

00:00:00:00 - 00:00:20:09

Tonia Merideth

Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us for an oral history interview for the Virginia Museum of History and Culture's exhibit, A Better Life for their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T Washington, and the 4978 Schools that Changed America." My name is Tonia Merideth, the oral historian. Please state your name and the school that you attended.

00:00:20:11 - 00:00:27:17

Michael Scales

My name is Michael Scales, and for the first five grades of my life, I attended Pine Grove School.

00:00:27:19 - 00:00:33:04

Tonia Merideth

Could you please tell us about your family, your parents, and if you had any siblings?

00:00:33:06 - 00:01:05:11

Michael Scales

Yes. My father's name is Mr. Robert L. Scales. He has been in Cumberland since 1949, but he was originally from Henry County in the city of Martinsville, just outside of Martinsville. He came here shortly after he graduated from Virginia State University, and his first teaching job was here in Cumberland. He's resided here remainder of his life. My mother's name is Mrs. Betty Gillham Scales.

00:01:05:13 - 00:01:14:01

Michael Scales

She was a resident throughout her life, both being late of Cumberland County.

00:01:14:03 - 00:01:15:14

Tonia Merideth

And any siblings?

00:01:15:16 - 00:01:37:05

Michael Scales

Yes. I'm the oldest of four children by my parents. Next to me would be my sister, Patricia Denise Scales, my brother Jeffrey C. Scales, and my sister Rita L. Scales Mayberry.

00:01:37:07 - 00:01:39:13

Tonia Merideth

And you were born here in Cumberland County?

00:01:39:18 - 00:01:40:11

Michael Scales

I was.

00:01:40:13 - 00:01:41:04

Tonia Merideth

Born here?

00:01:41:06 - 00:01:42:19

Michael Scales

I was.

00:01:42:21 - 00:01:49:16

Tonia Merideth

Mr. Scales, could you please tell us any childhood memory that you have growing up in the area?

00:01:49:18 - 00:02:23:10

Michael Scales

Being it's a rural area. I consider our family rural, but not farmers. But my dad raised a garden so going out to pick string beans, corn, squash, watermelon - wasn't a real huge garden. Was enough to know it was enough. He was going to be sweating when he finished. And so there was no doubt we were rural.

We could go take walks. And actually there was a dirt road behind - it's now paved - but there was actually a dirt road that was behind our house.

00:02:23:12 - 00:02:57:01

Michael Scales

But we lived on a main thoroughfare, which was Route 60, which was the first intercontinental highway in the United States from east to west. So we lived on it - it no doubt was rural and quiet. And you could play outside, easily take walks because what we would do also ,we enjoyed going to Richmond. And for us going to Richmond, even today is about 40 miles.

00:02:57:01 - 00:03:29:18

Michael Scales

But it is a trip that we would take at least once a week, if not more than that, certainly on Saturdays. Mother would take us down there for dancing school. Yes. So playing outside, playing games, being outside for as long as you (?) I make that joke now. Now you have to make kids go outside. Back then, our folks would have to make us go in and I'd say, "I just want to stay out there" and play as long as you can.

00:03:29:18 - 00:03:56:02

Michael Scales

And it was long enough to start catching lightning bugs that would come out when it got dark. You don't even see many now. Now, I would have to admit that I lived in an area, there was a lot of poverty, not dire poverty, just, I would say - my family being a family of teachers. And my dad was a principal, mother was a teacher, and my dad became a principal.

00:03:56:02 - 00:04:26:08

Michael Scales

And my grandmother also lived with us. So I always considered us middle class, lived in the area. It was a farming area, lot of agricultural, pulpwood cutting. And if people didn't work there, they would have to travel to Farmville, Virginia or Richmond. But the farming being primarily tobacco raising and raising cattle, things like that.

00:04:26:08 - 00:05:03:00

Michael Scales

So definitely was a country boy, rural area and surrounded by wonderful folks that - that a very strong agricultural base. My uncle had a, actually a shop where he would take livestock and slaughter them and, yeah, don't think of a fancy - it was it was definitely a homemade slaughterhouse. So that type of a setting, the background - that's my remembrance of my childhood, at least when I'm not in school.

00:05:03:02 - 00:05:07:05

Tonia Merideth

What year did you attend the school and how many years did you attend?

00:05:07:07 - 00:05:34:11

Tonia Merideth

Right. I started school in 1959. First grade. I continued here until the school closed in 1964. Had the school not been closed, I would have been coming here. I was through the fifth grade. I would have been coming here another two years up through the seventh grade. This was a one room school, even though it has two rooms, but it was one room for classroom and there was seven grades.

00:05:34:13 - 00:05:42:20

Michael Scales

And after that I would have anticipated going, as everybody else did, go on to Luther Porter Jackson High School.

00:05:42:22 - 00:05:49:11

Tonia Merideth

So for school, can you please tell me what a typical class day was like?

00:05:49:12 - 00:06:17:18

Michael Scales

A typical class day was the teacher arriving and the students being there, having - some of them having come by bus and many of them having walked. And they would be out playing. We'd be out playing, and a teacher would get settled inside and get set up for the day. You'd put things on the board that need to be put up because actually, after all, she'd be getting ready to teach seven grades.

00:06:17:20 - 00:06:48:21

Michael Scales

So you can imagine her preparation that was needed and once she had things prepared, we'd be outside playing different games, hopscotch, tag, dodge ball, baseball, all kinds of the - softball. Not baseball, softball. Then we'd know that school was starting when she'd ring the bell. One of those bells that the teacher holds up. And that was the time to come on in.

00:06:48:22 - 00:07:16:01

Michael Scales

So we would race in to the school and have us put our - if we had coats, there was a cloak room there with - I think I showed you just before you come into the classroom, put your coat up there. If it wasn't cold you'd come on in and gets - get your pick up - get your books from the book table where the books were kept and you'd go to your assigned seat.

00:07:16:03 - 00:07:49:19

Michael Scales

Now, before we started studying though, that was because we were coming in to save time. You get your books. But before we did any studying, was always a time for devotions, which was really a fun time, an uplifting time of music, prayer, scripture, recitation - really fun time - lively, people would take turns being the song leader. Now it was the teacher that taught us the songs, but after a while, we, all of the students would know the songs because they could conduct the devotions.

00:07:49:21 - 00:08:18:01

Michael Scales

So it was a very special time, uplifting. We enjoyed singing, we loved to sing. That was a part of my education too. Talent. It wasn't just academic, it was definitely academic. It was also - it was well-rounded. And it's kind of hard to keep saying "the teacher," because the teacher was my mother. My mother was a teacher. She had attended Shaw University, and out of Shaw University,

00:08:18:01 - 00:08:52:18

Michael Scales

she was hired here in 1954. So - but I'm going to refrain from - I'm going to say "the teacher" would make sure that we had lively devotions, which I'm so glad she did. And many of us sing to this day. And

so then of course, we started the academics, so whatever we had not picked up, the teacher would pass out whatever work she'd have.

00:08:52:18 - 00:09:26:13

Michael Scales

for each grade, because each grade would have different work to do. And the way it was, it was three subjects in the morning and three subjects in the afternoon. So we did have the basic subjects. I don't remember which one she'd start off with, but there would be a subject and all it was - we'd be working on the same subject being that the younger ones could learn from the older ones, well, it might be more advanced math, but you could be hearing about more advanced math even though you were the first grade.

00:09:26:15 - 00:09:50:15

Michael Scales

And I think it was a helpful part of education and it also inspired you. You wanted to get to the point where you didn't just have to add one plus one, but you could be doing, maybe a little algebra, geometry. Higher math. Now also it was a good, also because the older students could be called upon to be student teachers.

00:09:50:17 - 00:10:24:22

Michael Scales

So that's how each grade would be studying the same subject, but different classes with assignments. She started with the lower grades and so teach them the work, showed them how to do the work and tell them to proceed on. Do some more in the book, and then she would come back and - so she'd go to each grade in that manner. Again, if in the process, some student needed help, then she would call a seventh grade who also had their work.

00:10:25:00 - 00:10:46:08

Michael Scales

They were working on their work as well. Everybody was working on something. Nobody was just sitting around waiting for the teacher. That's another wonderful feature of having been to a one room school, like this is that it taught you independence, it taught you your own integrity. You're here to learn. Just because the teacher is not teaching you, find some work to do.

00:10:46:10 - 00:11:16:20

Michael Scales

Be creative, desire to learn, desire to want to do more. You did your assignment, you want to go further in the book. And so I found myself often doing that. Sometimes I would have to go ask for another book because I went through that, the one that was given. So that's how it would be for each subject. Then it would be lunchtime. So for lunchtime, we'd put our books away and everybody brought their lunches in a bag.

00:11:16:20 - 00:11:42:22

Michael Scales

There was no cafeteria here. Everybody brought their bagged lunches. There was water that would be back there, sometimes the teacher would make some Kool-Aid or people brought their different things from home to drink. Now, my mother, somehow she managed one - to have a Coke machine, maybe because she would have liked Coke. But many of my years here we had - there was a Coke machine back there that

00:11:42:23 - 00:12:13:01

Michael Scales

you could buy a Coke for five cents. So. And that's what you found also - was a sense of community in my mother's heart. Many times she would buy the sodas for the students if the parents couldn't afford it. Again. Again, we had a lot of a lot of poverty. So so most of the time we had with sodas, Mom would make sure - I mean there was water back there, but she would make sure that everybody had a soda.

00:12:13:01 - 00:12:40:00

Michael Scales

if they couldn't afford it. So then it would be time for lunch - for a break, and we'd go out to have a good, healthy recess. Now I'm trying to think now, 'scuse me, recess would be right after - before lunch, which was great. Which is great. You were not supposed to run on a full stomach. And I don't know if that was a motivation.

00:12:40:00 - 00:13:08:02

Michael Scales

But having studied hard, we were excited to go outside and play hard and we kind of felt like we deserved it. We had been studying for various hours, so yeah. So yeah, definitely recess was before

lunch and it was like an incentive. We took it, had lunch and then after lunch, it was time to study some more. Now for the real youngest ones, they - my mom had blankets. They could lay down, take a nap.

00:13:08:04 - 00:13:33:00

Michael Scales

that they - she felt that they needed. They did. The young wasn't even in elementary school. They give them nap time. So the very youngest ones, first or second graders, they had to take a nap. Then there was the other three subjects to be done in the afternoon. So that's a typical typical day. But also, and again I was just a first through the fifth grader.

00:13:33:02 - 00:14:02:20

Michael Scales

There were many times that we had extracurricular activities - which we were learning songs. We were learning poems. We were writing - not just doing skits, writing skits, performing skits, practicing for skits. I don't know if the other Rosenwald schools did but that was just - I say I think they were all - you know, you learn to be well-rounded. So much of the education was academic.

00:14:02:21 - 00:14:07:08

Michael Scales

but also was extracurricular.

00:14:07:10 - 00:14:14:09

Tonia Merideth

Okay. Do you remember the school books and the condition that they were in?

00:14:14:11 - 00:14:31:22

Michael Scales

Ah yeah. You do remember that, because they were hand-me-downs. Yeah. They were torn up. Many of them didn't have backs, so the pages were missing. There would be graffiti in there and some vulgarity and things like that. Yes. Yeah.

00:14:32:00 - 00:14:37:04

Tonia Merideth

At the time, did you know that they were hand-me-downs from the white schools?

00:14:37:06 - 00:15:04:01

Michael Scales

Ah yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And sometimes there were messages left, you know, directed to what we would call colored then, the messages directed to us. Yeah. Yeah, we did. But we were interested in being educated. We were interested in being educated. And so whatever pages were missing, we read with somebody else, you know, learned to write.

00:15:04:01 - 00:15:18:14

Michael Scales

We used the books as they were. There was no complaining. Yeah. Yeah. That was because my mother was a very positive person. That she said "Why you complaining? You could be learning." So there was no room for that with her.

00:15:18:16 - 00:15:20:16

Tonia Merideth

Did you have a principal at the school?

00:15:20:18 - 00:15:21:09

Michael Scales

Yes, we did.

00:15:21:14 - 00:15:23:17

Tonia Merideth

Okay. Can you tell me about him? Do you remember?

00:15:23:20 - 00:15:24:14

Michael Scales

I just have.

00:15:24:19 - 00:15:26:07

Tonia Merideth

That - she was a principal too?

00:15:26:08 - 00:15:31:18

Michael Scales

Yes. She was the principal, she was the janitor, she was the nurse.

00:15:31:19 - 00:15:33:00

Tonia Merideth

Wow.

00:15:33:00 - 00:15:34:22

Michael Scales

She was the dietitian.

00:15:35:00 - 00:15:46:05

Tonia Merideth

Wow. How did she handle discipline or did she have to? Was she - was that not a problem because she maintained control pretty good? Or how was discipline handled?

00:15:46:10 - 00:16:15:12

Michael Scales

Yeah, because she was a disciplinarian, she had set the culture of the school. So they knew - we knew that we should do as we were told. But basically we wanted to do - nobody really want to cut up or so much. Yeah, so. So. And if you were foolish enough to want to, your mind would be changed pretty soon but no, this one really wasn't.

00:16:15:14 - 00:16:34:00

Michael Scales

It was a lot of again, not like in a prison and not like you stifled. It was just we had a culture of learning and creativity and exchange and discipline. It was just the culture.

00:16:34:02 - 00:16:37:08

Tonia Merideth

She was the only personnel on site?

00:16:37:11 - 00:16:38:05

Michael Scales

Yes.

00:16:38:07 - 00:16:39:01

Tonia Merideth

One person.

00:16:39:04 - 00:16:57:12

Michael Scales

Right. I've got to tell you, she was also the fire maker. Sometimes a young man that was - she would pay him to come and start the fire might be sick. So we'd get here. And you think this is - yeah, it. She had had to make the fire.

00:16:57:18 - 00:17:03:23

Tonia Merideth

So what types of chores did - were the boys expected to do or the girls expected to do?

00:17:03:23 - 00:17:21:08

Michael Scales

The the guys would - bringing wood, cleaning out the stove. You know, you needed to clean it out, dusting the erasers, anything needs to be moved around. And the young ladies did more of the cleaning, sweeping, that type of thing.

00:17:21:12 - 00:17:24:21

Tonia Merideth

Okay, so the school was heated in the winter by wood.

00:17:24:23 - 00:17:32:14

Michael Scales

By wood, Yes. In fact you see, the pipe over there now, you see the remnant of it. So

00:17:32:16 - 00:17:33:08

Tonia Merideth

that's okay.

00:17:33:08 - 00:17:46:15

Michael Scales

Like a potbelly stove. Yes. She was also the - my mother was also the - took care of the heating as needed.

00:17:46:17 - 00:17:50:07

Tonia Merideth

And did you have indoor bathroom facilities at the time?

00:17:50:13 - 00:17:51:07

Michael Scales

No, we didn't.

00:17:51:09 - 00:17:53:07

Tonia Merideth

So you had - I'm sorry. Go ahead.

00:17:53:09 - 00:17:53:23

Michael Scales

No, go ahead.

00:17:54:00 - 00:17:56:02

Tonia Merideth

Did you have an outhouse or what type of.

00:17:56:02 - 00:17:57:05

Michael Scales

Yeah, we had outhouses.

00:17:57:05 - 00:17:58:21

Tonia Merideth

Okay.

00:17:58:23 - 00:18:21:07

Michael Scales

We had outhouses. The good - very good distance between the guys and the girls. No, no problem. Privacy. Plus it was down in the woods, as we would say. And so the girls tended to be on this side of school. And the guys on that side. Yeah. I also make a joke. We didn't have bathrooms even though we had running water.

00:18:21:09 - 00:18:46:01

Michael Scales

That seemed strange, well the reason is, I'd say we had running water because we'd have to run to the creek to get it. And run from the bull. Mr. (?)'s bull. When it was - Yeah. Yes. So no, but we did not have running water so we did not have bathrooms and didn't - so we'd had to bring buckets of water.

00:18:46:03 - 00:19:03:19

Michael Scales

That's another things she just - she had to make sure it was taken care of. That tends to be a guy's chore too. And my sister takes offense. She - I don't remember girls doing it often, but my mother, my sister, who also attended here, she's a year younger than me. She says the girls would do it sometimes. So.

00:19:03:21 - 00:19:04:14

Michael Scales

Yeah.

00:19:04:16 - 00:19:08:04

Tonia Merideth

Okay. You said that you brought your lunch from home?

00:19:08:04 - 00:19:08:15

Michael Scales

Yes.

00:19:08:20 - 00:19:13:14

Michael Scales

Do you remember what was in the - what types of lunch did you have? What? What did you guys each for lunch?

00:19:14:01 - 00:19:40:17

Michael Scales

Well, mostly we had baloney. Baloney sandwiches. Yeah, baloney sandwiches. Fried chicken. And we'd make a joke. You could tell someone had fried chicken, because a little brown paper bag would have a

big grease spot on it. So whatever they had had leftover from home, pork chop or sausage or whatever, they would bring from home.

00:19:40:18 - 00:19:48:14

Tonia Merideth

And you mentioned special days and extracurricular activities. Did you guys have a carnival they called May Day?

00:19:48:16 - 00:19:49:10

Michael Scales

Absolutely.

00:19:49:10 - 00:19:50:07

Tonia Merideth

Okay. Can you tell me about May Day?

00:19:50:09 - 00:20:18:23

Michael Scales

Yeah. Yeah. But the activities were not necessarily related to May Day. We would have things throughout the year, such as skits, spelling bees, plays, things like talent shows, so - and so these extracurriculars was not just for May Day, it was throughout the year that my mother would have those. But the highlight of the year and toward the end of year was May Day.

00:20:19:03 - 00:20:46:14

Michael Scales

Yes. May Day is where you invited the community in and you have the parents get a chance to see the games the kids play and different projects they may have made. Again, using that back room to build things for parents to see. I.. I'll say the teacher had to finance the wood and the nails or the cardboard were we paid for.

00:20:46:17 - 00:21:07:22

Michael Scales

Now, I will say this. Though - the these were also fundraising events. So these talent shows, spelling bees were also fundraising. So when - it wasn't all on the teacher, well that was with her initiative and creativity - this was a win win. So her kids got to do extracurricular things, but they also brought in some income, got families involved in the community.

00:21:08:00 - 00:21:30:16

Michael Scales

So May Day was a culmination of that. All of that. There was food, families would bring food to share with everybody, like a smorgasbord. And real highlight of the event was the the May Day pole, which you know, I think many - I think it was across the United States they had May Day, so the pole was there, got us another thing to teach.

00:21:30:16 - 00:21:49:22

Michael Scales

We had to make sure that it got done. I'd know, so my mother had that digging, which she was had to find somebody local, gentleman to come and dig and find the pole and dig the hole and put it up. And because she would bring the things that would wrap the poles, she wouldn't have to do that because you got up to seventh graders.

00:21:49:22 - 00:22:04:02

Michael Scales

So we got them 12 and 13 year olds, they could climb the pole and put the things up there that need to be put up there. But May Day was a real lot of fun, a lot of fun games. We got to have so much community everybody here.

00:22:04:04 - 00:22:07:20

Tonia Merideth

What school did you attend after you left Pine Grove?

00:22:07:20 - 00:22:34:17

Michael Scales

I attended Luther P. Jackson and was - the reason I have to say, would have been Luther P. Jackson High School, 'cause I would have gone here through the seventh grade and saw it to eighth grade. But I say

consolidated was because after my fifth year, all of the Rosenwald schools, which had been like feeder schools prior to that, started with eighth grade, but they were closed in 1964.

00:22:34:19 - 00:23:05:05

Michael Scales

They built a very nice elementary part and middle school and attached it to the high school, so it became the Luther Porter Jackson Consolidated School, grades one through 12, but it was, you know, an improvement physically. Again, from what you see now, a wooden school one, two. It was brick and mortar, running water, fountains, bathrooms. And they're still being used now.

00:23:05:07 - 00:23:12:07

Michael Scales

They're using it for office buildings. So, yeah. So it was a modern, modern school we went to.

00:23:12:09 - 00:23:21:04

Tonia Merideth

At the time when you were going to school, what did you think of the education that you were getting and what do you think of it now?

00:23:21:06 - 00:23:45:13

Michael Scales

Well, I thought I was getting a wonderful education then and as I look back at it, it was even better now, I look upon even, with greater the - how my mother was able to accomplish so much and the other teachers and the success stories of, you know, all of them, multiples have gone on to college, those who wanted to go, graduate school and beyond.

00:23:45:15 - 00:24:01:02

Michael Scales

And also - I would also say when I did go to - they did have integration. I had no problem whatsoever academically. So I was regularly on the honor roll.

00:24:01:04 - 00:24:23:23

Michael Scales

A lot of people say that's because, your parents were teachers. No my parents never helped us. They said, well, they said, "Well, what do other students do?" Well, "Well, we really didn't ask, I don't know. It's part of the nature of our family. We just we, we - So it wasn't because our parents were teachers and we had some extremely smart people.

00:24:24:01 - 00:24:50:17

Michael Scales

Their folks were farmers, but extremely smart, became lawyers, CEOs of companies. So, again, it had nothing to do with our parents and teachers. It was some bright students were here and they obviously got a good education because they went on to be very successful. I don't know. My mother had developed a culture not only of discipline, but of wanting to enjoy learning.

00:24:50:19 - 00:25:26:12

Michael Scales

So I'm not saying we were giddy learning, but you felt a sense of pride that you were learning and it was fun. It wasn't a task or a chore. Yeah. So, so you didn't really measure not saying this as a fifth grader. The quality of it - I mean, but looking back, you know, you were enjoyable. You know, you were learning, you enjoy learning and again, from the hindsight, looking back, obviously it was quality education because the results that it produced to me and others.

00:25:26:14 - 00:25:29:21

Tonia Merideth

So we know that this was a time of segregation.

00:25:30:01 - 00:25:30:21

Michael Scales

Yes.

00:25:30:21 - 00:25:59:01

Tonia Merideth

And I watched the news. I watched the interview that was done with the 700 Club. And Miss Muriel mentioned that there were times when kids would taunt you guys, say nasty things. Do you have any

experiences of similar situations at that time from the white community and their reactions to the Rosenwald school being here?

00:25:59:03 - 00:26:20:03

Michael Scales

Not so while I was here with the Rosenwald School, but those were the ones that were walking and they had to walk through areas in - and in the rural areas. You know, you have black and white side by side. So it's very easy for a local farmer to say things. You know, as you're walking by. See, I was in my mother's vehicle so I didn't experience, but I would hear about it.

00:26:20:03 - 00:27:02:03

Michael Scales

Yes. It was sad me, you know, and I again, Merle(?) being a little older generation, but yeah, they - but the ones in my generation as well, they experienced being reminded that they were second class citizens and not being told very nice things about - based on their race. Now where I did experience it when I, I was one of the first African Americans to go to what was considered the white school, and it was by - first three years as voluntary.

00:27:02:05 - 00:27:27:06

Michael Scales

It was an experiment. And I think there was a palpable desire to discourage us so that it made it pretty rough for us racially. You know, if we stopped, you know, didn't want to go, then it would kind of shut down integration. So we had some tough times. Nothing I didn't have anything happen to me physically, but I had a friend I didn't realize he - was playing basketball with him.

00:27:27:11 - 00:27:54:06

Michael Scales

He actually had a young man, did pull a knife on him and they had him scuffling. He got the knife away from me, he say has this, still the pair of pants that the young man cut trying to stab him. So fortunately, I didn't have that. But there were some individuals that had a physical exchange, you had to, you know, fight or someone was kept messing with them and so eventually resolved in a fight.

00:27:54:06 - 00:27:57:16

Michael Scales

Yeah.

00:27:57:18 - 00:28:18:02

Tonia Merideth

So I know you mentioned previously about the success of many of the Rosenwald students that went on to become the CEOs and - so what do you think of the efforts that are being made right now to preserve the legacy of the Rosenwald Washington, Tuskegee schools? What do you think of those efforts?

00:28:18:04 - 00:29:07:15

Michael Scales

I think they are immensely important because it shows that when community works together, they can accomplish - go against great odds and the odds now not of restoring these buildings not nearly as daunting as it was back then, where you had to build a school and acquire the land and get the materials for the building. So comparatively, you know, this is much less daunting a task, daunting a task, but it's an example of we can use them as an example to us to press on against the odds and it's going to take a lot of money to restore this building and a lot of effort.

00:29:07:15 - 00:29:36:07

Michael Scales

And but again, if they built it, why can't we restore it? You know, I think that's a great lesson for our young people that's coming up now. In terms of preserving history, there are efforts now to cover up history, to pretend that certain things didn't happen. And that is, you know, a critical race theory and this type of thing.

00:29:36:09 - 00:29:58:14

Michael Scales

So I think it's really important, but also to reinforce the African American history. And that's - and not allow this building to just deteriorate and in maybe 20 years, don't even know it was here. So that's another thing because of the movement to try to cover up the history.

00:29:58:16 - 00:30:02:09

Tonia Merideth

Thank you so much for participating in this oral history interview.

Post Script: Immediately after it was decommissioned in 1964 and placed on auction, Pine Grove School was purchased by Pine Grove community leaders as inspired and led by local community activist Mr. Robert L. Scales, who saw the school building as a rare and valuable resource for this low-income, rural area and he thus became the founder and president of the Pine Grove Community Center. Under his leadership and the center's board between 1964 and 1991, this community center sponsored various activities such as alumni reunions, May Day community fellowship, fundraiser events, voter education registration, and mobilization, social services outpost programs and school building upgrade and maintenance projects which contributed to the building being found suitable for purchase in 2017 and, pending renovations soon, subsequent use once again, this time as a community center as well as a cultural museum as sponsored by the AMMD Pine Grove Project as founded by Rev. Muriel Miller Branch.