

ORAL HISTORY RELEASE FORM

DATE: 4/20

I hereby give to Longwood College the tape recordings, transcriptions, and contents of this oral history interview. I understand this interview will be available in the Longwood College library for scholarly or educational purposes only.

Signature of Interviewee: Kathy W. Smith

Name: KATHY W. SMITH

Address: 1001 MILNWOOD RD
FARMVILLE, VA 23901

Name of Interviewer: Angela Rainey and Julie Weber

Special Restrictions: None

ORAL HISTORY DATA SHEET (to be turned in with tapes & transcript) 98-15

INTERVIEWEE: Kathy Wimmer Smith

ADDRESS: Farmville, VA

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 4-20-98

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Home of Ms. Kathy Wimmer Smith

INTERVIEWER/S: Angela Rainey and Julie Weber.

TOPICS COVERED: Her school life
Her family's move to the town and their
relationship w/ the town

NUMBER OF TAPES: 1

Interview of:

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By: Julie Weber and Angela Rainey
April 20, 1998

Interview Summary
Mrs. Kathy Smith

by: Julie Weber and Angela Rainey
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Kathy Smith's family moved to Prince Edward County in the early seventies from Illinois. She has two brothers and one sister. They originally moved to Rice because they owned horses and needed a place to keep them. Her father worked in Richmond and commuted daily. When they arrived in Prince Edward County, they registered at the private school Academy because they were told that was what they should do. When her parents found out there was a public school system, they withdrew their applications from the Academy and enrolled the kids in the public school. The Academy refused to refund their money but the check had not yet been cashed so her mother put a stop payment on it. That was the last they heard from the Academy.

Mrs. Smith did have a few friends at school. Some of her friends lived down the road from her. She met her husband over the summer. He attended the Academy and graduated a year before her. They went to all of the programs at the public school including the dances. His parents were not supportive of this but they did not forbid him to go either. Mrs. Smith tells of one dance they went to at the Elm~~s~~ Hall. There were several policemen there and she found out later that they were there to protect Kathy and her boyfriend. The town just really wanted

everything to work out and everyone to enjoy the dance.

Mrs. Smith did not have too many problems at school. She said she was stubborn and determined to be fine there. She did not have a whole lot of friends and to some extent she knew when she was not wanted around. She thinks the students were angry but she did not understand why. She never received any threats while living in Farmville and neither did her family, as far as she knows.

After Mrs. Smith graduated from high school, her family moved to Richmond. They left their horses with someone to take care of and moved closer to her father's work. Not long afterwards she married her husband and returned to Farmville. Upon her return she did not notice that anything had really changed much. She does think the town is becoming more open and friendlier, though. Mrs. Smith now works at a local bank and lives in Farmville with her husband and three kids.

Kathy: "I have two brothers and one sister. When we moved here we registered at the Academy first and then we found out there were public schools so we withdrew our applications."

Julie: "Did you have friends at school?"

Kathy: "Yes. I had a couple of friends that lived down the street from me. I met my husband.... He graduated from the Academy a year ahead of me....We attended most all of the programs the public school had to offer, dances and"

Julie: "And he didn't mind going with you? And his parents were ok with that?"

Kathy: "Well, at one point he had wanted to switch schools.... We went to the Homecoming Dance. We went and the dance was held in the Elms Hall.... And we didn't know it but when we went there afterwards... We kept seeing policemen wandering around. Didn't find out till much later that they were there to protect us because they just wanted everyone.... To encourage everyone to participate and show that nothing was going to happen."

Angela: "Could you understand why they were treating you that way even though your family is not from this town? Like why do you think you were...?"

Kathy: "Because I was white."

Angela: "And just because of their situation in the town..."

Kathy: "I think they were angry... But I didn't understand it at that age. I hadn't done anything and nobody else had either. Now I'm sure that..."

Questions asked to Kathy Wimmer Smith

1. How did your family come to Farmville?
2. What part of Farmville did your family live?
3. What was your family's relationship with the town before the the schools reopened?
4. How did you feel about going to the public school before school started?
5. Did your family consider sending you to the private school?
6. What type of reaction did your family receive when you attended public school?
7. How was your life at school?
8. Did you interact with the children who went to Prince Edward Academy?
9. What events led to your family being called "outsiders"?
10. Did you feel uncomfortable going to the public school?
11. Did your family feel threatened living in Farmville?
12. Did your family receive threats?
13. Did your family ever consider moving?
14. Overall, have you seen any changes in Farmville?