment that they were receiving at the hands of white men. The Lowrys bore a proud ancestry. They could trace their ancestry back to Judge James Lowry, who came from England to Virginia with John White's colony. He had a son named James Lowry, Jr., who married Sarah Keasey. On August 7, 1969, he bought 100 acres of land from William Fort to whom it had been granted by George II in 1748. They had three sons, John, James, and William. John signed the Cherokee Treaty in 1806. James married and moved to Tennessee. William fought under Whig patriot Colonel Thomas Robeson, for whom the county is named. William sold out because of Whig principles and settled in Harper's Ferry. He married Betty Locklear, who was a half-breed Tuscarora Indian. There in Harper's Ferry he had both

² Interview with Jessie Mae Byrd, Charlotte, North Carolina, 20 March 1983.

<u>Mary Margaret Lowry's Family</u>	
Judge James Lowry	Came from England to Virginia
James Lowry, Jr.	[son of Judge James Lowry] married Sarah Keasey
William Lowry	[son of James Lowry, Jr.] married Betty Locklear
George L. Lowry	[son of William Lowry]
Allen Lowry	[son of William Lowry] married Polly Cumbra
William Lowry	[son of Allen Lowry]
HBL--Henry Berry Lowry	[son of Allen Lowry]
Thomas Lowry	[son of Allen Lowry]-- married Frances Ellen Wilkins
Olin H. Lowry	[son of Thomas Lowry]
Haynes P. Lowry	[son of Thomas Lowry]
John William Jacobs	married Mary Margaret Lowry
<u>Mary Margaret Lowry's:</u>	
Parents	Thomas and Frances Lowry
Grandparents	Allen and Polly C. Lowry
Great Grandparents	William and Betty L. Lowry
Great-Great-Grand- parents	James, Jr., and Sarah K. Lowry
Great-Great-Great- Grandparents	Judge James Lowry and wife

Fig. 2. Direct Ties of Mary Margaret Lowry's Family (from information by Jessie Mae Byrd).

a store and saloon. He also had slaves for his children. The fact that the Lowry grocery store and saloon afforded much drinking by the half-breeds generally resulted in a scuffle to live, and the town became known as "Scuffle-town."³

William had two sons, George and Allen. Allen married Polly Cumba, who was a white Portuguese. They had ten sons. Allen was a tall and fine looking man and was respected throughout the area. He became something of a chief in the community during the time when the Indians of Robeson County began to undergo a lot of turmoil and bitterness.⁴

Although the intent of the 1835 constitution was to disfranchise free Negroes and Mulattos, the Indians of Robeson County soon found themselves deprived of the political and civil rights in a society that had become intensely color conscious. Thus the adaptation of the amendment was the beginning of decades of harassment and suppression. The majority leaders wanted control over all of the nonwhite segment of their population. The Indians quickly perceived that they were going to be treated as inferiors, and they felt betrayed by a people that they had frequently helped in the past and never harmed, so they began to grow

³ Byrd interview, 20 March 1983.

⁴ Byrd interview, 20 March 1983.

antagonistic.⁵ In 1840, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a law which prohibited free nonwhites from owning or carrying weapons without first obtaining a license from the Court of Pleas and Quarter Session in their county.⁶ The Indians also became angered over several alleged "tied mule incidents" whereby their land was taken away from them. Such an incident occurred when a white farmer tied his mule on an Indian's land, freed several cows in the Indian's pasture, and put a hog or two in his pen. Then the white man would arrive with the authorities and claim that the Indian had stolen his animals. Knowing that he had little chance for justice in the courts, the Indian would agree to provide free labor for a period of time, so that charges would not be pressed, or to give up a portion of his land as a settlement.⁷

It was this type of exploitation and injustice which intensified the mood of hostility that existed between the races in the antebellum period. The coming of the Civil War forced a confrontation between the whites and the Lumbee Indians over the status of the Indian people.⁸ Before long

⁵ Adolph Dial and David K. Eliades, The Only Land I Know: A History of the Lumbee Indians (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1975), p. 43.

⁶ Dial and Eliades, p. 45.

⁷ Dial and Eliades, p. 45.

⁸ Dial and Elrades, p. 46.

the civil authorities began to conscript Lumbees for labor camps at Fort Fisher and other places on the coast. There they were used to build batteries and make salt. Fort Fisher was essential to the defense of Wilmington, a port suitable for the operation of blockade runners and a primary source of supplies for the Confederate troops in Virginia. The Confederacy relied almost solely on their conscripted Indian labor and slaves to perform these tasks. Again, the Lumbees resented the attempts to deprive them of their status as freemen and found conditions at the labor camps intolerable. Food rations were inadequate, there were no medical facilities, and the work was both monotonous and dangerous. The misery of their circumstances and their pride as freemen led them to flee the coastal work camps for the swamps of Robeson County. They were joined by others who sought to avoid conscription, and occasionally by Union soldiers who had escaped from a Confederate prison at Florence, South Carolina, a mere sixty miles from the Lumbee River Indian land. Because they had to share their swamp refuge with Northern escapees who had escaped from the Confederate prison, they soon learned the reality of the war. Before this, some of them had favored the Confederacy, but by the end of 1863 they had come to view that government as oppressive. Consequently, their willingness to help the Union soldiers avoid recapture grew. This, combined with a

need for food, led to violent confrontations between several Lumbees and White Robesonians, and the fury that had begun in 1835 culminated in the 1860s.⁹

The main incident which sparked a showdown was an accusation made in 1864 by James P. Barnes, a wealthy planter and minor Confederate official. He accused several of Allen Lowry's sons of stealing and butchering two of his "best hogs," supposedly to feed Union prisoners. Barnes claimed he followed cart tracks from his place to that of the Lowrys' and then found two hogs bearing his identifying mark. He ordered the Lowrys to stay off of his land or be shot. Apparently Barnes' attempts to intimidate the Lowrys plus his effort to conscript Indian labor for the Confederacy led to his death, because on December 21, 1864, he was shot and killed. On his deathbed he named William and Henry Berry Lowry, two of Allen's ten sons, as his murderers. Barnes' death was the first of many violent deaths during this period.¹⁰

The Indians' attempt to avoid service at the coast, their growing friendliness with escapees from Florence, and the murder of Barnes brought them into conflict with the Home Guard. The Home Guard was an organization of local citizens charged with aiding the Confederate cause and with

⁹ Dial and Eliades, pp. 46-47.

¹⁰ Dial and Eliades, p. 47.

maintaining law and order while so many Southern white men were at war. Since some of the Lumbee men were in the swamps or at the coast, food for the Lumbees was not as abundant as in the past; and because Indians were legally prohibited from owning weapons, guns were scarce. Lumbees therefore began to seek out supplies and weapons preparing to defend themselves. Raids were regularly staged against farms and plantations in the area to acquire the needed items. The Whites were appalled by their lawlessness. As days passed, more of the blame for these acts was laid to Allen Lowry and his sons. The Home Guard was convinced that the Lowrys were largely responsible for the breakdown of law and order in the county and thought they should be punished as an example, one that would be all the more effective because of their position in the Indian community.¹¹

During the first week of March 1865, as General William T. Sherman's Union forces crossed into North Carolina and as the Confederacy came closer to defeat, the enmity between the two races finally exploded into prolonged nightmares of bloodshed. On March 3, the Home Guard, commanded by Captain Hugh McGregor, began a roundup of members of the Allen Lowry family.¹² The guardsmen arrested

¹¹ Dial and Eliades, pp. 47-50.

¹² Dial and Eliades, p. 50.

Allen Lowry, his wife, three of their sons--Calvin, Sinclair, and William--several female members of the family and their neighbor, George Dial. Calvin Lowry, who later gave authorities his version of the 1872 story remembered the roundup this way:

I saw them coming and went to meet them. Part of them was in my house and yard before I got there, searching the house. When I got there they had a shotgun out and a gourd of powder and wanted to know who I was. I said I was a Lowry and they said I was of bad stock and wanted to know if I knew anything about the robbing and killing that was going on through the county. I told them I had heard it was going on but did not know who it was. They wanted to know if I knew anything about the Union prisoners and if I was harboring them. I don't recollect whether I told them I had seen them but had not been harboring them. They searched the smokehouse and wanted to know if I fattened all that meat. I told them I did. Said they wanted me to go with them. They started down to Allen Lowry's, and in going they saw my rifle which I had carried down in the field to shoot crows and took that. Allen Lowry was at work in his fields and they took him along on to his place and when they got there, William was there. They wanted to know if they had been harboring any Yankees or Union prisoners. They said they hadn't. Then they took a demijohn with some brandy in out of the house, took William Lowry's three trunks, all of his clothes or about so, and his rifle and put them in a cart and took William Lowry's horse and put it in and tied me and William Lowry together and took my mother and father and all of the family and carried us all down to Sinclair Lowry's house. Part of the crowd had been there and searched the house. When we got there they carried us all down to [Robert] McKenzie's.¹³

¹³ Dial and Eliades, p. 51.

About eighty men, frustrated and angered by the outcome of the war and by raids and robberies in the neighborhood, had gathered at McKenzie's place. The Lowry women were locked in the smokehouse, but the men were kept outside for questioning. The members of the company accused the Lowrys of "highway robbery," of aiding escaped Union prisoners and deserters, of having knowledge of hidden caches of guns, munitions, and other weapons, and of having avoided service in the government fortifications near Wilmington.¹⁴

Although the Lowrys denied all of the charges against them, various members of the guard kept up the questions. Robert McKenzie asked Allen Lowry "if he hadn't told him if he didn't bring his boys up so they could take them off to the batteries they would be in trouble," to which Allen replied, "The boys are free from me, and I cannot rule them." When McKenzie then asked if Allen had not threatened his life, the elder Lowry denied it and asked McKenzie for proof of that charge.¹⁵

Later William and Calvin, still bound together, asked for water. Accompanied by three or four men, they were allowed to go to a nearby well. Again Calvin Lowry relates what happened next:

¹⁴ Dial and Eliades, p. 52.

¹⁵ Dial and Eliades, p. 52.

After we got our water, William Lowry and myself stepped to a nearby fence. William pulled a small dirk out of his pantaloons and cut the rope and ran. One man popped a cap at him as he turned the corner of the house. Then they jumped over the fence and run into the field where they could see him and fired on him. . . . Then they cried out that they had him and went on down there and got him. Someone wanted to know who had fired the shot and they said Captain Baker as well as I understood it. Then they said call no names and carried me on back to where the company was outside of the yard and handcuffed me and my father together.¹⁶

After the wounded William Lowry was brought up from the field, John H. Coble, a white preacher and a member of the group, urged him to "tell the truth and not to die with a lie in his mouth; to tell him where the Union prisoners were and if he were not in the robbing with them." William Lowry continued to deny the accusations. Someone in the company remarked that if the Lowrys had "reported the Union prisoners they would have been given credit but as they had been harboring them they must suffer for it." The Indian men were then locked in the smokehouse with the women.

With the Indians confined, an extra legal session of court was held. The four Lowry men were tried by a jury picked from the ranks of the military company, found guilty of various charges, and ordered shot. Calvin and Sinclair were saved, but William and Allen were both convicted. Following the trial, Allen and William Lowry were placed in

¹⁶ Dial and Eliades, p. 53.

a mule cart driven by Emmanuel Fulmore, an African-American, and taken back to their homeplace. There, a common grave was dug by Fulmore and several of the company. The two Lowrys were blindfolded, tied to a stake, and executed. According to Fulmore, "There was two rounds fired at them, by about twelve men. And Allen and William were badly shot in the face and breast." The bodies were then thrown in the grave and covered over.¹⁷

The following Monday, which was March 6, Sinclair and Calvin led a party to the grave of their slain kinsmen, disinterred the bodies, washed and dressed them, and gave them a proper burial. Other Lumbees who paid their respect said, "The Lowry men died for the Indian people."¹⁸

Although the civil and military authorities failed to take any effective action against the participants in the summary trial and execution of Allen and William Lowry, justice by the sword prevailed. Young Henry Berry Lowry, the youngest of Allen's sons, who supposedly had witnessed his father's and brother's murder from a secluded place in the woods, swore vengeance against those responsible for these deaths, and vengeance was his. Reacting to the violence against the Indians in like fashion, blood for blood,

¹⁷ Dial and Eliades, p. 57.

¹⁸ Dial and Eliades, p. 61.

Henry Berry Lowry and his followers became the scourge of Robeson County for a decade.

He became known to the Lumbees as a Robin Hood figure who they felt was fighting for their rights as a people. The best-known members of his gang were two of his older brothers, Steve and Tom; two cousins, Calvin and Henderson Oxendine; two friends who were also his brothers-in-law, Andrew and Boss Strong; and two other Indians, John Dial and William Chavis. There were also two African-American members, George Applewhite and Eli Ewin, and one white member, Zachariah McLaughlin. This is reported to be one of North Carolina's first mixed bands. Among these members Steve Lowry was the eldest. He was considered tall, powerfully built, and menacing in appearance with his thick, black, straight hair, his thin mustache, and his penetrating eyes. He reportedly took part in most if not all of the raids attributed to the Lowry gang. By contrast, Tom Lowry was temperate in mood, preferring to avoid bloodshed whenever possible, and darker-skinned than his brother. He fought out of a sense of duty, having little appetite for some of the violent acts of the band.¹⁹

In the months to follow, Henry Berry and his followers engaged in numerous raids in "retaliation" for past

¹⁹ Dial and Eliades, p. 67.

injustices, and in 1868 Governor W. W. Holden issued a proclamation which made Henry Berry and his followers outlaws. On each occasion that Henry Berry was jailed, he escaped from the prison; no prison in the area was strong enough to hold him. He became the first man to break out of the Columbus County jail at Whiteville. It is reported that he filed his way out of the grated iron window bars, escaped to the woods with handcuffs on, and made his way back to his wife in Scuffletown. The next time he broke out of the new Lumberton jail with a knife and revolver aimed at the jailer. This time he walked out of the jail, took cover along the river bank, stopped at a house and helped himself to some crackers, and crossed the bridge leading out of Lumberton. This was a solid brick structure, and the prisoners were held in a maximum security cell. The story goes that Rhoda Lowry, Henry's wife, walked the eighty miles from Scuffletown to Wilmington, went to the jail there and created a diversion with her womanly charms that allowed her aides to tie tools to a string with which the outlaws were able to draw the tools into their cell. The gang also slipped out of several traps when authorities were certain that they had the outlaws cornered. Henry Berry Lowry is especially remembered for his success in holding off eighteen militiamen at Wiregrass Landing. Using his boat for a shield, he fired at the enemy and forced them

to flee through the swamp.²⁰ Once officials wanted Henry Berry and his followers so badly that they locked up Rhoda Lowry and some of the other wives of the gang members, thinking that this would surely bring them out of hiding. Henry Berry sent a message to the jail that if their women were not released, "the bloodiest times ever" would occur in Robeson County. Local citizens who were more afraid then than ever of the Lowry gang at this point saw to it that the women were released and sent back to Scuffletown on the next train. It was always a credit to the gang that in all of their raids, never once did they harm a single woman or child.²¹

The final and the most talked about raid in the Lumbee community occurred on February 16, 1872. The band went to a livery stable, took a horse and rig, drove to the general store where they loaded \$20,000 in goods, and took the store safe containing money. The safe was stolen from the sheriff's office.

During this period of unrest in Robeson County, at least eighteen people--pursuers, outlaws, and innocent people--died in the Lowry war. By this time Henry Berry Lowry had become the most hunted and feared man in North

²⁰ Thomas C. Parramore, Carolina Quest (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 275.

²¹ Dial and Eliades, p. 67.

Carolina's history. The State legislature placed a \$12,000 bounty on his head and \$6,000 each on the heads of Steve and Tom Lowry, Boss Strong, Henderson Oxendine, and George Applewhite. In addition to the rewards offered by the state, the Robeson County Commissioner offered a purse of several hundred dollars. All of the rewards carried the provision "dead or alive."²²

Shortly after the robbery at the sheriff's office, Henry Berry Lowry mysteriously disappeared, and until this day his disappearance remains a mystery. No man ever claimed the reward money that was offered for him, and several rumors eventually sprang up regarding his whereabouts. One member of the gang was publicly executed, and the others were eventually killed by hungry bounty hunters seeking the price that had been set on their heads.

The question is what did Henry Berry Lowry mean to the Lumbees and how did he affect their history? He had become known as the "king of Scuffletown," and, while this name meant lawlessness and terror to the white community, it meant to Scuffletown that Lowry was a man who fought oppression of the Indians. This is why authorities got no help from the people in locating the gang's hideouts. Eventually the "king" became a folk hero to his people, and his name symbolized pride and manhood. Today in honor of their

²² Dial and Eliades, p. 67.

outlaw-hero, the Lumbees annually give the Henry Berry Lowry award to the citizen who best exemplifies the highest standard of service to the community. And, although many of the Lumbees regret the violence associated with Lowry and his band, they nevertheless understand that circumstances directed him and his followers onto that path. To them he was simply a strong man called upon to play a strong man's part in a period which was marred by racial hatred.²³

Most importantly, according to W. McKee Evans, the Henry Lowry gang made an impact on Indian affairs in general. He writes,

The Lowrys clearly made an impact on the home territory of the Lumber River Indians. They appeared on the scene at a particularly difficult period in the history of the Indians. At this time the armed resistance of the plains Indians was being smashed, their numbers decimated, while the Indians of the Eastern Seaboard had known little but defeat and increasing humiliation for a hundred years. With the triumph of a frankly racist party during reconstruction, it appeared that nothing could stop the winners from putting the Lumber River Indians into the same half-free place in which they generally succeeded in putting the Blacks. But this effort failed. It appears to have failed furthermore to a great extent because of the bold deeds of the Lowrys which filled the Lumber River Indians with a new pride of race, and a new confidence that despite generations of defeat revitalized their will to survive as a people.²⁴

²³ Dial and Eliades, p. 87.

²⁴ W. McKee Evans, To Die Game: The Story of the Lowry Band, Indian Guerrillas of Reconstruction (Baton Rouge:

In 1885, the Indians demanded and received official sanction as Indians rather than as merely free persons of color. The ruling Democratic party gave them a status midway between black and white, and they managed to hold on to that status through the darkest of Jim Crow legislatures. This meant that the Lumber River Indians could gain full citizenship easier than other nonwhites. Although this was a small victory, it was a significant one. The change from a community of wretched poor people to a recognized Indian tribe might never have taken place had it not been for Henry Berry Lowry.²⁵

During this awful period in Indian history, the Lowry family had to bear the pain and hardship of losing their men and being continually harassed by the authorities. Young Mary Margaret Lowry had been only twelve years old when her father, Tom, was gunned down as he was on his way to attend a political meeting at the Union Chapel Church on July 20, 1872. Her mother was forced to follow her father's body to Lumberton to reclaim it after it had been fully identified so that the men who had killed him could receive their rewards. Mary's life could not have been easy, growing up under these circumstances, but she carried the proud Lowry

Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1977), p. 259.

²⁵ Parramore, p. 290.

blood in her veins, and her children were told of their ancestry.

It must have been some time during J. W. Jacobs' student days at Whitin Normal School in Lumberton that he met Mary Margaret. They courted, and when she reached the age of seventeen (the typical marrying age of an Indian girl), they married. They stayed in the area for a while but soon Mary left her family in Scuffletown and arrived on the train from Portersville in Armour with small James Alexander, a young infant, in her arms.²⁶ She moved here with J. W. to live and rear his children. They had nine children. They were Willie H., Mary Frances (named after Mary Margaret's mother), Dancy Wilfred, James Alexander, John Henry, David Louis, Maggie Lula, Etta Jane, and Cora Lee. All of the children looked very similar to their mother, bearing her bronze-tone skin and her dark hair. She taught them about her past, and they became proud to say that they had been kin to Henry Berry Lowry. Their son James (known as Rev.) used to make it a part of his daily boast that "you better not mess with me 'cause I'm kin to Henry Berry Lowry."²⁷ He often told his cousin, Doug, how Henry Berry Lowry had seen them kill his father and how he swore that he would get them back.

²⁶ Informal conversation with Lelia Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 22 January 1983.

²⁷ Informal conversation with Lloyd Porter, Armour, North Carolina, 22 January 1983.

Most residents here feel that Henry Berry Lowry was "just paying 'em back," but there are a few who have heard of the atrocities that the gang committed, and they "don't want anyone to know the relationship."

J. W. cleared the land and used the timber from his land to build his home. Perhaps Mary Margaret was able to see something of her father, Tom, in J. W. He too was a proud man who fought against the system of Jim Crowism out of a sense of obligation, and he too had felt himself called to lead his people upward. He was not satisfied either at being considered a second-class citizen and living in a land where only a few men are free. Mary's father had made the supreme sacrifice for the Indian people, which inspired J. W. even more in his own struggle.

When Mary Margaret died, she was thirty-two years, three months, and seventeen days old (as listed on her tombstone). Her youngest child was Cora Lee, only nine months old at her death. Mary Margaret and J. W. had been married fifteen years. J. W. was deeply saddened by his wife's death. His beautiful Lumbee Indian had left him and his children, who ranged in ages from ten years to nine months. Still, he knew they needed a mother's care.

Being the public servant that he was, J. W. also needed a wife. He found his second wife in Elkton, North Carolina. J. W. entered a second time into marriage with Mary Jane

Freeman, said to have been a "dashing beauty."²⁸ Like J. W. and Mary Margaret, she was also born in July--on July 7, 1871. She was eighteen when she married J. W.

Mary Jane moved to Armour with J. W., helped him rear and care for his children, and soon they began to have children of their own. In all, they had ten children. They were named Dallie Webster, Major McKinley, Richard Leon, Eddie Franklin, Eliza Mabel, Callie Mariah, George Ira, Columbia Isadora, Oliver Dawson, and Addie Louise.

When the 1900 census (Twelfth Census of the U. S.) was taken, there were eight children listed in the household, five of them--from seventeen to eight--from J. W.'s first marriage, and three--from four years to eleven months--from his second marriage. At this time, J. W.'s age was listed as 47 and Mary Jane's as 28.

Mary Jane used to take in washing for Miss Julia Love, one of the few white families in the community.²⁹ But in the evenings, when all the work was caught up, she would load the children on the back of the mule and wagon and make her way to the river for some fishing.³⁰

²⁸ Byrd interview, 20 March 1983.

²⁹ Interview with Josephine Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

³⁰ Interview with William Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 31 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

She loved to fish, and she was pretty good at it, too. She was a good mother to all of J. W.'s children, and all of his grandchildren naturally called her "Grandma."³¹ Mary Jane and J. W. lived happily together until her death on December 20, 1916. Again J. W. mourned the loss of his beloved wife.

J. W. needed a constant companion, so he married for a third time, this time to Lucy Graham. She had a daughter named Tishie who was married to Grant Frieson. They also resided with J. W. and Lucy.

Thus, J. W. lived out his life in happiness and ease, surrounded by his wife, his children, and his grandchildren. To all of his nineteen children he was a constant source of stability. He trained and reared his children with a firm hand and taught them to have respect and pride. He used his guiding influence and his own example to help his children make good of their own lives. It was not unusual for residents of the community to find his children "jamming the fence" (learning to read at the point where the fence intersects)³² while others were out plowing in the fields. J. W. instilled in his children a love and a need for education, and many of his sons and daughters became imitators of their

³¹ William Jacobs interview.

³² Interview with Douglas Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

father. They were proud of him. Three of his sons became preachers; some of his daughters became teachers. Then, they, too, became role models. Many of his sons and daughters left the Armour community, went to the big cities up North, and led very prosperous lives. Some stayed in Armour, raised crops on their land, and trained their sons to till the soil. But no matter where J. W.'s children eventually ended up, their father was seen in them.

The last of J. W.'s children, Addie Louise, died in November 1982. She was the last of the nineteen children that he fathered. Before she died, on July 4, 1982, Addie Louise had left her home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and traveled to a family reunion being held at Armour, in honor of her father. Addie Louise was the most honored and revered person attending the reunion which numbered over three hundred. There, she was able to bear witness to the beauty and strength of these people who had originated from her father's veins.

The final test for any man is how he is viewed by his family and those closest around him on a daily basis, for it is within the home that man must prepare himself for service to the public. A man must have peace and abiding love in his own home before he can attempt to advise another, and he must be able to run his own household smoothly before he can help to run a community. And so it was with J. W.,

for he was able to do all these things. He was always a good father, and his door always remained open to his children, who knew that they had a father on whom they could depend. He guided his family smoothly over the tough spots and taught them by example the way that they should go. He taught his children of mixed ancestry that a man's wisdom, courage, and strength could guide him in his struggle to attain upward mobility.

Chapter V

Family Lore

This chapter consists of examples of family stories, customs, and materials. The stories were submitted by family members; the customs and the materials were observed during family research. In certain instances the stories serve a didactic purpose, and in others they exist for sheer entertainment. Many of the stories tend to cluster around John William Jacobs, helping us view him as a fully developed character. The study of the culture of the African-American has become important to folklore, allowing us to see the unique place he occupies in American history.¹

In literature, many writers did little more than observe this culture and record the findings interpreted from their own experience. According to Sterling Brown, "The Negro has met with as great injustice in literature as he has in American life. The majority of books about

¹ Robert Hemenway, "Are You a Flying Lark or a Setting Dove?," in Afro-American Literature, ed. Dexter Fisher and Roland B. Stepto (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1978), p. 122.

Negroes merely stereotype Negro character."² Such stereotypes as the ones suggested by Brown tend to obscure what Gross and Hardy call the "complete diversity and essential humanity of the African-American" and give readers an unfortunately narrow-minded view of him.³ It becomes quite important, then, that the African-American be able to tell his own story in his own words in order that the complete story be written. One of the goals of the study of native works of art is to assess the complete fate of being American, to banish stereotypes of thought and character, and to discover the truth about our own people.⁴ Novelist Ralph Ellison suggests that the African-American has the right to "trust his own experience and his own sensibilities as to the definition of reality,"⁵ rather than leave these perceptions to those who can merely observe.

Certain studies have shown that one of the most significant qualities of African-American literature is its close link to its folk roots; it is full of the "sound" and "music"

² Sterling Brown, "Negro Characteristics As Seen By White Authors," Callaloo, 5, Nos. 1 and 2 (1982), 55.

³ Seymour L. Gross and John Edward Hardy, Images of the Negro in American Literature (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 5.

⁴ James A. Emmanuel and Theodore L. Gross, eds., Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America (New York: Free Press, 1968), p. 4.

⁵ Hemenway, in Fisher and Stepto, p. 122.

of its culture.⁶ Folklorist Robert Hemenway believes that a literature assumes "patterns and replicates forms of the world."⁷ He believes that the most profound and persistent aesthetic forms of African-American writing arise from the traditional poetic performances of Black people and that these acts of creativity are recorded as folklore.⁸ In most folklore traditions the literature begins with early instances of lasting achievements in works that skillfully initiate or characterize dominant trends. Oftentimes lore such as that which is recorded in this chapter becomes an integral part of another author's work. Sometimes authors have at their disposal a random sample of oral lore from which to choose and on which to build their stories.⁹ Because African-Americans were once imprisoned by enforced illiteracy, African-American literature is deeply entrenched in its oral folk roots.¹⁰ Some authors believe that the most important feature of African-American folklore is its historical and linguistic portrait of a culture.¹¹ Much of

⁶ Hemenway, in Fisher and Stepto, p. 126.

⁷ Hemenway, in Fisher and Stepto, p. 123.

⁸ Hemenway, in Fisher and Stepto, p. 123.

⁹ Hemenway, in Fisher and Stepto, p. 130.

¹⁰ Emanuel and Gross, p. 5.

¹¹ Emanuel and Gross, p. 5.

this folklore is also patterned after the African-American sermon. The narratives that cluster around J. W. Jacobs tend to follow this pattern.

The following stories were collected from the Jacobs family in Armour, North Carolina, and they portray the culture of the Armour community during the period between 1852 and 1925. Members of the Jacobs family rarely talk of their past. It is only when they are prodded that they consent to unravel the mysteries of the past; still, they do realize the importance of preserving their history. The first story that is included here is a personal narrative which was given orally to Raymond Shaw by his grandfather, Henry Shaw, who lived to be one hundred five years old (1871-1977). The first-person narrative used here is noted for its single rhetorical power, its presentation of personal history, its scriptural structure, and its tendency to present the historical self.

I have lived in this present home for 77 years. I was Sunday School Superintendent for over thirty years. When I was made Sunday School Superintendent I was thirty years old.

When I came along, there was nothing but hard work and you could not do any better. White folks in those days said Black people was good for nothing but to work and be killed. But I say, "Trust in the Lord and He will make a way."

I remember when white people had a pack of guns in case the Black people try to start trouble when they go to vote. If they started any trouble they would kill them.

The Lord promised three score years and ten, but by reasonable strength there will be four score years, but I'll be five score soon.

I remember when two white men came around here from Georgia and lived down on the river between Clenan and Narrow Gap. One of the men killed the other for his money and buried him beside the creek. Mr. John Sutton and Ben Brown were chopping blocks in the trees, and they saw the buzzards flying around, and they found the man in the branch. Mrs. Julia Sutton was washing clothes for the man and the more she would wash, the plainer the blood would come in them. I was around five years old then.

A man by the name of George Simmer used to own Armour Community. I was twenty-three years old when I moved where I am now. I bought my land from old Dr. Lucus. He was the only doctor around here at that time. My Papa bought his land from J. C. Hankins, who was an engineer on the train.¹²

Henry Shaw's personal narrative takes on a biblical tone, which it maintains practically throughout. He is proud of the fact that he has been Sunday school superintendent for over thirty years. Because of his longevity he is able to recount decades and periods of his life. His anecdotes are characterized by their brevity and directness, and it appears that Henry has been greatly influenced by the Bible and the African-American sermon. It has been noted that such sermons play a large part in African-American literature. Robert G. O'Meally explains:

¹² Interview with Raymond Shaw, Armour, North Carolina, 23 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

The influences of the black sermon on black literature have been direct and constant. The African-American playwright, poet, fiction writer, and essayist have all drawn from the Afro-American sermon. Scenes in black literature occur in church; characters recollect particularly inspiring or oppressive sermons. A character is called upon to speak, using the Old Testament black sermonic stories and images. Just as one finds continuity in tone and purpose from the sermons of the Puritans to the essays of such writers as Emerson and Thoreau, one discovers continuity in the Afro-American literary tradition from the black sermon-- still very much alive in the black community-- to the Afro-American narrative, essay, novel, story, and poem.¹³

Remembering the hardship of his life, Henry reminisces, "When I came along there was nothing but hard work, and you could not do any better." Perhaps a bit envious of the present generation which does not have to live under the strict customs and laws of the past, he regrets that his life has been so harsh. Indeed, "White folks in those days said black people was good for nothing but to work and be killed." He knew what it was like to have to "stay in your place" in order to live through those times. The key to his survival was his faith and trust in God, and he reminds the audience in his preachy tone to "trust in the Lord and He will make a way."

¹³ Robert G. O'Meally, "Frederick Douglass' 1845 Narrative: The Text Was Meant To Be Preached," in Fisher and Stepto, p. 196.

The next subject that Henry approaches is voting. The issue of voting was the cause of quite a bit of turmoil between the races during Henry's times. He remembers that "the white men had a pack of guns in case the Black people try to start trouble when they go to vote," and that if the Black folks started any trouble the whites would "kill them." Historically, this issue is significant because between the years of 1888 and 1903, African-Americans were often eliminated from the electorate on grounds that they could not read or write, did not own property, or did not have descendants who voted before 1866 (grandfather clause).¹⁴ With his increasing disenfranchisement, the African-American faced a hard time on voting day. Henry's recollection is similar to that which folklorist B. A. Botkin has recorded in his collection entitled Lay My Burden Down. One of his characters recalls the subject of voting in this way: "They kept the niggers from voting. They would whip them. They put up notices, 'No niggers to come out to the polls tomorrow.'"¹⁵ Another of his selections recalls what type of treatment the African-American

¹⁴ Lettie J. Austin, Lewis Fenderson, and Sophia H. Nelson, eds., The Black Man and The Promise of America (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1979), p. 83.

¹⁵ B. A. Botkin, "They Kept the Negroes from Voting," in Austin, Fenderson, and Nelson, p. 143.

was in for if he attempted to vote. Botkin's informant states, "On Sunday before the election on Monday, they went around through that county in gangs. They shot some few of the Negroes, disbanded their homes and went into different counties and different portions of the state and different states."¹⁶ The themes of the disenfranchisement and intimidation of the African-American are also found in American literature. As Botkin states, these recollections are a "mixture of fact and fiction, and the type of conflict that Henry's narrative recalls is useful for historical and literary documentation."¹⁷

In the next division of the narrative, Henry speaks of how long he has lived, and again he uses both biblical language and allusions. He says the "Lord promised three score years and ten, but by reasonable strength there will be four score years." He is both quoting from the Bible and realizing his "self" in relationship to the universe and God's promise to the people, hereby asserting his historical self. As he is approaching his one hundredth birthday at the time of the narrative, he instructs his grandson to record the information that he is supplying because he knows that he has already outlived his "appointed" time."

¹⁶ Botkin, in Austin, Fenderson, and Nelson, p. 144.

¹⁷ Botkin, in Austin, Fenderson, and Nelson, p. 143.

The next part to the six-part structured narrative is a story which is filled with several literary elements. We have two white men moving to a predominantly African-American neighborhood, and one killing the other for his money. As greed is established as the motive of the killer, other elements come into play. Two men "chopping blocks in the woods" are signaled to the spot by observing the flight of buzzards. The supernatural elements come into play when the lady who does the killer's wash is unable to wash the blood from his clothes; instead, it becomes plainer and plainer in the wash. The blood literally refused to be washed away. It is significant to note that this event actually took place when the narrator was "around five years old," yet he still is able to remember it in gory detail after more than ninety years have passed. This motif can be traced back to Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare. The combination of literary elements that exist in the story and perhaps the didactic biblical message (Thou shalt not kill) makes it memorable and worthy to be retold.

The last part of Henry's narrative centers on local history for the Armour community. He recalls the early ownership of the community and how old he was when he moved into his present home. For the sake of family history he tells his grandson that he bought his land from old "Dr. Lucus," who was the only doctor around at that time, and

he tells how his father, Archie, acquired his land. In each part of this narrative, which is told and recorded in this simple six-part structure, a different subject is discussed, and a different theme developed. He tells us how long he has been Sunday school superintendent, how hard times were for the African-American, what voting day was like in the community, the story of a murder which occurred in the town, how old he is, and about land ownership in the community and family. His language and diction are simplified, spoken in what might be considered "black dialect." These elements become a basic part of the fabric of the narrative itself, serving to intensify its meaning. Some novelists have implied that a narrative of this sort is a distinctly African-American text and that it mediates between the novel of sentiment and the picaresque, set in motion by the mode of the confession.¹⁸ With these short capsuled events, Henry transforms life into art. The images and reference that he uses make his story a compelling one.

The next family story, which was written by Paul Cooper, offers an example of personal history transformed into autobiography.

The following are some memories and impressions about "Grandpa," as I called him, which I am still able to recall. Unfortunately, I did not

¹⁸ Fisher and Stepto, p. 173.

know him very long. When he died I was only eight years old and had spent almost all of these early years away from his home in Armour, North Carolina. My mother (Etta Jeanette) had become a widow three years earlier while expecting her fifth child, and shortly thereafter we all came to live with Grandpa and his third wife, "Miss Lucy." In addition to Grandpa and his wife, the household consisted of: my two teenage uncles (Ira and Dawson), my teenage aunt (Isadora), my mother and five children ranging in age from an infant to approximately seven years, and Miss Lucy's daughter (whom we called "Miss Tisshie") and her husband (Grant Frison).

I remember that his home was a frame house with a porch, situated on a hill overlooking the railroad tracks. There was a combination living room and library where Grandpa used to read and write and meet with a variety of people who came to him for advice and consultation as well as notary services. In most instances this room was "off limits" or us kids. Early on I developed a curiosity about all the coming and going and activity in this room, and concluded that Grandpa was a pretty important person. He seemed to be always getting ready to go some place or just coming home from somewhere. He was always "dressed up" while most others (except white folks) only got "dressed up" on Sunday for church or to "go visiting." Everybody called him "Professor Jacobs," or "Fess Jacobs."

It was a crowded household whose population went from seven to thirteen when Mother moved in with her kids. We all slept in one of the four bedrooms. It was obvious that "Miss Lucy" resented our presence, but the calm and steady influence of Grandpa kept the internal tension at a minimum. Without raising his voice or lifting a hand, he could calmly mediate or prevent potential explosive confrontations. No matter what was going on, when Grandpa walked into the room, it ceased until his smile or nod of approval gave the signal to continue.

To me he seemed to be a towering figure. He always looked to be taller and larger than anybody else. Of course, this may have merely been my own child perceptions of one who played such

a significant role. The fact that he was my mother's father was a source of awe. On the occasions when he was at leisure to look over his large farm, he would let my younger brother (Ray) and me accompany him. We never asked but would simply start out behind him and if he did not tell us to go back, we knew it was okay. I would try to talk in his tracks as he walked through waist-high weeds which sometimes were over our heads. He would shorten his steps and slow down when we experienced difficulty in the negotiating through some of the uneven terrain. When we were alone like this I plied him with one question after another, usually beginning with "why" or "what." He never seemed to tire of this and would answer the same questions over and over and over and over.

Once on a Saturday afternoon when he was preparing to go to his Masonic Temple by horse and buggy, I sensed that this was a very important event, as we had heard that a lot of secret and mysterious things went on in the "lodge hall," as it was called. So, I asked him what they were going to do at the meeting. Without hesitation, he told me they were going to give the "Third Degree." My next question was, "What do you have to do in order to get the Third Degree?" "Climb a greased pole backwards," he replied with a straight face. Needless to say, for the next several days Ray and I tried it without success.

Then there was the Easter Sunday when he absent-mindedly put on Mother's new flower-bedecked hat and walked a mile to the church to preside over Sunday School, where he was the superintendent. We watched him leave and nobody said a word as they struggled to contain their glee. We walked behind him as he graciously acknowledged the straight-faced greetings of neighbors he encountered along the way. It was only after he removed the hat to enter the church that he discovered his mistake. If he was embarrassed, we never knew it, AND NOBODY DARED TO LAUGH.

Then there was the large dining room where the entire family would gather for supper. Grandpa sat at the head of the table. He was always served first. At each meal he had a large "hoe cake" which "Miss Lucy" made especially for him. Its ingredients included eggs and flour. She

always served it herself, and everybody else had cornbread and/or biscuits. Occasionally he would not eat it all, but would share it with me--only after "Miss Lucy" had left the room. Instinctively I knew she would not have approved, so I quickly ate it. Ever so often there would be a close call when she suddenly returned, but she never caught us; Grandpa and I would exchange knowing looks. Of course, Grandpa also shared his "hoe cake" with the other younger children from time to time, and each always made certain that "Miss Lucy" did not see it. Not surprisingly, there was some ongoing rivalry for this special treat.

Once Ray and I watched as our teenage uncle Dawson put grapes, sugar, and yeast in a keg and buried it under a large cedar tree. Some months later, in Dawson's absence, we decided to dig it up and investigate. It was quite a struggle for us to get it out of the ground, but we finally managed after much digging and prying with a pole. As we were carefully cleaning the dirt from around the bung hole, a shadow loomed over us. I was horrified to see Grandpa standing there. When he asked what we were doing, we told him we were just playing and he started to walk away, and that's when the bung hole stopper blew out and wine started spilling over the side. Quickly he turned and capped the bung hole with the palm of his hand while turning the keg on its side in order to stop the flow. As we were now caught red-handed, I was mentally preparing myself to receive my very first spanking from Grandpa, but instead of showing anger, he proceeded to question us about the facts and circumstances. I did not want to involve Dawson, nor did I want Grandpa to know that we were in the process of secretly tampering with Dawson's wine. So, I told him that I had overheard adults talking about how to make wine, and Ray and I had decided to try making some ourselves. I don't know whether he bought this story or not. He simply admonished us not to do that again, as it could make us sick, and had us help him carry the keg up to the house, explaining that he would feed it to the hogs later. That evening after supper while we were playing outside in the yard, I happened to look in the dining room through the window and there was the empty keg and a row of half-gallon jars

full of wine. Miss Lucy and Grandpa were toasting each other, and I overheard him say: "You know, those boys make pretty good wine." Although Dawson must have seen the keg and discovered that his hiding place had been plundered, he never mentioned it--and we didn't either.

There was the time when Ray and I were swinging on the bottom doors of Miss Lucy's china closet in the dining room when it suddenly came crashing down, trapping us inside and breaking dishes and glasses into what seemed like a million pieces. Everybody came running to see what had happened; when they set the closet right, two very sheepish little boys crawled out amid the wreckage. Mother was horrified and Miss Lucy was "fit to be tied." No wonder, we were her unwelcome guests in the first place, and now this! I felt awful--just wanted to find a hole somewhere and disappear. In the midst of all the shouting and yelling, Grandpa, who had been outside, came upon the disturbing scene just in the nick of time when we were about to get the thrashing of our young lives. He calmed everybody down and wanted to know whether Ray and I had gotten cut by the breaking glass or otherwise injured. I suppose we later got a severe "beating" but I can't remember that, but I will never forget how Grandpa's first concern was about our welfare.

When Grandpa died in 1925 I was eight years old, having stayed in his home following the death of my father when I was five. His death was my second encounter with the loss of a close family member. It left me bewildered because I could not understand why everybody was weeping and wailing, since he had "gone to heaven." I had heard so many wonderful things about heaven until I just sort of thought that there would be great joy. Instead, there was deep gloom inside the house and all over the neighborhood. I remember him laying on the "cooling board" in the living room, not far from the spot where he had spent so much time at his desk. There was a band tied around his head and chin to hold his mouth closed, and a penny on each eye to keep them shut. Someone explained to me that he had died with his mouth and eyes open and they had to be closed before the "body got stiff." There was pandemonium throughout the house. In every room someone was loudly weeping. Mother was on her

by his bed sobbing uncontrollably. I tried to console her, but to no avail. Neighbor and "stranger" (black and white) were coming and going during the next several days and we children were left pretty much to our own devices. Then there came the day when everything was very quiet around the house. All the grownups had gone to the funeral and burial.

I heard it was the biggest funeral that had ever been held at Armour. The Masonic Lodge had held a special service and brothers had come from far and near. . . .¹⁹

As Paul recalls his life with "Grandpa" (J. W. Jacobs), he offers us a glimpse of life within the Jacobs family household under the domain of his grandfather. J. W.'s household is an example of the extended family. When Paul comes to live with his grandfather, the household consists of four distinct family units: J. W. and his wife, three of his children from his second marriage, his wife's grown daughter and her husband, and a daughter from his first marriage and her five children. The setting of the story, as Paul Cooper describes it, includes certain local elements that are important to the Armour community. Grandpa lives in a "frame house with a porch situated on a hill overlooking the railroad tracks." His house is an example of some of the spacious houses that were being built in the community during this time with the lumber that had been cleared from the land. His house contains "four bedrooms," a

¹⁹ Paul J. Cooper, "Some Notes on My Maternal Grandfather," unpublished manuscript, 15 January 1983.

combination "living room and library," and a "large dining room." There are certain rules of decorum that are observed within the household; for instance, Grandpa was always served dinner first, received a special treat (hoe cake) that no one else was served, and was always served his special treat by the woman of the house, Miss Lucy.

Cooper makes good use of imagery in his narrative. He describes the hat that Grandpa mistakenly wears to Sunday school as "flower bedecked," and we are able to visualize Grandpa lying on the "cooling board" in his study with a "band tied around his head and chin to hold his mouth closed, and a penny on each eye to keep them shut." Such images vividly recall the days when these things actually occurred.

Cooper also tells us how he used to follow in his Grandpa's footsteps when he was a boy following behind him in the fields. Ironically, years later members of the community felt it was Paul Cooper who most closely imitated his father. W. D. Robinson feels that Paul is the one who has "simply brought J. W.'s spirit right on down to the present generation." Bearing witness to his quick wit, Grandpa tells the boys that the "third degree" means that they had to "climb a greased pole backwards." Also, Grandpa's humanness begins to surface when he and Miss Lucy are seen "toasting each other" with the wine that he confiscates

from the mischievous boys. The stories that Paul tells of his life with Grandpa are both compelling and passionate. They are told from the point of view of a mature adult reminiscing about his childhood days and those forces which influenced and helped to shape his life.

There are certain peculiar personality traits which characterized J. W. Certain eccentricities as the following have also helped to make his character more memorable:

Things they used to say regarding J. W. Jacobs:
 that he frequently had broken limbs;
 that he was slow and deliberate;
 that when falling he would take time and
 and arrange his coat to fall on;
 that he would wear away his shoe heels on
 the inside and then to level them he
 would put them on the wrong foot.²⁰

These humorous traits which have been attributed to J. W. serve only to add to the aura of his character, making him more of a rounded legendary character.

There is also another grandson who recollects his days with "grandpa" in a yet a different way. William Jacobs recalls playing a prank on his grandfather at school one day when he caught the professor napping at his desk, and relates the incident in this way:

I pinned a tail on his coattail at school one day while he was asleep, and I was trying to

²⁰ Interview with Jessie Mae Byrd, Charlotte, North Carolina, 20 March 1983.

get it loose when he woke up, and that's when he caught me. Boy, he tore my behind up, he put one more whipping on my behind.²¹

This anecdote is structured so that A first gets the better of B and then the tables are turned, with B getting the better of A. The anecdote serves to characterize J. W. as one who frequently nods in public, and William Jacobs as a show-off who craves the attention of his classmates. A few of Bill's classmates remember how humorous the situation became when J. W. was forced to pursue Bill with the tail still intact on his coattail. Lonnie Shaw especially recalls how funny it was to see the tail go up and down, reinforcing the slight limp that J. W. walked with. Today, it is ironic that Bill appears to walk with the same slight limp that was seen in J. W. that day.

From such humorous anecdotes surrounding J. W., we turn our attention to another type of family story, the "courtship" story. According to Steven Zeitlin,

American family storytellers wax poetic over tales of courtship, and are especially enamored of the seemingly serendipitous first meetings of husbands and wives. Romance inevitably transforms reality. Two persons meet as a result of some meaningful combination of circumstances. If they died the next day the encounter would have little significance. But if they take to each other and finally marry, a sort of "alchemy

²¹ Interview with William Jacobs, Armour, North Carolina, 31 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

of mind" transforms the incident into a rendezvous with destiny and the deepest sort of romance.²²

There are several similar romantic courtship stories which are retold in the Jacobs family. The following story which was collected from Jessie Mae Byrd tells of her mother's courtship:

Etta Jacobs met John S. Cooper, Sr., at the old churchyard when she invited him into Sunday school. He had on a wide hat and was very neatly dressed: she thought he was a sport. Little did she know that he was to preach that Sunday, and that he was a friend of her father's. After church they rode in the horse and buggy to my grandfather's house. Later he asked permission of her father to write to her, and he would write her very interesting letters, telling her that she was "queen of his heart." She was so "chagrin" that she would protest that she had no experience to speak of, and he would tell her that he was so "green that cows wouldn't eat him." My brother Ray quoted from his letters to his girlfriend because they were so interesting. They got married that June in the same year that they met. Her father performed the ceremony. He already had an eighteen year old son by a previous marriage whose mother had died at childbirth, and he ran through the dormitory yelling, "Hey, fellows, I've got a mother now: my mother is twenty-three years old." They were happily married for seven years and he died with four children and one born one month after his death. The son, who was eighteen when he married my mother, went to Shaw University for one year and got so "intelligent" until my father wanted him to taste of a harder school, so he sent him to Howard University the year after. The son would

²² Steven J. Zeitlin, Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker, A Celebration of American Family Folklore (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 91.

tell his dad, "Father, it is not that way any more, you are thinking in the dark ages." Now mind you, my father was a Harvard graduate.²³

There are several romantic elements found in this courtship narrative. Even after many years have passed, the storyteller is able to recall certain explicit details of her mother's courtship. She remembers the lovers' first encounter in the "churchyard," and her mother's first impression of the young man: "She thought he was a sport." She therefore transforms "reality into romance" through her recollections. The narrative includes folk sayings such as "he was so green that even cows would not eat him." In this instance he makes use of the extended metaphor as he compares his "greenness" (naivety) with the green grass. The subplot of the courtship revolves around the father-son relationship and conflict. The father wants the son to taste of a harder school because he was a Harvard graduate. The boy is thrilled to find out that he has a mother who was only a few years older than he, and he reminds us of the generation gap that exists between him and his father by such statements as "you are thinking in the dark ages." The young woman in the courtship is very much typical of her age as she is described as being "chagrin," as she rides from church in her father's horse and buggy. The family

²³ Byrd interview, 20 March 1983.

courtship serves also to preserve the family tradition regarding marriage. It is small wonder that such stories are quite popular.

The folk rhyme is also a valuable form of folklore. It is also quite popular as it is traditionally passed from one generation to the next. The following folk rhyme was submitted orally by Jessie Mae Byrd. It is a play song that her father told to her, one that came from his childhood.

The higher I climb the cherry tree
The riper was the cherry
My foot slip and I fall down
And I never go there no more.
Georgia rabbit choo choo
Georgia rabbit choo choo.²⁴

Relying mainly on repetition and onomatopoeia, the folk rhyme is similar to other rhymes that have been collected in African-American folklore. The dialectical language is straightforward and to the point, and the dialect makes the rhyme unique. Such folk rhymes as this one, according to Botkin, "saved a folk art and preserved as no other medium could the folk temperament, and by maintaining them introduced the negro to himself."²⁵ These rhymes contain childish imagery and folk simplicity, along with lyric intensity. The rhyme recalls an emotional experience which

²⁴ Byrd interview, 8 October 1982.

²⁵ Botkin, in Austin, Fenderson, and Nelson, p. 143.

has happened to the child that makes him decide to "never go there no more." The repetition of the "Georgia rabbit choo choo" gives it a lighthearted playfulness, making a happy song from a bad experience.

The family narrative, anecdote, courtship story, and rhyme such as the ones recorded here possess certain definite literary elements. They also preserve the ways and customs of this family during a previous generation in a way that nothing else can.

In keeping with this holistic approach to folklore, Zeitlin asserts that family customs should also be documented because many families seem to enjoy the idea that they have certain well-established customs, even when they are in fact enacted only on rare occasions. Zeitlin states that the "family celebrations symbolically recreate not only the original episode, but all of the subsequent occasions on which it was celebrated, the present continually recalling the past."²⁶ Although there are several established customs in the Jacobs family, there are two that are especially meaningful to the family: Grandma Jo's birthday party and the Jacobs' family reunion. These two are the ones that most family members attend each year and renew their family ties. Such customs reveal the Jacobs family

²⁶ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 162.

as a traditional one which likes to preserve its past. It is at such gatherings as these that "the real emotional business" of the family is enacted.²⁷ For the Jacobs family, these customs are their way of expressing kinship and renewing their dedication to one another.

A birthday party for Mrs. Josephine Jacobs, who was born on October 9, 1882, is traditionally held each year on the second Sunday in October. On that day all of her relatives and friends gather in celebration of the long life that she has lived. Her sister, Ada Brown, who is ninety years old, usually makes sheet cakes and homemade yeast rolls for her sister, and her sons and daughters prepare a tremendous amount of food to be served on this occasion. This is an annual event that every member of the family looks forward to throughout the year because they know that a great feast will take place. The family usually eats outside on several picnic tables along with friends who have been invited from the church and community.

The following is an excerpt from her life's history which was read by Jollye Shaw at the church service that was held in October 1982 to commemorate her 100th birthday:

To most of us one hundred years seems like an impossible dream, but to Mrs. Josephine Brown Jacobs, it is simply a lifetime. Born on

²⁷ Zeitlin, Kotkin, and Baker, p. 162.

October 9, 1882, Mrs. Jacobs is the granddaughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Brown and the daughter of Mrs. Rachel Brown, the sister of Mary Liza and Ada Brown, and the widow of Mr. Johnny Jacobs, and the mother of eleven children: William, Maggie, Mabel, John Henry, Jr., Sylvester, Benjamin, Solomon, Lottie, Thomas, and Clemmon. She has survived all of her immediate family except four of her children, William, Lottie, Thomas, and Clemmon, and her baby sister, Ada Brown, who was ninety years old last August 10th. Fondly called "Mama," "Mama Jo," "Grandma Jo," "Sister," "Aunt Jo," "Cousin Jo," and "Jo," Mrs. Jacobs has spent her entire one hundred years in the Armour Community except of course for short visits to family members and friends. She is a quiet, kind, humble woman who God in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to allow to live among us so that we might reap the benefits of her vast knowledge and love. In her younger years Grandma Jo was converted and joined the Mt. Pleasant A.M.E. Zion Church where she is still an active member. Her husband, whom she lovingly called Johnny, and she were the parents of their eleven children and foster parents to four of her sister's children, Earsly, Lillian, Francis and Adolph. All her foster children are deceased except for Adolph. In addition she has been a mother to many of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. To the five generations over which she gladly reigns, Grandma Jo is a constant source of stability. Her life and her presence remain the same. She is an inspiration to everyone in the family from her sister Aunt Ada to the youngest great-great-grandchild. Yes, age has taken its toll. Grandma Jo is one hundred years old but we just thank the Lord that He has blessed us to be able to share this day with her. Happy Birthday Grandma Jo, Mama Jo, Mama, Sister, Aunt Jo, Cousin Jo, Jo, and Miss Jo. We all love you and we salute you on this your one hundredth birthday. May God bless you.²⁸

²⁸ Jollye Shaw, "Happy Birthday Grandma Jo," commemoration service at Mt. Pleasant A. M. E. Zion Church, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982.

Another event which is customarily looked forward to in the Jacobs family is the family reunion. This is a reunion of the descendants of J. W., who fathered nineteen children. It is traditionally a large gathering, as the children he fathered by two of his wives join together to honor their family patriarch. The following is an account of their annual Jacobs family reunion.

The members of the Jacobs family could not have chosen a more appropriate weekend to celebrate their great ancestor than the fourth of July. Because of his leadership roles in the community, it was just the sort of holiday that was befitting to his memory. William McNeil, chairman of the family reunion, and the other members of the committee saw to it that every detail was taken care of before the occasion arrived. The reunion was held on July 3 and 4, 1982, at the homes of Josephine Jacobs and Clemmon Jacobs. The confirmation of the reunion came on November 27, 1981, during the dedication of the monument to Armour High School.

When the weekend finally arrived, members of the Jacobs family came from thirteen different states to join their family and friends in Armour, North Carolina, to celebrate their roots. They came as teachers, singers, models, artists, writers, college students, executives, administrators, secretaries, industrial workers, longshoremen, and farmers. They came from virtually all walks of life, and

with them they brought their children to share in the celebration. It was a homecoming for many, and they came to renew their "roots." Activities had been planned for every age group, and all of the family events culminated with a Jacobs family worship service which was held on the final day of the reunion. There was good food, much laughter, and hearty cheer as the descendants of John W. Jacobs got together for their first annual family reunion. This event is to become an annual event. Thus, in their leisure time the Jacobs family manages to preserve its family ties by such traditional gatherings which have ultimately become family customs.

In addition to stories and customs, material folklore also plays a valuable part in preserving the culture of a community. One material collection is folk architecture. According to Brunvand, folk architecture includes all traditional nonacademic building types. These consist of cabins, houses, barns, and other agricultural outbuildings.²⁹ Folk architecture is the most basic aspect of traditional material culture.³⁰ A house which still stands in the Armour community that originally belonged to Mackinley Jacobs, one of J. W.'s sons, qualifies as folk architecture. It is

²⁹ Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. 311.

³⁰ Brunvand, p. 311.

located directly behind the Mt. Pleasant Church cemetery. The house is made of cinder blocks and built in the form of a complete square. There are three windows on each side of the house; there is a chimney, and the roof of the house comes to a point as the four sides meet. It should be emphasized that the folk builders followed certain traditions, and many of the houses built during this time followed similar floor plans. The structure still stands surrounded mostly by wilderness.

The stories, customs, and materials that are recorded here together give a "holistic" view of the Armour community and the Jacobs family. These three items also blend together to give both a historical and literary picture of the area. The "mixture of fact and fiction" contained in the collected materials attests to its folkloric significance. Such traditions reveal the family celebrating, renewing, and reestablishing itself through its stories. Family tradition is a great part of American culture because it both indicates trends in our national character and gives insights into our family structure. Folklore transforms life into art.

WORKS CITED

Works Cited

Books and Magazines

- Allen, Barbara, and William Montell. From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1981.
- Austin, Lettie J., Lewis Fenderson, and Sophia P. Nelson, eds. The Black Man and the Promise of America. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1970.
- Boatwright, Mody C. "The Family Saga as a Form of Folklore." In The Family Saga and Other Phases of American Folklore. Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1958.
- Brown, Sterling. "Negro Characters As Seen By White Authors." Callaloo, 5, Nos. 1 and 2 (1982), 55.
- Brunvand, Jan Harold. The Study of American Folklore. New York: W. W. Norton, 1978.
- Corbelt, David. The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943. Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1969.
- Corbitt, D. L., and Elizabeth Wilborn. Civil War Pictures. 6th ed. Raleigh, N.C.: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1979.
- Dial, Adolph, and David K. Eliades. The Only Land I Know: A History of the Lumbee Indians. San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1975.
- Ebron, Norris. "Acme Delco Elementary School." In A Historical View of the Columbus County Schools 1808-1977. Ed. Jerry D. Paschal. Whiteville, N.C.: Columbus County Board of Education, 1977.
- Emanuel, James, and Theodore L. Gross, eds. Dark Symphony: Negro Literature in America. New York: Free Press, 1968.

- Evans, W. McKee. To Die Game: The Story of the Lowry Band, Indian Guerrillas of Reconstruction. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1977.
- Fisher, Dexter, and Roland B. Stepto, eds. Afro-American Literature. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1978.
- Gross, Seymour, and John E. Hardy. Images of the Negro in American Literature. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966.
- "Justice of the Peace." New Age Encyclopedia. 1974 ed.
- Knight, Edgar W. Public School Education in North Carolina. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1916.
- Little, Ann C., ed. Recollections and Records. Raleigh N.C.: Fishers Harrison Corp., 1980.
- "Madison, Dolly." New Age Encyclopedia. 1974 ed.
- Montell, William Lynwood. The Saga of Coe Ridge: A Study in Oral History. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1970.
- Page, E. E. "Notes on Education and History of the Local Schools." In Material Concerning the Beginning of Public Schools in Columbus County. Vol. I. Raleigh, N.C.: State of North Carolina, Department of Archives and History, 1952.
- Parker, Inez Moore. The Biddle Johnson C. Smith University Story. Charlotte, N.C.: Observer Craftsman Co., 1975.
- Parramore, Thomas C. Carolina Test. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Russo, David. Families and Communities: A New View of American History. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1974.
- Rutherford, J. F. Riches. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1936.
- "Surveying." New Age Encyclopedia. 1974 ed.
- Woodson, Carter G. "Chronicles of Black History." Ebony, February 1983, pp. 31-36.

Young, Carlene, ed. Black Experience. San Rafael, Calif.:
Leswing Press, 1972.

Zeitlin, Steven J., Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker.
A Celebration of American Family Folklore. New York:
Pantheon Books, 1982.

Manuscripts and Records

Annual Report of the Public Schools of Columbus County
1915-1916. Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton
Printing Co., 1916.

Byrd, Jessie Mae. "A Partial History of the John William
Jacobs Family." Unpublished personal compilation
record, Armour, North Carolina, 4 July 1982.

Columbus County Courthouse. Whiteville, North Carolina.
Columbus County Land Deeds.

----- Whiteville, North Carolina. Marriage Register
1867-1899.

Cooper, Paul. "Founder's Day Address." Speech delivered
at J. W. Jacobs Founder's Day Service, Armour, North
Carolina, 27 November 1981.

Cooper, Paul J. "Some Notes on My Maternal Grandfather."
Unpublished manuscript, 15 January 1983.

Oral Sources

Byrd, Jessie Mae. Interviews. Armour, North Carolina,
8 October 1982; Charlotte, North Carolina, 20 March
1983.

Cooper, Paul. Armour, North Carolina. Interview. 8
October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

Jacobs, Lelia. Armour, North Carolina. Informal conver-
sation. 22 January 1983.

Jacobs, Josephine. Armour, North Carolina. Interview.
8 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)

Jacobs, William. Armour, North Carolina. Interviews.
8 October 1982; 31 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)

- Porter, Lloyd. Armour, North Carolina. Informal conversation. 22 January 1983.
- Robinson, William D. Armour, North Carolina. Interview. 6 October 1982. (Tape-recorded.)
- Shaw, Blanchie. Armour, North Carolina. Informal conversation. 24 January 1983.
- Shaw, Douglas. Armour, North Carolina. Interview. 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)
- Shaw, Jessie. Armour, North Carolina. Interview. 24 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)
- Shaw, Jollye. "Happy Birthday Grandma Jo." Commemoration service at Mt. Pleasant A. M. E. Zion Church, Armour, North Carolina, 8 October 1982.
- Shaw, Nora. Armour, North Carolina. Informal conversation. 24 January 1983.
- Shaw, Raymond. Armour, North Carolina. Interview. 23 January 1983. (Tape-recorded.)
- Woodard, Elsie. Charlotte, North Carolina. Interview. 22 March 1983. (Tape-recorded.)