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An
Oral History
of
Meredith College
Alumnae

compiled by Jean Batten Cooper, '54

Meredith College
Raleigh, N.C.
July 1996

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INTRODUCTION

In 1988, Jean Batten Cooper began an oral history of Meredith College alumnae as part of the requirements for a master's degree in history from Wake Forest University. The completed project consists of one hour interviews on audiocassette with 24 alumnae of the college, a written report of the methods and results, and videorecordings of the 1988 alumnae meeting presentation of the "Portrait of a Meredith Woman," a Meredith College doll collection review, and short video glimpses of some of the cassette narrators. All of these materials are permanently housed in the Meredith College archives.

The histories proved to be a valuable source of information about Meredith, past and present. However, audiocassettes cannot be used for long term storage of information. At Cooper's suggestion, the college archives transcribed the tapes so that the interviews could be put in a longer lasting medium. The transcriptions were completed by LetterPerfect Transcriptions of Raleigh, edited by Ted Waller and then bound. The editing process consisted mainly of correcting the transcriber's spelling and punctuation errors. Everything else was left unchanged, so that the printed version follows the audio version as closely as possible.

The interviews included here represent 23 alumnae who graduated between 1910 and 1985. The interview with Ona Rutzler, class of 1907, is not included. Mrs. Rutzler's memories of Meredith after 81 years were not strong enough to warrant inclusion here.

Rather than attempting to obtain interviews with a random sampling of graduates, this compilation represents an attempt to sample the great diversity of Meredith alumnae. A great deal of consideration was given to the choice of narrators, so that each woman might possess unique characteristics and help to reflect a wide range of professional and service experiences. A detailed discussion of the goals, methods and results of the project can be found in the paper submitted for the Cooper's master's degree at Wake Forest University. A copy is in the Meredith archives.

Ted Waller
Carlyle Campbell Library
Meredith College

July 12, 1996

Jean Batten Cooper, the interviewer for this volume of oral history, was born on May 3, 1932 in Johnston County, North Carolina. She did her undergraduate work at Meredith College and received a bachelor of arts in music in 1954. She studied organ two additional years at Salem College. She is married and has two sons and four grandsons. In the years since 1954, she has served in the music ministry of churches in Virginia and North Carolina. Her term as president of the Meredith College Alumnae Association in 1986-88 led to the choice of *An Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae* as her project for her master of arts in liberal studies at Wake Forest University. Cooper has also served on the Board of Trustees at Meredith.

LULA DITMORE SANDLIN
Class of 1912

Today is February 28th, 1988. This tape is being made as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae.

COOPER: This is afternoon and we are at Bermuda Village, which is a part of Bermuda Village Country Club in Advance, North Carolina, which is very near Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Ms. Sandlin, you are in this beautiful home here today with your daughter, Caroline Fullerton. I am delighted to come and talk with you about Meredith because you are one of the few persons of your age living today, who are Meredith Alumnae. We just want to chat a little bit about what you remember about Meredith. Your graduating class was 1912. Is that right? 1912.

SANDLIN: Yes, 1912.

COOPER: Okay, alright, Dr. Vann was the president when you were at Meredith, right?

SANDLIN: Dr. Vann.

COOPER: Okay. Would you tell me what you remember about Dr. Vann, when you were there?

SANDLIN: Well, just on the spur of the moment I don't know that I can tell it accurately. But I do know that he was a very charming, impressive, knowledgeable gentleman. And he was ideal for the place he held as head of a girls' college. And they were devoted to him and had the greatest admiration for him. And took pleasure in pleasing him and following his directions.

COOPER: Okay. I understand he lost both arms in a cane mill when he was a young boy. Can you tell me what you remember about his physique?

SANDLIN: Well, in the first years we were at Meredith, our class was at Meredith, I don't think we knew exactly what caused the trouble, or caused the accident. But after a while we were informed that it was an accident on a farm from a machine that was used to make cane, sugar cane. I suppose just to cut it to make it used in anyway they wanted to. And I'm not aware of just the ways they wanted to use it. But he, Dr. Vann was working in the cane mill when and he happened to a serious accident which made him lame permanently. It cut off one arm, the accident was the cause of the cutting off one arm just below the shoulder. And the other one a little more than halfway down. So he was very, very limited with any kind of work that could be done by

anybody. And it seemed that no one else would have had the courage to undertake the sort of work that he did, and be able to do whatever came his way. One arm was cut off just above the elbow and the other just below the elbow.

COOPER: I think that was probably a real challenge to the girls there, when they saw the inspiration of what he had done being handicapped, was probably just made it all the more meaningful for you girls. Right? I understand he could do a lot without hands.

SANDLIN: You're right. Yes, he ate at the table. He strapped a fork to his arm, one arm, and a knife to the other. And ate just as others did, unconsciously absolutely it seemed. And he was able to sit at a desk and write with a pen strapped to his arm, much like the knife and fork had been... his table silver was. And apparently he wasn't in anyway handicapped. He didn't appear to be anymore than any of the rest of the people at the table.

COOPER: He didn't let it bother him at all did he?

SANDLIN: No, no.

COOPER: Well, and you actually saw him eat that way though? You sat at the table with him?

SANDLIN: Oh yes, yes. And write at the desk.

COOPER: I think that's wonderful. And he wrote our Alma Mater so I'm told. I don't know if he had written that when you were there or if that was...

SANDLIN: Yes, he had.

COOPER: "We salute thee, Alma Mater ..."

SANDLIN: Oh and we loved it and sang it. Oh yes, he did, and he right had a beautiful voice, a singing voice too. And he wrote songs and sang in choruses and he could sing solos, but didn't do that often, in my presence.

COOPER: Well, you know I bet that's why he was very interested in getting a good person to come in music to Meredith, don't you?

SANDLIN: Oh, yes indeed. He wanted the very best of everything for Meredith. And sought for the very best.

COOPER: Cause you told me how, was it Wade R. Brown who was the Music Professor

when you were there, as head of the Department?

SANDLIN: Yes, as head of the Music Department. And it was just one of the very best in the state and was, he was admired a great deal. And people thought that he was a great addition to the state and as well as Meredith College.

COOPER: I believe the year he graduated, you graduated in 1912, he did go to Greensboro to the college there probably. But all of the time that you were at Meredith Wade R. Brown was the Professor there, right?

SANDLIN: Yes. But I didn't know that he left Meredith. I thought that he...

COOPER: I believe about the year that you graduated he went to another school.

SANDLIN: Well he, he worked at another job at the same time he was at Meredith, for some time.

COOPER: Was that the Raleigh Choral Society? I know he organized Choral Society.

SANDLIN: Well, he was with that Choral Society and then he had a beautiful choir at Meredith College. And the choir would go to different places for musical programs sometimes. And then the Choral Society met there for practice a great deal. And I don't know or remember too much about that although I belonged to some of the musical groups that he had, just for the sake of keeping up with music in various ways. But I didn't have a voice to develop. But I did take piano lessons some of the time.

COOPER: Oh great. Did you ever take any organ lessons?

SANDLIN: No.

COOPER: The reason I'm asking that is because supposedly during that time maybe just before you went there, when you were still in high school, they got an organ from Buffalo, New York, I think for \$4700 or something like that. And they moved it out to the new campus where I went to school. And I gave my organ recital on that organ. And I just wondered if you had played that organ too. You took piano.

SANDLIN: Well I didn't, I didn't play an organ any except at my own church in Bryson City where I was organist at, but it was just a single _____ organ.

COOPER: A pump organ or an electric organ?

SANDLIN: No, just a _____...

COOPER: Yes, the pump organ, okay. Good.

SANDLIN: Yes. I was organist, church organist for a while. But not because of any performance that I could have except just playing for the organ and singing for the church.

COOPER: But you had the piano background at Meredith? And so you could pick that up, so. So Bryson City? That's where you lived after you were married then after you were graduated from Meredith?

SANDLIN: No. That's where I was born and grew up and...

COOPER: Back before you went to Meredith.

SANDLIN: ...and I did not live in Bryson City after I was married. I lived in Old Fort.

COOPER: Old Fort, okay.

SANDLIN: Yes.

COOPER: That's a beautiful little mountain town.

SANDLIN: I thought so.

COOPER: And you lived there until you did come to Winston-Salem with your husband in your later years then?

SANDLIN: Yes. George Washington Sandlin.

COOPER: Okay.

SANDLIN: (unintelligible)

COOPER: Yes. There was another professor that I believe I heard you mention the other day, J. Gregory B oomhour.

SANDLIN: Yes, Boomhour.

COOPER: Boomhour, okay. What do you remember about him?

SANDLIN: I can't remember what department he was head of but he was very important to the school and very dear to the pupils. But I can't remember.

COOPER: Could he have been a dean or maybe they called him a dean?

SANDLIN: Dean Boomhower, yes it was, he was. And I believed he had a business school. I think that's what it was.

COOPER: He was probably in charge of the academic program and then taught some too I expect. In those days he had to do...

SANDLIN: Well, I think that he had a school of, for some kind of writing. I mean, pen and pencil or typewriting I guess it was.

COOPER: Well, I know you remember a lot about your professors but how about some of your friends? Tell me what you remember about some of your classmates, or friends. Did you have a special friend, maybe Maddie McDowell?

SANDLIN: Yes, she was my dear friend. Maddie Elmore in Bryson City was at another boarding school. She was at Winston-Salem and then I went to Meredith. She promptly left her school and came to be with me and she was there and so she was in the Music Department, and did give a recital. And made progress in music and had a good time as we all did.

COOPER: Okay, so Maddie attended Salem Academy here in Winston-Salem then, I bet that's what it was, before she went to Meredith.

SANDLIN: Yes.

COOPER: Alright. Yeah I see a postcard here. My goodness, Miss Maddie Elmore, Salem Female Academy, Winston-Salem. Yes, your daughter just handed me this. It says, "Hope you will have a pleasant Thanksgiving and hope I will too. Lula." Okay, so that... Isn't that nice?

SANDLIN: What date was that?

COOPER: Uh let me see. It's postmarked 1906, November the 29th, 1906.

SANDLIN: Well, let's put that on there. I'm holding a postcard since, I'm holding a postcard with this address on it and with this note on it. I think that would be...

COOPER: Okay, alright, very good. And so then you, she is a very special friend then, I'm sure.

SANDLIN: Yes. As far as I know she's still living. We haven't kept in touch. I haven't kept in touch with any friends. Well let's see now she went to Raleigh to live,

and where was I living when that was written?

COOPER: Well, now I believe in 1906 you were still in Waynesville High School then.

SANDLIN: Oh I was in Waynesville High School.

COOPER: Yes. Because you have on this locket here that supposedly your mother gave you in 1907. And that's what's written on it when you graduated from high school.

SANDLIN: Is that what it says?

COOPER: Yes. It's very pretty.

DAUGHTER: It's monogrammed. And her mother's picture is in it.

COOPER: Oh, okay. How wonderful. I know you treasure this.

SANDLIN: So many heartaches...

DAUGHTER: And so many joys.

COOPER: Yes.

SANDLIN: Yes. Well now let me, I think I'll add that to it then.

COOPER: Okay, we surely will. That's very special I know. Now she was not, didn't graduate from Meredith at the same year you did then or not, did she?

SANDLIN: Yes.

COOPER: She did.

SANDLIN: She did, in piano. She was a pupil of Mr. Brown's. and she graduated in piano. And, the same year that I graduated.

COOPER: Okay, okay, that graduating class of 1912, do you remember how many people were in that class? About how many people were in your class? That's really not important. I just wondered if you remembered. Because I had a note here that the graduating seniors of 1912 gave the school a portrait of Mr. Stringfield. And he was a person who did a lot of work before Meredith came to be, in trying to get Meredith to be.

SANDLIN: Yes.

COOPER: And supposedly that was your class gift to the college when you graduated, was a portrait of Mr. Stringfield.

SANDLIN: Did it not give his name?

COOPER: Yes it just said that...

SANDLIN: Not his first name or any other name?

COOPER: Oh goodness. Right now his first name won't come to me.

SANDLIN: I remember that my, I had a suitor that kept an automobile there for me. It was the first automobile that was ever there. And I lent it to him and he, there was a widow teaching there at Meredith and he took her out, you know. And he was just thrilled to get that automobile because automobiles were scarce. And everybody thought that I was just wonderful to have an automobile there. Oh there was a lot said in the paper there about me, you know. And this, let's see there was something about me riding up and down, they spoke of the street in Raleigh, in an automobile and created so much interest, or something to that effect.

COOPER: Excitement.

SANDLIN: Yes, yes.

COOPER: Do you remember what that car looked like?

SANDLIN: It was a Winton, a Winton 6.

COOPER: Oh, a Winton 6. I don't know very much about cars but that sounds...

SANDLIN: Well, I just happened to remember that that was a very popular car. And I studied with, my mathematics teacher was a very attractive widower. And I wasn't good in math. And I think I'll say some of this.

COOPER: Oh yes, that's what we want.

SANDLIN: And he was interested in an attractive teacher there. So he was seen in the Winton 6 quite frequently.

COOPER: That's very good. Okay, that's an interesting story.

SANDLIN: Yes, yes.

COOPER: When did you get to drive that? When you went home did you get to drive it?

SANDLIN: Well, I couldn't drive at all so I had to have a chauffeur. So there was another interest too. And he was, well he was I believe another teacher there...

And there was a wife of the superintendent of schools in Waynesville where I had graduated and had lived in the home with them, you know. And then we would go to that place that seaside place and visit you know. And there I met her brother.

DAUGHTER: They were just high school girls and just barely, mother started there when she was just, I think one year grandmother was still living and so she was, my father and John Wilkerson just watched her grow up.

COOPER: I understand that John Wilkerson was a very important suitor of yours and then Mr. Sandlin of course was your husband. And then there was another special friend that even wrote poetry for you. And you remember this poem. Can you sort of recall at least part of that poem for me, that this other suitor wrote for you?

SANDLIN: Let's see.

COOPER: It was sort of a paraphrase on Edgar Allen Poe's The Raven.

SANDLIN: Well, let me think. Oh well..... I've forgotten right now. Can you help me? Leslie?

DAUGHTER: Once upon a ...

SANDLIN: Once upon a morning weary while I was dreaming so sincerely
Of the maiden o'er the bridge so sweet and fair
While thus engaged in dreaming suddenly there came a screaming
Out with harsh discordant noise get thee out and we are going
And the whistle that is blowing leave thy dreaming for the future
Think not now of pleasant things though my pleasure now be over
For the present let now more, for next Sunday I shall see her
See the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels call Lula Ditmore.

COOPER: Oh, I think that's wonderful. And I know that was especially important to you to have this poetry because you were an English major?

SANDLIN: Yes. Yes.

COOPER: And you taught English then when you returned to Old Fort?

SANDLIN: I'd been teaching it then.

COOPER: Okay. I know that you got your basic education at Waynesville High School and then at Meredith. But you did so many things after that to continue your education, which was most unusual in those days. And so I'm going to let Caroline just sort of run down the things that you have done since then, the places you've studied and so forth. I'm going to let her tell us that because she has it right there.

DAUGHTER: Well, this is sort of a list of things that mother has done and clubs that she has organized, and that sort of thing. But I had, she got her masters degree at Columbia University. And she finished law school after that. And she did work on her doctorate at Chapel Hill when my child was a baby. Mother is an eternal co-ed and I'm sure that the only reason that she is not back in school right now is because she didn't see as well as she did. She has no central vision. She has peripheral vision. My niece said one time, "If you don't think Ul can see you just try chewing with your mouth open across the room."

COOPER: Okay, Caroline while you are with us here would you tell us some of the other things that she has been involved in too? Like I believe the daughters of..

DAUGHTER: Oh, alright. Instead of taking time to select here I will just do, run this down a little bit. Lula Caroline Ditmore was born in Bryson City, North Carolina, on October 29th, 1890. High School was Waynesville High School. She graduated in May, 1907. She graduated from Meredith College in 1912. She changed her major there from music to English and needed an extra semester. So she didn't need but the one extra semester and so stayed home and had a happy semester with her parents and then went back and finished in the spring. And she did some extra graduate work at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, at the University of Miami and Asheville Teacher's College, Plank School of Creative Arts in Asheville. She was awarded her master of arts at Columbia University in the spring of 1935. She graduated from law school in the summer of 1938. She did graduate work at the University of North Carolina in the summer of 1948, and completed preliminary courses required there for a doctorate in education. She was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma and one of the organizers perhaps of Delta Kappa Gamma? I'm not sure if she, oh she was a charter member in Asheville, North Carolina of Delta Kappa Gamma. It's an honorary educational fraternity as you know. And she was one of the charter members when they organized in 1936. She was a member of the American Association of University Women, and former vice-president of the Western District. She was a president of the Western

District of the North Carolina Association of Educators. She was a member of the Committee of Professional Standards and delegate to the National Educational Association. She was at a summer conference in the Western Michigan University of Professional, uh Setting of Professional Standards for Teachers. She was on the state executive committee of the PTA and on the State Board of Manager. She was a vice president of the North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers. She was a Meredith College Alumnae Association president and on the Council of Past Presidents.

She was a charter president of the Old Fort Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1923-24. She organized the Old Fort Woman's Club in Old Fort, North Carolina, and was president of it for three years. She was the third president and was president for three years. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and she was first vice-regent in Winston-Salem from 1961-63 and was regent from 1963-65 of the General Joseph Winston Chapter in Winston-Salem.

Well there are a lot of other things there that perhaps, she's a member of the Daughter of the American Colonists, the Wachovia Chapter. She's a member of the Colonial Daughters of the 17th Century. She has done a good deal of writing in her time and for papers and magazines and so forth. President of the Astrotekton Society at Meredith College. I knew I'd get to that.

COOPER: That's very important, yes. I would like for you to tell her story about her Astrotekton pin and how she kept it for so long. I think that would be something we'd like to have on the tape, if you could tell that story.

DAUGHTER: Alright. And I love the, everyone knows what the motto of the Astrotekton Society is I'm sure. And I've always loved it when mother told it to me. 'To lo he builds who builds beneath the stars.' I think that's lovely.

SANDLIN: Is that society still in existence, the Astrotekton?

COOPER: Uh, I'm not sure that the Phis and Astros are active right now.

DAUGHTER: Oh really?

SANDLIN: There was the Astro and then that was the one I belonged to. And then there was the Phi's.

COOPER: Philoretians, yes.

SANDLIN: Are they still in existence, the Philoretians?

COOPER: I don't believe they are.

SANDLIN: Well, surely Astro wouldn't let the Phi live and...

DAUGHTER: No, I'm sure if the one is living the other one must be.

COOPER: I think it's just absolutely fantastic that she kept her Astrotekton all these years. So tell us how what a close call you had.

DAUGHTER: She does have it. She certainly does.

SANDLIN: Where is it?

DAUGHTER: Well, about four years ago... It's in your room in your jewelry box, in one of your rooms. And you have several pieces of pins. The Delta Kappa Gamma pin and your Daughters of the American Revolution pin and one pin or another. You have some great treasures that you keep in your jewelry box. Well it was at least four years ago, probably longer than that, that mother lost her Astro Tekton pin and we were all very upset at first. And then we said, 'No, how wonderful that she had it all those years and enjoyed it all those years. And we weren't going to be sad about her losing it because she had enjoyed it for so long and kept it so much longer than most people keep pins anyway.' So the following Sunday after the last time that I saw it was when I took her to church one Sunday morning. And I didn't remember seeing it after that, or putting it away as I usually did. And so on the following Sunday it was Mother's Day and we were going up the Baptist, the First Baptist Church steps downtown where mother is a member. And as we got midway up the steps I was watching mother's feet to be sure that she took the steps and _____ stumble or anything. And she was holding the rail. And I looked down and I saw a glitter glistening against the back of the steps. They had put little black lines against the back of the steps so you could see more clearly where to put your foot on the steps. And there was that shiny little gold shield. And I said, 'Mother, don't move your foot. I think I see your Astrotekton Society pin.' And there it was on the steps of the Baptist Church.

COOPER: I think that's fantastic.

DAUGHTER: I love it. We were thrilled to death. [end of side one]

COOPER: ... big part of your life.

SANDLIN: It has indeed.

COOPER: Perhaps you'd like to tell us, I understand that your parents were both teachers and perhaps met at a college?

SANDLIN: In Maryville, Maryville, Tennessee.

COOPER: Okay.

SANDLIN: I'm not sure that, did Mama, was Mama a teacher?

DAUGHTER: No, just your father. She was questioning that her father was a teacher, not her mother.

COOPER: But they met in college?

DAUGHTER: Right. They met in college.

COOPER: And do you remember what your father taught? Was he an...

SANDLIN: Well, Lord yes, it was Brubeck's Feather. (???)

COOPER: Oh that's good. I'm sure you got a good foundation then before you went to Meredith, right?

SANDLIN: Well he was all for education. He was all for education and not for me to miss a thing.

COOPER: Well I'm impressed with the many things that you have done since you left Meredith. And I just want to put on this tape that we are on the second side of a tape for Mrs. Lula Ditmore Sandlin of the Class of 1912. And we are here in her daughter Caroline Fullerton's home, on February 28th, 1988. And we've just been told on the other side of this tape about the many things that you have done since your Meredith days.

SANDLIN: That I, that she has done.

COOPER: That you have done, since your Meredith days. And I, what impresses me about this is certainly your interest in continuing education and so forth. But, for your time back in those days to have a husband who was supportive in you doing these things and you continuing your education, because certainly you didn't do all of this in Old Fort, North Carolina. You had to go away to do these things. And you must have...

SANDLIN: Did I go away after I was married?

DAUGHTER: Oh yes. And Daddy used to come to New York remember, on weekends, when you were at Columbia University.

SANDLIN: Well, he said, I know that he said that he didn't, he said all the time that he wasn't going to marry any schoolteacher. He wasn't going to marry any schoolteacher.

DAUGHTER: Mother always took her children, but she couldn't take her husband, he had to stay home and support her.

SANDLIN: We went to New York and lived and put them in school in New York and taught in New York.

COOPER: Well, I just think he must have been a super sort of person.

SANDLIN: Well, he wanted them to have an education of course. He didn't want them to not, well, he had gone to college but he hadn't gone to any fine up to date college. And then there were as good as there were near him...

COOPER: I guess you could say you had the best of both worlds couldn't you? You had an opportunity to live in that lovely little mountain village of Old Fort. And then you had the...

SANDLIN: Oh, I thought Bryson City had it all over Old Fort.

COOPER: Oh, yes.

DAUGHTER: Mother went to law school in order to get Daddy to go back. That's why she went. And he practiced law and was ultimately sworn in before the Supreme Court. So she went, that's why she went back to law school.

COOPER: Oh, well yeah. So you were the support for him? As well as him being... That's exactly the way I would think would be a wonderful way for it to be.

DAUGHTER: When she was at Columbia University my sister was at Barnard College and I was in high school, so we were all there together. And Daddy would come up on weekends and see us.

COOPER: Well, that's great. Well, now you are here in what I consider a very fine place to be in North Carolina, and that's in Winston-Salem. Because I think it's a nice place that you've been in now for a number of years. Then being your daughters here. And there's a lot to offer in Winston-Salem so they've been able to enjoy Winston-Salem with you, right?

SANDLIN: Yes. I'm heartily enjoying Winston-Salem right now.

COOPER: Right now? Your lovely daughter, right? That's right, since you...

DAUGHTER: And your other daughter, your older daughter. Susanna _____.

SANDLIN: What's she doing now?

DAUGHTER: Well right now she's in Winston-Salem not feeling too well. She's had a touch of flu. So she's not feeling best in the world.

SANDLIN: What are you doing now?

DAUGHTER: Well right now I'm having a lovely day with you. And I still teach at Wake Forest University in the fall.

SANDLIN: Well, I'm excited...

DAUGHTER: But I'm semi-retired.

SANDLIN: I'm excited over everything that, cause it's going well.

COOPER: Well, I think it's marvelous at your age that you can sit here and remember as well as you do. And tell us all of these stories and hear so well. You just can carry on a conversation with us so well. And you look so pretty.

DAUGHTER: Her grandson calls her regularly from California.

COOPER: Oh.

SANDLIN: My grandson?

DAUGHTER: Your grandson. He wrote a song.

COOPER: Would you like for us to listen to the song that your grandson wrote for you? If Caroline would put that on for us we're going to listen to the song that your grandson wrote about the place that you grew up in.

SANDLIN: I love it.

COOPER: And he is now an actor in California. But I just think it's wonderful for you to have this song that he wrote.

SANDLIN: I do too.

DAUGHTER: She has two grandchildren. One grandson, Richard Sandlin Fullerton, and a granddaughter, Marion Norway Douglas. And two great-grandchildren, Sandlin Norway Douglas and Thomas Dixon Douglas. And he is called Dixon and Sandlin is called Sandlin.

COOPER: Yes. And I know your grandchildren. I've seen them.

SANDLIN: Yeah?

COOPER: Yes.

SANDLIN: Well, maybe you'll think it's wonderful enough to...

COOPER: I know your great-grandchildren, that's what I meant. Not your grandchildren but your great-grandchildren. I don't know the son, grandson that's going to sing for us right now. But I do know his son.

DAUGHTER: And his wife is Susan Grace Daneen Fullerton. And Marion's husband is James Wilson Douglas.

SANDLIN: Maybe somebody will get all of this into a story somehow. Maybe somebody would do that.

COOPER: You have had an interesting time. We're just going to listen to this song now by your grandson.

SANDLIN: Alright. I'll listen to it too. Where is it going to be? Isn't it going to be around here?

COOPER: We're going to hear it from right in the next room. It's going to come in here.

DAUGHTER: The first one is written about, it's sort of, he took sort of poetic license to tell a story. But it was about the house where she was born. But the house in which mother moved when she was 7 years-old and from where she went to Meredith and from where she was married is still standing and it's still painted white with tall white columns in Bryson City. And it's there on the main street. There's many businesses built up around it. It used to be on a city block with just grass and picket fence. And now it has many buildings and businesses all around it. But the house is still there.

SANDLIN: Is that house still there?

DAUGHTER: Yes. The house where you were born is the one that was torn down. And that's the one Dick wrote about.

SANDLIN: Well it was way up on the side of the mountain up there. It wasn't down in Main Street.

DAUGHTER: No. The one where you were born was on the side of the mountain. The one where you lived from the time you were seven years-old that you left when you were married, was on Main Street.

SANDLIN: Oh, is that the one?

DAUGHTER: And here's the song he wrote about you.

SANDLIN: Sandlin? Dick Sandlin?

DAUGHTER: Yes.

Riding through the Smokies in blue Twilight.
My grandma smiled with a second sight.
And said, I can't tell the day from night.
But I know that we've come to Swain County.
And you will see the house where I was born.
my daddy built in his field of corn.
He came along on a frosty morn
and stole me away from Swain County.
All next morning we drove around,
the twisted streets of that wrinkled town.
Trying to find the piece of ground
where she was born in Swain County.
I spied an old woman with a hole in her hat,
hacking away on some tilted land.
From the severed jaw you could understand
how she'd lived all her life in Swain County.
Do you know the house where Miss Lula was born?
Built long ago in the Ditmore's corn.
My eyesight is gone and my patience is worn.
She says that it's here in Swain County.
Il Lord have mercy, the old girl cried.
I would have sworn that she had died.
But Daddy said and he never lied,
that she was the pride of Swain County.
They tore down the house where she was born.

There's a library now in that field of corn.
that it had been many a morn
since she last was home to Swain County.
Well I watched while they talked the hours away
and their eyes grew brighter as they passed the day.
For the voices of two young girls at play
rang in the hills of Swain County.
they re-built the house where she was born.
They planted and bricked about a mountain of corn.
Filled _____ while I gladly sworn,
that I'd met every soul in Swain County.
The day when poor granddaddy died
he'd squeeze my arms with a young man's cry.
And said this woman by my side
is still the prettiest girl in Swain County.

SANDLIN: With this woman by my side, who was that?

COOPER: This is the one that Dick Sandlin wrote to you and it was his Granddaddy and your husband George who had said that you were still the prettiest girl in Swain County. That your husband said about you.

SANDLIN: This woman by my side?

COOPER: Yes.

DAUGHTER: He's talking about you of course. And this other song is where you lived, a house that Daddy built for you just out of Old Fort, North Carolina. And this is the second song that Dick wrote about where you and Daddy lived. Your husband, your husband George.

SANDLIN: George Sandlin?

DAUGHTER: That's right. And this is this song and it's the next.

SANDLIN: There are two songs.

COOPER: Uh hmm, yes.

SANDLIN: If I didn't have you I couldn't stand to...

(second song playing)

Come with me to my grandfather's mountain. Sit on his porch hanging high

in the air. When moonlight flows from midnight fountain. Starshine can pour us some memories to share. And love swayed and oak trees said, "Where have you been my young friend?" Springtime comes home when she visits the mountain. Summers pass faster than blackbirds can fly. Winter throws snowflakes where children can count them. After the autumn paints leaves on the stars. And love swayed and oak trees said, "Where have you been my young friend?"

Granddaddy built him a home on the mountain. Drank his own water and breathed the fresh air. I am city smothered by fog and by doubt when the mountain starts calling, come follow me there. All of the times I returned to the mountain. Listened for echoes in shadow and dust. I never found what I left for the mountain. It was born in my childhood for children in trust. And love swayed and oak trees said, "Where have you been? Where have you been? Where have you been my old friend?"

Come with me now to my grandfather's mountain. Sit on his porch hanging high in the air. When moonlight flows from midnight fountain. Starshine can pour us some memories to share. Starshine can pour us some memories to share.

SANDLIN: Well, I declare Caroline, I'm so thankful you have that I don't know what to do.

COOPER: You went to the Plank School of Creative Arts in Asheville, is that right?

SANDLIN: That's right. Yes, that's right.

COOPER: And that's where you learned how to pronounce things very properly?

SANDLIN: Yes. (mumbling)

COOPER: Well, you certainly have had a lustrous career, and family life. And I know that I've probably kept you longer than you felt like you, that I promised you. But we just had so much to talk about.

SANDLIN: Well no, no. I'm so glad to have you. Now tell me your name again, I've forgotten.

COOPER: Jean Cooper.

SANDLIN: Jean Cooper.

COOPER: And I'm the president of the Alumnae Association at Meredith right now.

SANDLIN: At Meredith. Now let's see, Meredith still survives, is it still in Raleigh?

COOPER: Yes. And very much active. We have approximately 2,000 students.

SANDLIN: You don't mean. I never expected to see that big.

COOPER: Well, they really aren't planning to grow much larger as far as numbers of girls are concerned. But we're still striving for excellence. That's the big thing now.

SANDLIN: Well, I know you've heard of the woman who did so much for it. The one that got credit for, I can't think of her name right now myself. There's one woman who's given so much credit for, I can't think of her name. Haven't you heard of it? I'll know it the minute you call it if you do.

COOPER: You're not talking about the person who wrote the history? You're not talking about Mary Lynch Johnson?

SANDLIN: No, no. She was a known person and a smart person. She was Preacher Lynch Johnson's daughter.

COOPER: I believe that's right. Now, if we could think of this lady that you're talking about that would be a very good thing for us to think of. So you just give yourself a minute till you think about it.

SANDLIN: Well, she...

COOPER: Back in the early days of Meredith.

SANDLIN: Yes, yes.

COOPER: When it was being established.

SANDLIN: Yes.

COOPER: Okay. I've heard hints of this but I'm not sure...

SANDLIN: Well, it seems like Ethel, no it seems like that was her, looks like...

COOPER: Let's see, I've got a history of Meredith College here. If I could come up with her name.

SANDLIN: Well, I believe it'll be in there if that's a history of it. And I believe I'll recognize the name if you...She was giving.

DAUGHTER: You attended your 72nd, this would have been you, this would be your 76th anniversary of your graduation.

SANDLIN: Seventy-six?

DAUGHTER: Seventy-six years since you graduated from Meredith.

SANDLIN: From Meredith?

DAUGHTER: Uh huh. And I think you were there for the 72nd celebration. So that was about four years ago.

SANDLIN: I didn't know there was...

DAUGHTER: '84? Before I came out here.

SANDLIN: So it survived that long did it?

DAUGHTER: It's surviving very well.

COOPER: It is. That's one of the reasons I'm coming to talk to you is because we're getting ready to celebrate the 100th birthday of Meredith College, in 1891. And that's, it's almost the same age as you are. See you were born in 1890 and Meredith got started, chartered in 1891.

SANDLIN: Well, I was just one year-old when I went to Meredith.

COOPER: When Meredith was born you were one year-old. That's right. When they got the charter. But we're going lots of things now getting ready to celebrate the 100th birthday of Meredith. Although it's, you know, it's still three years away.

SANDLIN: Oh, yes.

DAUGHTER: Junior at Meredith. Oh here's a senior at Meredith.

COOPER: Oh, here's a picture.

SANDLIN: Well, when did you have that?

DAUGHTER: Well, I had those a long time.

COOPER: I'm going to put these under the video, I think and take a, I'm going to, I'm not going to put you on the picture. I'm going to put your pictures on the

picture.

SANDLIN: Well, I'll just, it won't hurt me to get on it if you want me to.

COOPER: Well alright, let's see. Okay, you hold it right there. You hold it in your lap and I'll see that's a picture when you were a junior and when you were a senior at Meredith. I think that's...

SANDLIN: Is that right? Well I think that'll be grand.

DAUGHTER: And that's her wedding there.

COOPER: I think I can get her wedding picture in there.

SANDLIN: My wedding? I didn't know... [tape is turned off].

DAUGHTER: Lula Carolina Ditmore, now Sandlin, was the daughter of Nanny _____ Ditmore and John Hendrickson Ditmore of Bryson City, North Carolina. She married George Washington Sandlin of Old Fort, North Carolina. She was married in Bryson City on June 25th, 1913. Lula and George Sandlin had two children, Nanny Sue Sandlin Norway of Winston-Salem, North Carolina now. And Caroline Sandlin Fullerton, Mary Carolina Sandlin Fullerton, of Bermuda Village, Advance, North Carolina. Nanny Sue married Beverly Carl Milloway, Jr. And they have one daughter, Marion Carolina Milloway Douglas. Caroline Sandlin Fullerton married Richard Neal Fullerton. They have one son, Richard Sandlin Fullerton, of Los Angeles, California. Marion Carolina Milloway Douglas is married to James Wilson Douglas. They have two children, Sandlin Milloway Douglas, and Thomas Dixon Douglas, something, the third or the fourth. Richard Sandlin Fullerton is married to Susan Grace Daneen Fullerton, from Minnesota and they live in Los Angeles, California. And he is the one who wrote and sang the songs, wrote the words and the music to the first song. And he wrote the words and modified the music for the second song. A very close friend of his wrote the music to the second song. And he sort of modified it. So they collaborated, I suppose you would say, on the music. But his dear friend Lindsay wrote the music originally.

COOPER: This concludes the tape for Lula Ditmore Sandlin, Class of 1912.

MARY STEELE SMITH
Class of 1913

Today is September the 1st, 1988 and I am at Willow Haven Retirement Home in Laurinburg, North Carolina. And I am here with Mary Steele Smith. And she is opening a bag that I've just brought into her.

COOPER: When you were at Meredith did they call you a Meredith Angel? Did they call you angels then?

SMITH: Why sure.

COOPER: Yeah. That's to remind you that we're now called Meredith Angels.

SMITH: Oh. No, we were not called that. Maybe we weren't angels.

COOPER: I doubt that any of us were. But somehow or other somewhere along the way we began being called Meredith Angels. And so this is a Meredith Angel. I'll just put it right here for you. And I'll, let's see...alright. Since you've just had cataract surgery you probably haven't been seeing the magazine.

SMITH: I have seen it but I've not read it.

COOPER: Not read it. Well, this is...

SMITH: But I can read now.

COOPER: Oh good. Well, this is the newest magazine that just came out. We just got it in the mail a few days ago.

SMITH: I've not gotten mine yet... I have these subscriptions.

COOPER: Well, I don't know if you can see that then or not. Can you recognize that picture there?

SMITH: Yes. Old Meredith.

COOPER: That's Old Meredith, okay? And you went to school there didn't you?

SMITH: I must say I did. I taught there too. Mr. Edwards was an English teacher about the same time I was there. (mumbling too faint to hear.)

COOPER: On the third floor?

SMITH: That doesn't look precisely, doesn't look precisely right, that old building.

COOPER: Alright, okay. Well, I'll tell you what, they made a painting from a, yes, from a photograph that they had. So there might be a few changes. But this painting was given by the class of 1928, just last May at the annual meeting. And it hangs in the Chapel, the common room of Jones Chapel. So that's how this picture happens to be in this magazine.

SMITH: I can read that from this distance.

COOPER: Uh huh. Well, that's good. Well, now when you were there it was called the Baptist Female University? Or had it changed?

SMITH: No.

COOPER: It was Meredith by then?

SMITH: No.

COOPER: Yeah, the name was changed May 19th.

SMITH: It was called Baptist Female University at first. I think it was Dr. Vann wasn't it, who changed the name? Anyway, somebody did. He said that was narrow. To put female in _____ something. And University is a lie. So, that's probably been repeated many times. but I believe Dr. Vann said that.

COOPER: Alright. Mary, I believe that you're 97 now?

SMITH: I believe so. I was born in '91. What does that make?

COOPER: Okay. Let's see, when is your birthday?

SMITH: July the 6th.

COOPER: Okay, so you've just turned 97.

SMITH: I turned 97.

COOPER: Okay. Alright, you were born...

SMITH: When people ask me I have to stop to think.

COOPER: I know. Okay, if you were born in 1901 then...

SMITH: I was born in '91.

COOPER: Yes, 1891, excuse me. You went to Meredith when you were how old? Do you remember that?

SMITH: Gosh I don't remember.

COOPER: About age?

SMITH: I was about 18.

COOPER: Uh huh.

SMITH: The college had not been founded very long. I remember when I was a child standing by my mother at her work in the kitchen. I was talking eagerly about going to college if we could find a college. And shortly after that this college was founded. Only then it was then called Baptist Female University. But when I became, I was 18 I believe when I entered. I'm not sure.

COOPER: That sounds about right. Now you, you were born in 1891, right?

SMITH: Yes.

COOPER: That's the year that Meredith got it's charter.

SMITH: Is it?

COOPER: And that's when we're going to celebrate it's centennial, in 1991.

SMITH: Is that so?

COOPER: In 1991, which is very close.

SMITH: I'll be around.

COOPER: Yeah so you'll be, you're actually the age of the college according to the charter.

SMITH: I'm the age of the charter.

COOPER: Yes. We did not have a class at that time but that's when it was chartered. And then of course it took a few years to get it worked out. So then that would make it right. And you graduated in 19??

SMITH: '13. A rather famous class in the old days.

COOPER: Really?

SMITH: Yes.

COOPER: Well, tell me about your class. What made you famous?

SMITH: Well, _____, I think was a member of our class. And it had an uncommon percentage I think of good students. That's two things. And then just generally we thought it was a top notch class.

COOPER: How many were in the class? Do you have any idea?

SMITH: I've forgotten.

COOPER: Okay, that's fine.

SMITH: I thought maybe you would have an old catalog with you. I have one up at the house. But when I suggested taking you up to the house my nephew said, "Oh, let's not do that."

COOPER: Yeah, that would be too hectic.

SMITH: He has the fence locked up. He has all the outside entrances locked up, the houses locked up. I would like to show you my mother's portrait at the age of about 18, as done by what's his name over in Fayetteville? It's a beautiful picture but I can't show you that now.

COOPER: It must be very special. Tell me about your mother.

SMITH: Very special.

COOPER: Was she what influenced you to go to Meredith?

SMITH: Well, no, I wanted to go to college. She wanted to go to college in her youth and was not able to do so. She came along during the war years of course. And she was particularly ambitious about college. So she said that I should go to college. So I, she instilled that ambition in me of course. But I really wanted to go anyway I think. Because I had a craving for higher education.

COOPER: And I understand when you're talking about your class, the class of 1913 being so special, that you were one of those special people. Because you did

go on after Meredith and do graduate work. Would you tell us about that?

SMITH: I believe I was the first graduate to get a Ph.D. I believe I was the first one.

COOPER: And where did you get this?

SMITH: Well, I, at Cornell.

COOPER: At Cornell.

SMITH: I considered going to, I considered first going to the University of North Carolina. At that time a Meredith degree was not quite a standard degree, according to the registering agencies. And I wanted a standard degree. I thought that I could get a standard degree in one year. Well, I thought the University of North Carolina would duplicate my degree, and accept that as standard. When I found out they would not I realized then that I must go elsewhere. I had a friend in Meredith from Rochester, New York, who left the college. Her family went back to Rochester before she completed work in New York. She was going to Cornell. And she made me desirous of going to Cornell too. So I did.

They did not turn my degree down. But neither did they accept it without question. They told me that to enter into graduate work they would want me to take a year of undergraduate work. They didn't know anything about me, nor what I could do. So I accepted their offer. They said, 'You may take any course in the catalog for which you are qualified.' I took their catalog of arts and Sciences. I went through it carefully and I picked the things that interested me in English and philosophy. I selected, they said, 'You may take any course in the undergraduate or graduate level.' Then they were, then I selected a course about six subjects that interested me in English and philosophy. I picked some of them for later, until the other courses. Because some were on the verge of _____, some were.

But I enjoyed them very much. And apparently was quite successful in my courses. At the end of the year they awarded me Phi Beta Kappa. Which I was very proud of since I had been a transfer there only one year. After that I wanted nothing so much as to continue there. But I did not feel financially able to do so, so I stayed out and taught freshman English for a couple of years at Meredith College. And I went back. They gave me a scholarship, Ezra Cornell scholarship. After that they gave me Ezra Cornell fellowships and I went through really on scholarships and fellowships. So that is how I got my doctorate.

COOPER: That's wonderful.

SMITH: And, well one additional year and then three additional years of graduate work for a doctorate degree. I worked in the Elizabethan field principally, with Professor Joseph Q. Adams who was a native of South Carolina. And a brilliant Shakespearean scholar. He was an honor to the South. And I liked his work very much. And he said he had given me a research subject. He was interested in plays and masks which had been given at Court during the Elizabethan period. He said, "You work on that." So I did. I did a year's work on it, for which I was given a masters degree. And when he read my manuscript he said, "This must be published." And he said, "Come back and complete your doctor's degree." And I did.

And Cornell did not have a press at that time. It used the Yale press. So my dissertation was published by the Yale press. I've forgotten now what year, but it was about 1925 or something like that. Because I got my degree in 1924. So that is a brief account of the way I got it.

COOPER: That sounds really exciting. You of course had your bachelors degree at Meredith in English. Do you remember some of your teachers at Meredith?

SMITH: Well, yes I do. Well, in English of course Mrs. Elizabeth Avery Colton. In history there was a _____ lady from Massachusetts.

COOPER: Oh, goodness. Somebody's mentioned her name before but I...

SMITH: In history.

COOPER: But I don't recall.

SMITH: In Latin, Helen Hull Law, a delightful person and a brilliant teacher.

COOPER: And the president of course you remember.

SMITH: That was Dr. Vann of course.

COOPER: Everybody seems to remember him.

SMITH: Oh yes.

COOPER: He was quite an interesting individual.

SMITH: He was an interesting person. I lived in his house for a year and got personally extremely well acquainted.

COOPER: Was that when you were a student or when you were a teacher?

SMITH: When I was a student.

COOPER: Okay. And you went back and taught for a couple years there. Was it Dr. Vann who talked you into coming back there to teach, or?

SMITH: Well, I don't remember. I suppose I was glad to go back. Had the urges to go back.

COOPER: After you finished your doctorate at Cornell, then where did you go after that?

SMITH: Well, I did not have a good offer at that particular time. I accepted one, I don't know that I would want this published, they may still be in existence or they may not...

COOPER: That's okay.

SMITH: ...at a little college in Georgia, as a stop gap until I could get a suitable position. I would have had a position at, I believe at Wellesley, but they did not have an opening in my field of study. And so I had to take something else as a stop gap until something came along. I stayed at this little school in Georgia for one year. And then a better offer came along. It was from Jefferson College in Marion, Alabama. A nice, dignified small southern school for girls.

COOPER: Well, good.

SMITH: Marion is a small town, more famous now for other things than the fact that Jefferson College is still in it. But it was a very good school. I stayed there for ten years. On the whole, happy years. Then the matter of health came in. In that section of Alabama malaria was rampant. Unfortunately, after five years I think of good health, I contracted malaria. I took quinine by the handful. It didn't do much good and modern treatments had not come along at that time. So after being there for about five years, and they were happy years mind you, and the faculty was good, they didn't for some reason contract malaria. I asked for a leave of absence for my health. And I got it. But unfortunately a year of rest was not sufficient to rid me of all the malarial parasites. I stayed at home, and of course I wasn't close to marrying. And Dr. Brewer heard about my being there and wanted me to come up to Meredith. [Door opening] What is that?

COOPER: It's just one of the aides I believe.

SMITH: The, by the end of another year my health was restored. And Dr. Brewer offered me, he did not have a good position in the English Department, he offered me the position of Dean of Women. Which I accepted just to get in. But I found the work very, very trying. And not at all suited to my disposition. And so that was that. I decided I did not want to go shopping around for another position. I was about 41 or something like that at that time. And I just up and resigned. I said, 'I'm going to retire.' And I did. So that is that.

COOPER: So you were actually at Meredith twice then?

SMITH: Yes. I believe ten years altogether, as an instructor.

COOPER: Then when you decided to retire, you came to this area after that?

SMITH: I just up and resigned. And I wanted a cottage in the mountains so I went up and built myself one. And I stayed there for a few years, and then came back home and got married.

COOPER: After a few years in the mountains, yes.

SMITH: After all that time.

COOPER: Okay, where were you in the mountains?

SMITH: I was at Hendersonville, In Laurel Park.

COOPER: Oh yes, that's lovely country.

SMITH: In a lovely little house there. Which I later sold.

N So when you say you came back home, where exactly was that?

SMITH: Calling home where it still is, Wagram was not much of a town at that time. And my parents were living in the country on the farm, where they had a nice place. But I did not, but my parents were old. My mother died. My brother and his family moved in. I didn't want to continue living with my relatives. And so I bought a run down place in the village of Wagram, which was a very small village, and restored it. My husband and I together restored it. It was impossible to build anything new during the war years. You couldn't even build a garage. I tried to build a garage with living quarters over, as a starter. I couldn't even do that. But you could restore something old. And buy as much material as you wanted to. So I bought an old run down house and

restored it. My husband and I together did. And we spend a whole lot on it. But we enjoyed the work. And at first he proposed building up on the farm in the edge of some beautiful woodland. But when I thought on our growing old together up there in a rather remote place, I thought that that would not be a good idea. So we went ahead with the restoration of the old house. We spent a lot of money on it. We finally produced something that we both enjoyed. And that was home.

COOPER: I live in an old house. I restored a house that's 140 some old years old. So I can appreciate that, the work that went into it. Did you know who had lived in that house before?

SMITH: Oh yes. I knew it was not a very old house. It was simply a house where the people who built it could not maintain it. They let the taxes get too high and they couldn't pay them. And the town took it over for taxes. We got it for a very reasonable amount with considerable land around it. And that became home.

COOPER: And that's still your home?

SMITH: It still is my home.

COOPER: Now when you married you lived somewhere else while you were restoring this, you lived with your family at first didn't you?

SMITH: Yes. And my husband-to-be lived with a family he had grown fond to. Because he had been coming down to this area for several years for hunting, which he enjoyed.

COOPER: Is that how you met him, when he came down to hunt?

SMITH: Well, I had known him actually five years before we were married. When I was teaching in Alabama I would come home at Christmas. He had been down hunting. Of course he retired early from business. People would say, "Too bad you didn't come yesterday, Mr. Smith has just gone home to spend Christmas with his mother." So it was five years before I really met him.

COOPER: And how long did you live together then before he died?

SMITH: About 17 years. We were married in '61 I believe, on his birthday. He became very fond of the South and was willing to stay here, or wanted to stay here. The Smith family homestead was one of the great old houses of Long Island. And it had, well the older members of the family had died. Ownership had settled on, finally, to two unmarried ladies and my husband. My husband

said, "If I stay there I will have the upkeep of this place." Which was a very imposing place built years ago by a famous architect. I don't think anybody ever counted the rooms in it but there was a report that it had forty, including a servant's wing of many little tiny rooms and a large attic. One of my nephews said I was practically raised, one of my husband's nephews said, "I was practically raised in the _____." But after it came into, in part, into my possession he said, "I found a huge room in it I had never seen before." That was the first floor. But I don't know that you are interested in any of these things.

COOPER: So did you ever go there to spend any time while the house was still in the family?

SMITH: What dear?

COOPER: In New York.

SMITH: In New York? Well, the house had been built many years before. Built by his great-grandfather. And so it was ...[endof side one]

COOPER: That's very good. You mentioned your parents. Would you like to go back and tell me, did you have brothers and sisters? Or do you want to tell me...

SMITH: One brother, no sisters.

COOPER: Is he older than you or younger?

SMITH: Yes.

COOPER: Older. And you mentioned in the, was your father a farmer?

SMITH: Yes he was.

COOPER: Okay. What kind of farming at that time?

SMITH: Cotton.

COOPER: So, did you ever pick any cotton?

SMITH: Pick any cotton? As a child yes I did.

COOPER: I did too. And it's very back breaking work.

SMITH: I tried desperately to pick a 100 pounds and I never did succeed. That is, in

one day.

COOPER: That's right. Well, you and I have something in common. We've both tried to pick 100 pounds of cotton. That's very hard work back in those days. Well, since you have that relationship with Meredith as a teacher, as a faculty member as the Dean of Women, as well as being a student, I'm sure you see Meredith from two different perspectives for sure. Do you want to think back on Meredith and it doesn't necessarily have to be agreeable. Something that you might...

SMITH: Well, teaching was always my main interest. I got shifted into executive work there at Meredith College, as Dean of Women. I did not like the work. It was not temperamentally suited to me because teaching was what I wanted to do.

COOPER: Was teaching a good experience at Meredith then? The students that you taught at Meredith? You had good students?

SMITH: Oh yes. I had very good students.

COOPER: Who was the Head of the English Department when you...

SMITH: Well, Miss Colton, but she died after, I've forgotten what year. And after having taught freshman and sophomore English for a while. After Miss Colton's death they gave me her position. And so I was Head of the English Department, at Meredith at one time. But when I became Dean of Women there I did not like the work. It was temperamentally unsuited to me. And very difficult.

COOPER: Now that was on the new campus. What we call the new campus.

SMITH: It was on the new campus. And after a try at it I just up and resigned and retired.

COOPER: When you were up in Henderson in the mountains did you do any writing or anything while you were there?

SMITH: No I didn't write anything. I just enjoyed the experience. The building experience of a small house that I enjoyed, and for several years. And then my brother was in the meantime managing the farm and the business. His health failed and I awoke to the fact that I had to come home. (mumbling) So I sold my house, which I dearly loved, and came home and lived there some after that. Then I began the, that was during the war time of course, we were married in '44.

COOPER: You were married in '44?

SMITH: Yes. Let's see, I believe we were, yes. And so I...

COOPER: So, if you were married in '44 and you were married 17 years, you said that's how long you were married.

SMITH: Did I say that? We were married 16 years, 17 years we were married.

COOPER: So, but you've been a widow a long time.

SMITH: Yes I have. About 21 years.

COOPER: And so you had the experience of a new house and you had the experience of remodeling an old house. And you helped to manage the farm for a number of years.

SMITH: Well, I didn't do much. My brother did most of it. But after my father's death, that was after my marriage too, we had to divide the property. And then my husband had a liking for the farm, or a farm, and he took over the management of it. Without knowing much about it, and made a great success.

COOPER: Oh very good. That was a nice retirement sort of thing.

SMITH: Yes it was a nice retirement.

COOPER: Yeah, very good. Then when he died did you sell the farm or did you...?

SMITH: I sold the farm. Not the part I inherited from my father. I still have that. But several people wanted to buy the farm and land was high. And I thought if I ever sold it I'd better sell when prices were good. Several people wanted to buy it.

COOPER: So you've been I Wagrum, back in Wagrum now since the early 1940's. Is that right?

SMITH: Yes. Something like that.

COOPER: Do you want to tell me a little bit more about Wagrum? About your life in the community, other than your farming with your husband?

SMITH: Well, I decided the proper thing for me to do was to enter into community life. So I did. I joined the clubs, taught in the Sunday School, all that sort of

thing.

COOPER: In Wagrum what clubs were there that you liked?

SMITH: The John Charles McNeil Book Club was our principal club.

COOPER: Okay.

SMITH: Which is still exists.

COOPER: I'm in a book study group so I'm interested. Tell me more about that.

SMITH: Well, let me tell you a little bit more about something else. John Charles McNeil of course, it was his native son. And by turn of fortune my father had bought up all the land that Duncan McNeil, John Charles' father owned, at his death. So we in fact owned John Charles McNeil's birthplace out in the country. So when the move arose to restore, to move and restore his house I had become deeply interested in historical preservation and renovation. And I was a moving influence I'm sure in moving John Charles' birthplace, which I then practically owned, my father having died. And I influenced the removal of his house and the restoration of it. That took me pretty deeply into historical preservation and restoration. So that has been a leading interest in my life since then. I wish you could visit their restored house. It is not very much to look at on the outside but it is beautiful on the inside. We, it was done according to, well the best principles of restoration. And we were fortunate in, in the interior of the house which was in pretty bad condition and needed a lot of old pine to restore it. We were very fortunate in getting some magnificent old pine from a local church, which had sold or was in the process of selling his old pine pews which were long and broad. And they were crazy for selling them cause they wanted to sell them. We bought enough of those pews to get all the wonderful old pine which we needed for the interior restoration of the house. Well, restoration was necessary as it was in many cases. The church for example where the pews had been used. They simply took them off, chucked them on the ground and proceeded to buy some shiny new pews. We bought as many of those pews as we needed. We had all the wonderful old pine of the period to restore the interior of the house where it was necessary. And the church by way, the colored church, was the Spring Branch Colored Church, about which John Charles wrote one of his best known poems.

COOPER: Oh, wonderful. Where is the house now? Can you sort of tell me where it's located?

SMITH: Yes. About mile and a half from Wagrum. If you happen to know where the

Spring Hill Cemetery is that is one of the county landmarks. The house is across the highway from there.

COOPER: Is the road a highway number, or where you go by it?

SMITH: Well, the highway is numbered but it turns off at that particular point.

COOPER: At the Spring Hill cemetery?

SMITH: At the Spring Hill cemetery.

COOPER: Okay. How far from your house is it now, since it was moved from your farm?

SMITH: Oh about, probably about two miles.

COOPER: Well, I believe your church is also called Spring?

SMITH: Spring Hill.

COOPER: Spring Hill Baptist Church yes. Tell me about your church.

SMITH: My church?

COOPER: Yes. Spring Hill Baptist Church.

SMITH: I can show you a picture.

COOPER: Okay, you said that the editor of the *Biblical Recorder* was going to put your picture on the front page and he did.

SMITH: He did.

COOPER: Alright this is evidently from your celebration.

SMITH: That is the church.

COOPER: Yes, Spring Hill Baptist Church wing.

SMITH: This church was originally founded and the first building was on the area that we're talking about. It was later moved to _____. But that is the church. Founded in 1813.

COOPER: So you just recently celebrated 150 years. Is that right?

SMITH: Yes.

COOPER: Okay, and I'm going to, this is the pictures of the congregation and...

SMITH: Yes. Just some little booklet about the church.

COOPER: And I see your picture right here

SMITH: Well, it is the worst picture I ever had made.

COOPER: Oh no, Mrs. Mary Smith, very good. I know you're proud of this.

SMITH: Well, it's a very nice little handbook to have.

COOPER: Yes. Now your parents went to this church?

SMITH: My mother did. My father went to Methodist. And not much of a church man at that.

COOPER: Okay you said originally this church was in the more the Spring Hill community but moved.

SMITH: Yes it was in the community which contained the cemetery.

COOPER: I see. If I go out and find the cemetery...

SMITH: Well, they moved with the house.

COOPER: So if I go out and find the cemetery I'd know that's where this church used to be.

SMITH: Yes. That area is called the Richmond Temperance and Literary Society area. Because in 1855 I believe, the community which was strong on temperance, built a temperance hall _____ up there. And they had a temperance society which met there and kept accurate little notes for many years. It seems as long as I can remember. And the temperance hall, which is a six sided little building, still stands.

COOPER: Why the six sides? Does that have a significance?

SMITH: I don't know. People usually said it was octagonal but it wasn't. That was, so I've been told, a popular style of building at that period. It's a beautiful little building and has been restored too. So that area is still of historical

interest.

COOPER: I talked to your Minister, Keith Burwell about you.

SMITH: Yes, nice boy I call him. He's quite young.

COOPER: Okay, now that you've said it I knew when I was talking over the phone to him that he was a young man. And from his picture I see that he is a young man.

SMITH: Yes he's a young man. He's under thirty now. He's about 28 or 29.

COOPER: Okay. Does he have a family?

SMITH: Wife and two small children.

COOPER: He talked very nice on the phone about you.

SMITH: He's very nice. He's just a nice boy.

COOPER: He encouraged me to come. I, since you, you know did have to be here temporarily in this retirement home, I needed, you know, to be sure that it was alright.

SMITH: I'm just here temporarily.

COOPER: You look like you're doing fine.

SMITH: Well, I get along very well. It's a nice place.

COOPER: This is so new. She told me...

SMITH: It's the cleanest place I've ever been in. I never saw the like of scouring that they do. And the chimney is well kept.

COOPER: Do you know how many people are here?

SMITH: Well, there are only thirty odd, the capacity is sixty.

COOPER: So they will have more as time goes on?

SMITH: They will have more.

COOPER: Yes. I'm sure they will because there's so much demand for it.

SMITH: Oh by the way are you hungry by any chance?

COOPER: No, thank you.

SMITH: There's some ice cream put away in the freezer in case you want it.

COOPER: That's delightful. But I don't get much exercise driving around so I can't eat a lot. Okay, when I came into the room I heard this meow and I thought surely under the bed there must be a cat.

SMITH: There would be a cat if this place allowed a cat.

COOPER: So I saw this lovely black cat on top of your TV.

SMITH: I had, it didn't do me any good, but after I had this little stroke which involved this hand, that was all it involved, a therapist to work on my muscles and so on, the doctor recommended a therapist. I didn't like the therapy by the way, but please don't say that.

COOPER: None of us would like that.

SMITH: No. I didn't like it. But she had a little girl who loved cats. And who would, who had this kitten or one like it and she would bring it along and show me. So after the therapy sessions were over this little girl, about 6 or 7 years-old, gave me her cat, which I thought was a wonderful gift. I presume she bought another. So I'm becoming very much attached to it.

COOPER: So she gave you this cat?

SMITH: She gave me that cat.

COOPER: Ah, that's precious.

SMITH: I had to leave a black cat at the farm. But now I'm planning to go back there. It's a big house and the renters have television and two apartments, good size ones. I intend to go back when we can get a good family in at least one of the apartments. That is just preliminary to saying that I left my black cat out there because someone was in the house, and _____ he likes cats. So my kitten is very well cared for. And I was afraid she would miss me a great deal but she doesn't seem to mind a bit.

COOPER: Well, you've had a lot of cats during your years.

SMITH: I've had a lot of cats, yes.

COOPER: But now you just have the one black cat.

SMITH: I have the one black cat.

COOPER: Well, I'm sure it's being well taken care of.

SMITH: It's well taken care of. Otherwise there'd be some other arrangement.

COOPER: With your interest in preservation and historical things, were there things from your family that you've been able to preserve? Like furniture or things of that sort?

SMITH: Yes, quite a bit of furniture. My husband had a number of pieces of very desirable beautiful old furniture. His old home is now a historical museum down in Smithtown, New York. Because the nephews said they didn't want to live there and they couldn't want to get rid of it. With most of the original furnishings in the house. And these pieces of Smith furniture, which we had some very beautiful furniture, after we had let them go, I haven't seen the house since we moved out. I said to Graham, 'What does the house look like, were those pieces taken? One piece was a fine desk.' He said, "It looks as if the locusts have been through there." So, but it's _____ to furnish without those pieces.

COOPER: So you let the, when it became a museum you let the pieces go back there?

SMITH: Go back there. They would go back into the original house from which they came.

COOPER: Smithtown? Since your last name is Smith, your husband's grandfather or someone must have been influential in Smithtown, New York.

SMITH: Well, it was my husband who first became interested in coming to this part. He told me that his first connection with this part of the connection was selling golf equipment at Pinehurst. That was a long time go. And then he was interested in hunting as a young man. And he met hunters here. And then he started coming back and hunting _____. He finally came to be disillusioned with hunting and gave it up. So he never wanted to kill anything else.

COOPER: That's exactly, my husband was a hunter but now he just likes to look at it. He doesn't like to...

SMITH: Yes, that was my husband.

COOPER: But, the furniture that went back to Smithtown, new York, you said, where the museum is now. Was that his father's place, his grandfather's place?

SMITH: His great-grandfather's place.

COOPER: Great-grandfather's place. Okay.

SMITH: It's an old family.

COOPER: But his interest down this way was in selling golf equipment, so is that the kind of business they had?

SMITH: No. His father was a lawyer and a dealer in real estate.

COOPER: Okay. Before our tape ends here let me ask you, I know you've given us some very colorful events in your life, some very meaningful ones and some that you've certainly done a lot in the way of preservation and so forth, you've lived for 97 years.

SMITH: Yes.

COOPER: In just looking back on your life as a whole, your philosophy of life, to some of us who haven't lived quite so many years, would you like to give us some words of advice or?

SMITH: No. I am or have been primarily a teacher.

COOPER: And you taught?

SMITH: But I'm interested in a great many other things too.

COOPER: But you're so alert here at age 97 and have such an interest in things. Because you've stayed involved in things all these years.

SMITH: Well, yes I have. I haven't lost interest in living and doing.

COOPER: That's great.

SMITH: I don't believe I ever shall.

COOPER: You certainly have a very good memory at this point. Which is a tremendous asset.

SMITH: Yes I suppose I have. Yet I forget a few things.

COOPER: You have a short term memory, things that are just happening around you now. And a long term...

SMITH: I have more of a long term memory. I can forget some little day to day occurrences. I don't forget them easily. But my long term memory is better than my short term.

COOPER: Well, I certainly think they're both marvelous.

SMITH: I went back yesterday to Dr. Tate. He's, if you know anything about _____, he's outstanding. He has an office here in Laurinburg. Well, he does his surgery in Pinehurst. What did I start to say?

COOPER: About your eyes. You were telling me about yesterday's visit.

SMITH: Yesterday I visited for a check-up. He removed a cataract and put in an implant, whatever that is. So it was rather extensive. I have to laugh when I think about a friend of mine who had recently had a cataract removed by the same doctor. She said to me, she said, "Don't dread this at all." She waved her hands and she said, "It's just nothing, really." Well, she had one small cataract removed. I had a large one. And when I had been on the operating table for forty minutes, because I checked the time, I thought to myself, 'I'm going home and tell Lottie May that it isn't nothing exactly. But I will insist that it's something.' But it is not an operation to dread.

COOPER: That's wonderful.

SMITH: And it was very successful.

COOPER: Good.

SMITH: What was that again?

SMITH: Hills wrapped in gray standing along the west.
 Clouds dimly lighted gathering slowly.
 The star of peace at watch above the crest.
 Oh Holy, Holy, Holy.

We know Oh Lord so little of what is best (This is the second verse)
 Windowless(?) we move so slowly.
 But in thy calm or knowledge let us rest.
 Oh Holy, Holy, Holy.

That is everybody's favorite of his poems.

COOPER: Alright and when you quote, will you tell us here on this tape whose poem it is.

SMITH: "Sundown," by Joan, Joan McNeil.

COOPER: Okay. And McNeil's house was on your farm and is the one that has now been moved and you've been instrumental in restoring.

SMITH: In restoring. It has incidentally a very beautiful portrait of Joan Joan McNeil in it because it was done by...

ELIZABETH VANN
Class of 1917

Today is October 3rd, 1988. We are in Fort Washington, Maryland. Dr. Elizabeth Vann, class of 1917 will narrate a tape for an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper, class of '54. This is side one.

COOPER: Good morning Dr. Vann. It's wonderful to be here with you today. Tell us about this place that you've lived for so very long.

VANN: Well, my friend that I lived with, it was a Yankee that really lived in Massachusetts near Boston, built the house entirely on her own. I didn't put in with her on the building of it. but I came down a lot when it was being built. And when she died, I guess she, well she deeded it to me before she died. So after, there are two full apartments in it each with two bedrooms, one bath, dining room and kitchen. And a fairly large living room. After she died in 1972 I moved down. I had been renting the upstairs since then. Right now there's a very wonderful girl, I say girl but she's 37 years-old and a grandmother, living upstairs and taking care of her family. And being an occasion to have to go and work other places that are cleaner(?).

COOPER: Well, it certainly is a beautiful place you have here.

VANN: And when we first came down we couldn't see the river. There was, open to work of trees through there. One time when we were down here before we had the house I saw a big black snake. And I called the other two people who were here. Then we called our neighbor down, between us and the river. But the growth was so heavy that he had to go down in through the road and come into our place before. And he said, "The snake was a black snake and I had to kill it." But the whole thing was willed to us and we started coming down here. But we worked to clear the house, the land, some before the house was built. And then of course people had to clear it some more when they started building.

COOPER: And now it's just enough clearing so you can see through to the river and still enjoy all the trees between here and the river.

VANN: Well, I say the only thing I like about winter is I have a better view of the river. And I can put things on my porch, unheated porch, that should be in the refrigerator.

COOPER: And you said that you call this place ...

VANN: RIP Haven. Our Rest In Peace. We started calling it that when it, during the war, second World War. And we used to have a sign up there saying it was a haven. Well, I don't know what you want to do.

COOPER: Alright, you came to Washington after you...

VANN: In 1926.

COOPER: ...'26. And you've lived her ever since? Is that...

VANN: I've lived in this area. When we left we both, Dr. Hubbard and I, both had apartments on hospital's, St. Elizabeth's grounds at St. Elizabeth Mental Hospital. Of course at that time it was the Federal Government Hospital for the Insane. And we both had apartments on the grounds. And then we moved out here. We had to come a little early because the District of Columbia charged us, had to pay income tax if were there by the 1st of July. And this place Maryland doesn't have to pay taxes until the last day of December I think it was. A good deal later anyway. So we came down in order to save the income tax, a year's income tax to the District.

COOPER: And so you and she both lived here.

VANN: Yes.

COOPER: For a long, for many years then.

VANN: 1951 to 1976.

COOPER: After you left Meredith, I know you were there as you say from the first grade through graduation.

VANN: Yes. After my father resigned as president, he was no longer president. Dr. Brewer came in in between my sophomore/junior years.

COOPER: Uh huh, okay.

VANN: But we had the apartment first within easy walking distance of the, about two blocks I think. One place and then when we, Dr. Charles Maddrey retired or moved we bought his house which was closer. Even closer than that to the Meredith Campus. But I did not live in the College in the dormitories for my first two years. And for my third year, my junior year, I did not live in the dormitory. But my senior year I did. But my friendship with Mary Lynch Johnson became in 1907 I think it was. Her sister came to teach in the lower, what we call the Little Academy. I believe that the primary grades were put

in primarily for possible teaching so that the students who were planning to teach would have practice rooms. But they were, well they came, I can't remember once or two times that anybody came. And finally they gave it up. But they did not give it up until after I left thank goodness.

COOPER: Alright. After you graduated from Meredith then you went to Medical School.

VANN: That's right. I went straight to medical school.

COOPER: And where was that?

VANN: In 1917, fall of 1917.

COOPER: You went to what place for your...?

VANN: Boy's Medical it was then. They started taking men and changed the name to the Medical School of Pennsylvania I think it is. But I didn't, Blanche Barius and Bessie Lane, I thought Bessie was college physician before 1950. Apparently she was not if you don't remember.

COOPER: Well, I went in 1950. But I'm not sure who the physician was. She may have been there and I was just so healthy I didn't come in contact with her very often. I did visit a physician who lived, who worked in the Raleigh Community. So maybe they had a community physician by that time.

VANN: No, I think Bessie was the physician for quite some time after Dr. Dixon Carroll was killed in an automobile accident. I don't know whether you ever heard of Dr. Dixon Carroll or not.

COOPER: Yes I've heard the women talking about her. I surely have.

VANN: Well, she was living in the dormitories when father went there. Incidentally, he had known her brother in theological seminary. And her, she had gone to visit her brother in his own home. So father knew her beforehand.

COOPER: I see.

VANN: And she was married from there. She didn't want to get married in the Chapel but the students were so anxious to have her do so they could go to the wedding that she finally was. And I think she was a tiny bit taller than her husband. I think she was as tall as he. My nephew's wife has almost, is two or three inches shorter than her husband when they stood up together. But his length is in his thighs. And hers is in her body.

COOPER: In height.

VANN: So when they're sitting down together it looks like he's taller.

COOPER: Okay. So Dr. Carroll was taller than her husband?

VANN: I think she was.

COOPER: Alright, now she had already gone to medical school and all before she came to work at Meredith though?

VANN: No, not before she first came to Meredith. Oh yes of course she had gone to medical school. I'm not sure where. Someplace in New York City I think. And she always wore that, she was the first woman to take State Board Examinations in North Carolina. And of course there you make and you answer questions and turn in a paper without your name on it, with just a number on it. And she insisted that the men on the examining board flunked the first five students with the most feminine handwriting, trying to _____ her.

COOPER: Oh goodness. But she made it.

VANN: Yes, she made it.

COOPER: Okay. Now there was another person who graduated from Meredith who, a little earlier than you did, and went on to Medical School. But then she developed cancer I believe.

VANN: Oh, that was Blanche Barius and she was, I guess you consider it _____ six or eight years older than I. And Bessie Lane was older than I. But she had, I guess she had several years out of college before she went to medical, studied medicine. And this other woman was Blanche Barius, B-a-r-i-u-s. And she was there interning at Philadelphia General Hospital. And she had volunteered for the medical missionary. And she developed some symptoms, I don't know just what symptoms she had. And the doctors at St., at Philadelphia General Hospital where she was working wanted to go a laparotomy on her but she wouldn't let them. She said she had to finish college, medical school first. And toward the last I think she, I don't know that she actually graduated but I know she never practiced because she went home to die. And did die four or five months later I think. It was, I know it was later.

COOPER: Alright. So she never practiced but, and Bessie Lane, you actually got your

M.D. degree before Bessie then. Because she went after ...

VANN: No, the same year.

COOPER: ...Same year, okay.

VANN: I think they read out the names I alphabetical order so she got hers ten minutes before I did.

COOPER: And so she was in the same school that you were in?

VANN: Yes, same school same class.

COOPER: Well, that must have been nice. Two of you from Meredith receiving your degree at the same time.

VANN: Yes, it was nice.

COOPER: Okay now Bessie, where did she work when she got out of medical school?

VANN: She started out to practice medicine with Dr. Hubbard, Dr. Dixon Carroll. And she was, they had practice offices together until Dr. Dixon died. And I don't know just who that was. I don't know whether you've ever seen the medallion of Dr. Dixon ?

COOPER: No, don't think I have.

VANN: Ought to see if you can find out. Plaster of Paris medallion, I think it's in that.

COOPER: Okay. But then Bessie continued her work. But she's not living any longer. Do you know when...? Oh yes, isn't that pretty? Maybe we'll take a picture of that a little later on our video.

VANN: Well, I think that a copy of it is at Meredith. But I think it's in the infirmary.

COOPER: Okay, uh huh.

VANN: I don't know whether they'd have any use for another one or not.

COOPER: Isn't that beautiful. And it was done about 1910?

VANN: I think that's when.

COOPER: And this one, was this done about 1910? Or the...

VANN: I think so, as far as I can figure.

COOPER: Now that's beautiful. Well, we'll take a picture of this a little bit later then to put on our video with you.

VANN: Yeah.

COOPER: Okay. So, but you're the oldest Meredith graduate who is living who received their Ph.D., right? You were right in there with them in years. She was earlier but you and Bessie were the same, on the same day you received your M.D.s?

VANN: That's right.

COOPER: And do you remember the date, the year that was?

VANN: No, there's my diploma there.

COOPER: That's alright. Let's see what it says.

VANN: But I don't know whether they dated it or not.

COOPER: After graduation you came straight to St. Elizabeth's Hospital?

VANN: No, I went to Samarkand. Which is, I guess it's still running. It's a North Carolina, a state college, I don't know what they call it up there. But for girls who were...

COOPER: Had discipline problems?

VANN: Yeah.

COOPER: Yeah, okay.

VANN: And I lived there two years and then I took one year at the North Carolina Mental Hospital. And then I came up here.

COOPER: Okay.

VANN: 1921.

COOPER: 1921, okay.

VANN: Yeah, I know the date, but I didn't know whether if the exact date was any different.

COOPER: Of your graduation. Okay so then you went to the girl's institution there for two years. And then to the Mental Health, Mental Hospital of North Carolina. And then ever since that time you've been here in Washington.

VANN: Well, I was at St. Elizabeth's most of the time, 1926 till I retired and came down here. But I think pretty sure I worked some several years after I got down here. And...

COOPER: That was a long time to be in one hospital. I'm sure that you have lots of memories.

VANN: I surely do.

NIECE: The day was the 15th of June. I didn't realize that's what you wanted.

COOPER: Yeah, 15th of June. Okay. They all get to graduate earlier now. The graduation dates are earlier than they were for us. Okay, there's a story about a smallpox quarantine that you had on the campus.

VANN: I was just three years-old at the time. I don't remember too much about it. But I remember they had, I don't know whether I remembered it at the time, but I'm sure they had, one girl had it. She was in what we called the East Building. And she was, that room was quarantined from the rest of the building. The rest of the building was quarantined from the rest of the town. And they had armored guards on duty to patrol around the, what's her name, outside the campus. And of course back then if they wanted to write to their people they put a hat pin through it. I bet you never saw a hat pin.

COOPER: Yes, I have.

VANN: And they had them over at the, held them over smoke with the idea that that would sterilize it.

COOPER: Oh, goodness.

VANN: And I was about three years-old. And we had a woman that had come to nurse me before mother's child was born. I'm sure that they got there in late summer of 1900. And mother was pregnant and she had, they decided they wanted a nursemaid for me and my sister who was three years-older than I. And they found this woman that turned out to be a wonderful person. But she said when they reached her that though she couldn't stay very long well she'd

come and help out for a little while. And she stayed until Richard died, my little brother. But when Richard was little I was jealous of him because I was used to sharing mother with other children. But I wasn't used to, Mary was mine.

COOPER: And Mary was the nursemaid's name?

VANN: Well, she started out with that. But of course we didn't need a nursemaid after we, I was at school then. And she was one of the maids hired by the college for our apartment. And then when we left there she came with us over to the other apartment. And I don't think she was working full time over there but she was working off and on till father died in 1941.

COOPER: The brother that you're talking about, do you want to tell us more about him? You said he died young? Richard?

VANN: Yes. He was born in November 1900. And as I remember him he was, that's the picture, a sturdy child.

COOPER: Yes, how beautiful.

VANN: And as I say I don't remember much of the particulars he had during his lifetime. But I had either whooping coughs or measles. And I had the other one of the two. And Richard had the two close together, and in the fall of 1905. And he had been there, born in November. And he and I both had chicken pox or whooping cough. I can't remember which it was. And he had both of them. And they put us in the infirmary which was on the 4th floor of the main building at that time. And then they let us out when Christmas was coming. And Richard wasn't feeling too good that day. And Christmas, the day we celebrated Christmas, the 25th of course, and they put him back in bed about noon. And the next morning I wake up. I didn't know anything of what was going during the night of course, but he had had trouble breathing. And mother called Dr. Dixon and she came in and the minute she came in she said, "Mrs. Vann, I'm afraid you're going to lose this baby." And he did die before morning.

COOPER: Oh my goodness. So then the two living children were your sister and you who grew...?

VANN: And my brother.

COOPER: Okay, and you have another brother. Okay.

VANN: She lost two boys. And she's the wife of one of the brothers, oldest one of

brother's children. There were three. And Richard was named for Brother, I mean for Father. And brother had been named for mother's father. And he was William Harvey Vann and called Harvey most of the time. His son was William Pennington Vann and called Penny. And his son was is William Roderick Vann and called Roderick.

NIECE: And you're married to Richard Filmore Vann, II. Who is the oldest son of her brother who survived.

VANN: Well, uh, Mother had, or Father had a prejudice _____, saying anybody that's named being named for him. And of course there were two brothers earlier. One was named for mother's father. And one was named for father's father. But mother wanted to name both those boys Richard. And father said, everybody that was named for him, even dogs and canary birds, either died young or went to the bed. And mother best waited until that, he let her name the next child Richard. But they thought they might take the curse off by naming him Richard, Thaddeus Richard was the name of father's brother, instead of Richard Tilman, which is father's full name. And then he died five years later.

COOPER: There's a story about you being rolled around the campus in a wheel barrow during the smallpox quarantine. Do you remember that?

VANN: No I don't remember that. But I remember one time when the building was, we were in the building where there was one patient sick. And father and sister, I don't know where brother was, were in the other building, what we called main building at that time. And I remember breaking quarantine to run over and show sister a new dress I had. But I can't remember about the, I don't know where Mary Lynch got that. I know she put it in the book.

COOPER: Well, evidently you were pretty young then. But there's also a story about your being a bridesmaid in a campus wedding in 1911. Do you remember about that?

VANN: Well, I was, Miss Kate Ford was married then. And I guess that was the time it was. Anyway she was helping out at Meredith and stayed out during the summer sometimes. And she wanted, she was going to get married and have father do it in the old College parlors. And Heather Cary, another friend of mine who graduated in 1918, and I were supposed to be bridesmaids. And it was all very casual. And we went, when other people in the crowd were seated, and we, Miss Kate and her, well I don't know where her husband to be was at that time but apparently in some other part of the building, out of the room. And she married and Heather and I walked in ahead of her. And for some reason brother made a remark. But what it was I have no notion,

that struck us all funny. And we pretty near broke up the wedding.

COOPER: I can imagine what that was like. I'm sure there were so many things that people wanted you to do when you were that cute little girl running around and as you grew up, for them at Meredith. You certainly can't remember all of them but basically your memories of those early days at Meredith seem pretty fun.

VANN: Well, as I said to you, one thing I remember being told when the building, when the old school was quarantined for smallpox, of course in those days I don't know what about now. I imagine it's the same now. All the maids came in for the day. And they wanted the maids to stay in and take care of the work but they couldn't go home at night because of the quarantine. And mother often has told me often that the only, there were ten or twelve maids I guess, I don't know just how many. But they all volunteered to stay. I don't know whether they volunteered or not but somebody asked them to stay and they agreed to stay All but one who had a nursing baby at home. And I think that was a real...

COOPER: That was really commendable on their part wasn't it?

VANN: It surely was.

COOPER: It surely was.

VANN: Well, the Governor's Mansion was right across Jones Street from Meredith College as it was then. And several times the governors' had children our age we went to play with. And one time Louise Aycock was sick in bed and we went over there to play. And Mrs. Aycock said Louisa is sick but I'd like for you to play up in her room because that'll keep her amused. And two or three days later Dr. Dixon told us Louise had diphtheria. And we all had to get inoculated. Of course they didn't have any routine inoculations for infants as they do now.

COOPER: So that wasn't very pleasant was it? do you remember about the inoculation? Evidently that was a very painful...

VANN: Well, of course it's about as, would be, I don't, I remember yes when I got it. I was in a small room off of our quarters in the old Adams Building, or the East Building. And I remember she came out one evening and gave us, I don't know whether anybody but me had to do it or not. Because I don't know whether sister was over there. But if she had been over there of course she would have had to have... Brother was ten years older than I and he doesn't figure largely in my childhood memories.

COOPER: Well, the reason I ask you about the diphtheria, I had diphtheria as a child. And all of my brothers and sisters under a certain age had to be, had to receive shots. And they all tell me what an ordeal I put them through because that was such a painful thing.

VANN: I don't have too much recollection of the pain. But I remember lying down in this smaller room when she gave me the shot.

COOPER: But the Aycock child survived?

VANN: Oh yes.

COOPER: Good.

VANN: She married Clarence Poe. I think he was also a rather prominent...

COOPER: Yes.

VANN: ...member of the community.

COOPER: So Governor Aycock is probably the one you remember the best then. Are there others you want to mention of the governors?

VANN: Well, I don't think so. There was a governor, I don't remember his name, Bushel I guess, who was a friend of my father's, my brother's. And he, I'm pretty sure, had been in school with brother. And at that time they had no public schools. I think Governor Aycock started them. And there was a man, Mr. Morrison, and he had a private high school. And I think this man that was later Governor was a friend of brother's in college, in Mr. Morrison's Academy.

COOPER: Oh yes, I've heard about Morrison's Academy. [end of side one]

COOPER: This is side two of a tape with Dr. Elizabeth Vann, as a part of an oral history of Meredith College Alumnae. Okay Dr. Vann tell us a little bit about your experiences in the professional field of medicine. Some of the things you've seen happen during your years of medicine.

VANN: Well, of course they didn't have sulfa drugs then. They didn't have antibiotics when I first...and they did treat people with bromides which put them to sleep for several mental hospitals after I joined and went into the mental psychiatry. And they didn't have, they had convulsive therapy. And then drugs came, drug therapy came in. But I was just about gotten out when the drug therapy

came in. But I lived on the grounds and there was, we had quarters where we could have a small stove and things so we could cook there if we wanted to. And there was a cafeteria on the grounds that we could also eat at when we liked. But nothing, the hospital didn't furnish any food. We always had to pay at the cafeteria or buy our food to cook. But I do remember that I think we got off at 4:30 in those days. And we could go home and phone a little store nearby and tell them what we wanted. And they could deliver it in time to cook it for supper.

COOPER: Oh, wonderful. So you literally lived at the hospital, for how many years there?

VANN: Well, from 1926 to 1951. And of course as one might expect I started off as an intern and gradually grew up in medical, in the hospital there till I was head of one of the services. Now I don't know whether the service, I hadn't stopped to think whether some division of the hospital how they happened to be called services. But they did and the hospital had an operating room in C Building where I lived at that time. And then the patients that needed operations were carried from the R Building where they were kept most of the time to C Building operating room. And then operated on and taken back to R Building. But I don't know just how long before I retired but they later got a separate building for more like a hospital building. And they had one floor for injured, for sick and injured employees. And the other floors for medical and surgical wards I guess, male and female. I don't know just how much ward services, how much the wards were.

COOPER: I'm sure that in the kind of situation you were in with people who were mentally disturbed that you had a great variety of experiences. Do you have any experiences you want to share, either that turned out to be funny or maybe that was sort of frightening?

VANN: Well, I don't remember too much that was frightening. One that was mildly amusing was, I was making rounds and there was an old lady in the ward I went through who was crying. And I stopped and asked her why she was crying. And she was in the late seventies I think. And she was crying because she said her mother had just died. And I was sure that couldn't be true. And she insisted. I said, 'How did you know?' She said, "That nurse that was here told me." And that she was talking to another patient. And I convinced her that she was not, her mother hadn't died recently. And she said, "Come and tell that woman that." And I said, 'Well, I'm in a hurry so I don't think, just as long as you know that's alright.' And she came onto the other woman and said, "This woman says you're a goddamn liar." And there was another woman that was, had her 100th birthday around that time. And she was around and dressed and talking fairly clearly. But one time I came in with a

supervisor. And she said, "How are you today?" And how is Mr. so and so?" I don't know what name she gave him, Johnson maybe. And I said, 'I don't know who you're talking about.' I had, he said, "Why he's your husband." I said, 'I never married.'" And the supervisor who was with me said, "Do you know something we don't know about her marriage?" And the old lady looked at me with the cutest _____ "Oh my goodness have I let the cat out of the bag" she said.

COOPER: That's a good one. Well, I know outside of the hospital you have had interests and I can see from this place where you lived here why you would well choose an interest in ecology. Would you like to share some of your experiences?

VANN: Well, I, Blanche Tabor was at Meredith in my class and she came when she was, Blanche entered the freshman class. And her family, I don't think they were living up here at that time, no. But I soon remembered, found out that Blanche anted to study medicine. But she didn't think she was going to be able to study medicine for some time. So she did not take pre-medical courses. And she and Mary Lynch took the Greek and I don't know what all else. And when she graduated she had, what's the name that I, a lot of extra subjects in the classical field, but not in medical. And the three of us went around together a good deal in Meredith. So I don't think we had, I was friend with Mary Lynch before, about the 7th grade. And she and I went around together a good deal during the college years. But, and I think that would be why I didn't see more of the others. For the first two years I lived in the College and for the next year I lived out. And for the senior year I lived _____ in the college but my family was living so close by that I spent a lot of time over there. And Blanche later came. We palled around with each other. So I didn't have as much dealings with the other members of my class as I might have if I had gone in as a freshman and associated with them more closely during the other years. But she...

COOPER: But Blanche is one of those that you did have a continued association with after you left Meredith?

VANN: Oh yes. She was responsible for my coming up here. Her folks were living up here then. And I, is that on?

COOPER: Yes.

VANN: I don't know whether it's appropriate to tell you one tale of her mother. Her father came from the, her parents lived when she was born in the far western part of North Carolina. And nobody had gone to college from there. And her father took the family which consisted of his wife and three small children, one

boy and two girls and Blanche was in the middle, oldest girl. And at that time they went to the University of North Carolina. And at that time it was so unusual to have any married families on...some of the professors wives decided that they should go and see about this. And I think she was fairly far out. And when they got there Blanche's mother had the three children out in the yard. And she didn't appreciate their coming and snooping, as she thought it was. And one woman said to her, "Are these three children all yours?" She said, "Oh they're Mr. Tabor's first wife's children." And she was the first wife.

COOPER: She was the first wife, that's pretty good. Alright so Blanche is one of those who, you said she was sort of responsible maybe for you coming here. So she was living here?

VANN: Yes, she was living here at the time and I think she was already going to medical school. She, I think she was in second year medical school when I came up here in '26. But I'm not positive. And I went with her, we went out together a fair amount after she got here. And then I kept up with the family. And she adopted one child. Or rather she didn't adopt her, she took her from her mother who agreed of course. And I don't think she ever had her adopted. And then she adopted a second child and then she married and had three more of her own.

COOPER: Oh my goodness.

VANN: She married on her 39th birthday. And as I said when she was, I saw this ad in the woman's medical journal for young doctors at St. Elizabeth. I took it. I applied and got accepted. And I think that I kept up with her pretty well till the day she died. She, her son who is now working for the Washington Post wrote a very good obituary. And he read it to me before he, he said her father was the first man to enter, to get a college degree in the town in the county, in Swain County I think it was, North Carolina. And I insisted he should make it the first person to get a degree and not rule out the females. But he said later in the obituary that she married on her 39th birthday and they raised five children. And the five children included the two she was, had adopted before she got married. But they sounded like she was doing something, going rather strong to have five children after her 39th birthday.

COOPER: Now in addition to your medical interests with Blanche, did she share some of the interests in ecology that you had?

VANN: In what?

COOPER: Your interest in the ecology. I understand that you're interested in unusual

varieties of plants, things of that sort.

VANN: Yes, she was a quite a gardener. She was living with her mother when I first came down here. And then she bought a house before she adopted the first child. And from then all they all did a lot of work in the yard. And we exchanged plants. I don't know whether you should know those plants or not, do you?

COOPER: I have seen them but I don't have any. Tell me about them.

VANN: Well, they were, Lula Dixon was an earlier graduate of Meredith. And father had married her parents and we kept up with the other ever since. But her mother died and I went over to see them and her mother had a lot of those things around her. Two trees, two big trees out in the yard. And I brought the bulbs up here. And I didn't know whether they were going to live this far north or not. But apparently they were pretty well satisfied up here. And I think I brought a dozen, half a dozen later. But most of the rest just proliferated.

COOPER: Okay, what is the name of that flower?

VANN: It's official name is vicarious radiala. And it's other name is spider lily.

COOPER: Spider Lily, yes okay. And are there different colors of those spider lilies or are they all pretty much this pink?

VANN: Well, they, I think yellow and white. But they seem to be much harder to grow. We had one and one of the books that tells about those things is Wayside Catalog and they also tell us what planting zones they will live in. And this is one of the most northern zones that they do. And when I first got them up here they, I put them at the hospital where I was living at the time. And put them against the west wall, south wall of the house in order to give them the advantage of as much north wind away from them as possible. And I don't know when I started spreading them all around the place. And there they have quite a profusion of them.

COOPER: So spider lilies are sort of your specialty?

VANN: There's a _____ that comes earlier and maybe a little taller. But they, that always comes up in the spring. And dies down long before the flowers ever think about blooming. And they bloom late August I guess. And some people call them Naked Ladies because they don't have any foliage.

COOPER: Is that, do some people also give them the name of a Surprise Flower or

something?

VANN: What?

COOPER: Because they do, the foliage dies down and then the flower comes up, sort of a surprise.'

VANN: Yeah, the foliage dies down in early summer.

COOPER: Okay, I perhaps see evidence of azaleas around here. Is that another interest of yours?

VANN: Well, we have a lot of azaleas around here. And one or twice, one or two blossoms appear in the late, sometimes in the fall. And sometimes in the early spring before others come. This man that used to live down there on the house between us and the river belonged to the Agriculture Department. And he was as much at home as anybody I ever from all walks of life and said if you can walk with kings and not lose the common touch, and something else, I don't know what it was. But that applies to Mr. Toot as much as anybody I know. When he had a black man working in the yard he'd take his tray and his food that his wife cooked for him and go out and eat with the black man. And she was, at one time he was baking peaches and giving shows, mostly to show the by-products that they can use with the things that are left over and that they use specially, the blossom or the seed or other things that was used for. And one time the Secretary of Agriculture said he would like to go over and see camellias blooming outdoors and Mr. Toot took him and somewhere along the way, I think while he was at the camellia nursery near Norfolk, he said, "I wonder why they won't grow in the District of Columbia area." And he said the District, the owner of the nursery said, "If you want to try it I'll give you some plants." So he introduced the first outdoor culture of camellias in this area.

COOPER: Ah, very good.

COOPER: Tell who you are.

NIECE: Dr. Betsy, which is the name I use for Dr. Elizabeth Vann, has been very much a role model for a whole generation, two generations of nieces and nephews. But particularly the nieces who look to her for her professional interests. And her great-nieces, I was very interested to hear one day, were asking her about her entry into professional life and whether she had any difficulty and what her views were. Because they were particularly in the women's movement. And they asked her about her feelings about the women's movement and the difficulty she might or might not have had in

entering professional life. And she, they were quite surprised by the answer which was that, for example she was not particularly in favor of women getting the vote because women were doing quite well at the time she thought.

VANN: And we were, everybody was talking then of our saying that if the women got the vote the men would not give them, let them go first escaping from a plane or anything else.

NIECE: And I think she was a living example of women doing what they set out to do at that time. The great -nieces now, particularly Elizabeth Renault Vann who is my daughter and is Elizabeth R. Vann. The second Renault is my mother's maiden name and I am the wife of Dr. Elizabeth Vann's nephew.

VANN: Oldest one.

NIECE: The oldest one. And my daughter Elizabeth R. Vann and another niece Susan Holmes, who is the daughter of her brother's second child who is the daughter, are frequently here. Both of them have lived here during the summers. And both of them have a good deal of conversation with Dr. Betsy about matters. My daughter Elizabeth R. Vann II is in an Anthropology Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago. And Susan Holmes is now in Biology concentrating in genetics Ph.D. program at Johns Hopkins, and was just here yesterday as a matter of fact. So she has been quite an inspiration to the young women. And also to the middle generation which I consider myself to be. Because I did not expect to be a professional woman. And at the time I, sort of life changed around me it was Dr. Betsy to whom I turned for a great number of things. Dr. Betsy has been the counselor on an amazing number of topics including all marriage subjects or non-marriage subjects, fertility and infertility. Any of the problems in between.

COOPER: Great. In your decision to be a physician as these nieces and great nieces have asked you, tell us the story about your first grade teacher telling you to write about, did you say first grade teacher, telling you to write about what you wanted to do? Or was it your third grade?

VANN: Yes, Miss Jessie Davis. She was my first grade teacher. But she also taught one or two other years before she left to get married. And one time she was leaving on a vacation, probably Christmas vacation. And of course they didn't have any automobiles in those days. And she said, and certainly not flying, "I want you all to write me a letter to read on the way home, telling me what you want to do." And I hadn't thought too much about it up until that time. But I had to come up with something. And of course Dr. Dixon Carroll was my, I knew that she was, I don't know whether I'd ever known any other women

doctors. Probably not. Anyhow, that's what I told her. and she was pleased and told mother. And mother was pleased because her father was a doctor. Her father was a doctor and he was, did not go into the Civil War because he was supposed to stay home and take care of the civilian population. But they came along and arrested him for being a southern sympathizer. And he was in a prison ship in the Potomac for several years. And I had always thought he didn't get released until after the war. But he died in 1864. And the war wasn't over until '65, if I remember correctly. And grandmother was left with these three children when she was 36 I think. And after grandfather died grandmother was living in Middleburg. And she didn't feel that she was prepared to earn a living very well. But she wanted mother better prepared to enter living, in case she had to, than she herself had been. So she took mother to Hollings Institute at Roanoke, Virginia. And I never did know whether, why she left the boy with his paternal grandparents and gave all her attention to getting mother educated. My mother said that she thought the boy without an education had a better chance of earning a living than a woman without an education. And of course she, I don't know what education she had, but she didn't have anything very advanced I know. And when, so therefore she took mother to Hollings and to get her an education. Now my uncles...

COOPER: And she was a housemother you said?

VANN: Well, a housekeeper.

COOPER: Housekeeper while she was, while your mother was being educated at Hollings, right?

VANN: Yeah.

COOPER: Okay and then your mother received...

NIECE: Your mother then got an award, right, when she graduated from Hollings?

VANN: I think it was probably the outstanding girl in her class. But I'm not positive what it was. Was it French, was it Latin that Richard has translated for me, I took three or four years of Latin but I didn't get proficient in translating it, "To The Winners the Award." Or something like that.

COOPER: Okay and I believe now that this medallion has been kept by you through the years. And now has been worn by your great-niece...

VANN: Yeah.

COOPER: ...at her graduation from Bryn Mawr College.

VANN: Exactly.

COOPER: And when she wore this medallion they realized that the medallion is older than Bryn Mawr College. Right?

VANN: Yes.

COOPER: And that this is still in your possession. And of course will go to the grand-niece one day.

VANN: How old is Bryn Mawr? Do you know?

NIECE: I've forgotten the date of founding but I just know that this was quite...

VANN: I think mother graduated in 1878. But I'm not positive of that date either.

COOPER: Okay. So this tells us about what would make your mother pleased about that you were interested in being a physician because her father had been. And although he had that tragedy in his life that was a very strong influence surely for your mother and her excitement about you being interested in being a physician. Because you told me that your mother was excited after you had written an essay in the first grade.

VANN: Well, it was called a letter to the teacher. She said she wanted everybody to read her, to write her a letter to read on the train going home and tell her what they wanted to be when they grew up.

COOPER: And you said you wanted to be a physician. And you said that probably one of the reasons that you, other than your grandfather being a physician, was Dr. Carroll, Dr. Dixon Carroll's role model. Because she had been on the campus all of your time.

VANN: From the time I was three years old.

COOPER: Okay and so you really had a strong, several strong influences there in your making the decision to be a physician. Dr. Vann, as the Distinguished Alumna of 1987, you told me that you received this on your 90th birthday which I think is wonderful, in closing what would you like to share with us?

VANN: There's nothing whatever the matter with me.
I'm just as healthy as I can be.
I'm not seeing very well.

I have arthritis of back of the knees.
And when I talk I talk with a wheeze.
My voice is weak. My posture is weak. My blood is thin.
But I'm just awfully well for the shape I'm in.
My teeth finally had to come up.
And my diet I hate to think about.
I'm overweight and I can't get thin.
My appetite is sure to win.
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
My moral is this.
As the tale we unfold about those of us who are getting old.
It's better to say, 'I'm fine' with a grin.
Than to let folks know the shape you're in.

COOPER: Very good. And thank you so much for sharing this tape for the Archives of Meredith College.



CAROLYN MORTON MERCER
Class of 1922

Today is February 24, 1988. And this tape is being made as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. Today we are in the room of Ms. Carolyn Mercer at Arbor Acres, which is the Methodist Retirement Home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. And Jean Cooper is the interviewer.

COOPER: Okay Ms. Mercer I know you have so many connections with Meredith but I'll try to help you recall a few of these. You graduated from Meredith in 1922 it says here.

MERCER: That's right.

COOPER: But you were just telling me that in order to get into Meredith you had to go somewhere else first. Would you like to tell me about that?

MERCER: I believe I went from the 10th grade. We were living in Thomasville and they did not have _____. And so I could not enter Meredith and I went over to Greensboro to the woman's college there, for my first year. And took music. I had not had very much music but my heart was set on having music. And of course they had very wonderful teachers, good teachers there. And I enjoyed being there.

COOPER: What area of music, did you do more keyboard? Or did you ...

MERCER: Keyboard and organ.

COOPER: And organ.

MERCER: Yes. Because I could have my music chords. One time I walked off the stage in tears having forgotten the piano piece. Without my music up there in front of me.

COOPER: Yes. It had to be memorized.

MERCER: And I memorized it. I could have done it. I mean I had done it I'm sure before they let me. But anyway I got that stage fright.

COOPER: I guess. Who were your piano teachers?

MERCER: Ms. Mambers. I forget what her name was. It's a long time ago.

COOPER: I know. But don't worry about anything that you don't remember.

MERCER: Ms. Mambers I believe. But I don't remember her first name. But they were very patient. They had to take a graduate out of high school _____. At Meredith they did not have to take them. But, because it as a state college and the high school only had ten grades. And...

COOPER: That means you were pretty young when you graduated from high school too, right?

MERCER: Yes that's right.

COOPER: So you were growing up away from home pretty early.

MERCER: I guess.

COOPER: Yes, that's great.

MERCER: Madeline brought my cats for us just to play with.

COOPER: That's great. You like cats.

MERCER: I like cats very much.

COOPER: And she knows you like cats. That's great.

MERCER: There's Madeline. She does a lot of the planning here of extra activities. And they do so much along that line. Trying to keep people happy I suppose.

COOPER: This is a beautiful place to be. And I'm sure it's just as well organized as it is pretty.

MERCER: It certainly is.

COOPER: Well, I'm sure you're really grateful to have this nice comfortable place. And not have to worry about keeping up anything.

MERCER: And then the beauty parlor is just down that way. Half of it I mean is on the property.

COOPER: Well, while you mention the beauty parlor I went to see Miss Lula Ditmore Sandlin, who is in the Danby home here, last week. And I talked to her in the beauty parlor. She was getting her hair fixed. And she's a lovely person.

MERCER: I just remember her name. I don't remember her.

COOPER: Yes, she's a past president of the Alumnae Association. But she's a 1912 graduate. So she's a good bit older than you are.

MERCER: That's true. It's nice to know that she's still going.

COOPER: Yes, she's very alert and as I say she was in the beauty parlor when I got there. There are lots of Meredith alumnae in Winston-Salem. And a lot of you who are now in retirement homes.

MERCER: Louise _____ was here.

COOPER: In this home?

MERCER: In this home.

COOPER: Oh I did not know.

MERCER: She has just been here. She was in the home next to this which is all part of the same thing I think. But she was moved to this part, I don't know why. But she has to have constant help, somebody with her all the time.

COOPER: Now the one that you're talking about is the person who started Sunday School.

MERCER: Started Sunday School.

COOPER: And was for many years the Headmaster.

MERCER: That's right.

COOPER: I really have heard so much about her but don't really know her personally. So I'll have to come back another time to visit with her.

MERCER: Uh hmm, yes.

COOPER: Can you talk with her? Is she able to talk?

MERCER: I think so. I haven't been to see her as much as I should.

COOPER: Well, I'm glad you told me that and maybe I'll come back and see her another time. Now Dr. Brewer was the president when you attended Meredith. And his grandfather was the president of Wake Forest. Now is that right?

MERCER: His grandfather.

COOPER: Samuel Waite.

MERCER: Waite, uh huh.

COOPER: So he had connections with Wake Forest.

MERCER: And Dr. Brewer had Ann Eliza.

COOPER: Oh, those are his daughters?

MERCER: Uh hmm.

COOPER: Oh, okay.

MERCER: And Ellen Brewer. Anna Liza was in my group.

COOPER: Oh, was she in your class?

MERCER: Uh hmm.

COOPER: Okay. And she's still living in Raleigh.

MERCER: I just don't know.

COOPER: Ellen is not living there but Anna Liza is.

MERCER: Mary Tillery, you know about her?

COOPER: No.

MERCER: She was in my class and she's an artist, was an artist. And she now is in a home similar to this in Raleigh. You know that one on the edge of town? I've been there once to see her. But, and she taught there.

COOPER: She taught at Meredith?

MERCER: Yes. Along with Miss _____

COOPER: Okay. And she lived in your apartment? Is that right?

MERCER: Yes she did. And her sister Doris. And I don't know whether Doris taught

at Meredith or much. Her major was math.

COOPER: Now was that Doris Peterson?

MERCER: No, Doris Tillery.

COOPER: Okay. Your home where you lived in Raleigh must have been near the campus then to have all those campus people living with you. Was your home near the Meredith campus?

MERCER: Let me think a minute. No. See I was a boarder at Meredith.

COOPER: But I mean when you worked in Raleigh.

MERCER: When I worked in Raleigh. No it wasn't near but see now my father taught.

COOPER: Okay. Yes that's...

MERCER: That's after he retired. Because one of the trustees, I just told you that didn't I?

COOPER: Yeah.

MERCER: Who had followed him to church. Dr. Livingston, he was a minister, Baptist minister and he said the people knew more about his bible then at least he'd better preach. And he recommended him to be a teacher at Meredith. I'm not sure that he taught full time. He must have part of the time. But he retired. I don't know which church was the last one. Maybe Thomasville.

COOPER: Okay, so he was a minister in Thomasville. And then he went to teach at Meredith. Okay. His name was Isaac Morton Mercer. Okay and he was Associate Professor of Religion after you graduated from Meredith. 1928-1939, so that's 11 years.

MERCER: I didn't realize it was that long.

COOPER: That's according to Mary Lynch Johnson's history. And very interesting she, what she wrote about him in there, "That people said instead of asking a question he gently requested an answer." I thought that was really nice. He must have been a...

MERCER: Well, he was a very gentle sort of person.

COOPER: Okay, that's what I gathered.

MERCER: He would want to help the students get the answer right. Help them out as much as possible.

COOPER: That sounds good. Okay now your sister, Annie Mercer Kessler.

MERCER: Mercer Kessler. And her husband's father, Dr. Kessler, was superintendent of the orphanage I think, in Thomasville where we lived. We lived in Thomasville at the time. And that's where Annie met her husband.

COOPER: Okay, I see. Did she have to go the same thing as you? Since she was at Meredith and graduated in 1918, did she have that problem with having to go somewhere else first before she went to Meredith too?

MERCER: I don't think so.

COOPER: Maybe you were living in another place.

MERCER: We were living in Thomasville. I think because it would have been so expensive probably to have us both at Meredith, that I could go to a state school. I think we probably _____ the tuition. And then...

COOPER: Not as much.

MERCER: Not as much. And so, and then I guess we wanted one of us at a time too to go there.

COOPER: Okay, it was just the two sisters of you?

MERCER: No we had a younger sister, Susanna.

COOPER: I did not know.

MERCER: Mercer. And she died very young. I'm not sure whether she graduated at Meredith or not. I don't suppose she did. I don't think she ever worked at anything.

COOPER: Okay, you went to college at the time Dr. Brewer was there. But then you were the Meredith Alumnae Association president in 1952 through 1954, when Dr. Campbell was there.

MERCER: Uh hmm.

COOPER: And so you had a lot of association with Dr. Campbell too, I'm sure. And

now, I know they were very different personalities. How did you view the two men as you remember them?

MERCER: They certainly had. Dr. Campbell and Dr. Brewer we're talking about?

COOPER: Dr. Campbell was a very scholarly man.

MERCER: I started to say he was a little more strict maybe. And I may not have got as much at ease with him in the conversations we had.

COOPER: Because Dr. Brewer was supposedly such a _____.

MERCER: _____. But now with Mr. Campbell we all kind of stood in awe of him.

COOPER: I did and that was... You know that you were the association president the year I graduated.

MERCER: Oh my, was it me? That was a very important commencement that year.

COOPER: Oh yes it surely was. You were also very involved at that time I understand with the enlargement campaign. They had a big fundraising thing there. Do you recall that? Because I know you played an important role in that, being right there in Raleigh.

MERCER: Certainly I don't.

COOPER: Okay, let me tell you what the book says about you then. What Dr. Johnson says about you in her history book. "Her enthusiasm was contagious. Her wise steadiness was reassuring."

MERCER: Was that about me?

COOPER: So you must have been saying, 'Okay we can do this. Come on.' Because then you were working in town as an educational consultant with the State Board of Health, right?

MERCER: Yes. And the Oral Hygiene Division. And North Carolina had the outstanding program of the United States I think, in Oral Hygiene, in the State Board. We had a staff of dentists who went to the school and they taught in the classroom. And they inspected the mouths. We avoided using the word examination because there wasn't any, inspected and then referred. Of course their teacher was the one that made that decision about the ones who could pay for, whose parents couldn't afford to send. And we had a staff of

dentists who worked for the underprivileged children. So the dentist was there. He taught and then he also worked for the children who otherwise wouldn't have been able to have the necessary treatment. Of course that decision about that was up to the student.

COOPER: Did you travel with them to these different places?

MERCER: No I did not travel with any of them. But I traveled, did I go with the puppet children?

COOPER: They had a puppet show?

MERCER: Uh hmm, they had a puppet show.

COOPER: And little Jack was teaching them how to keep their teeth brushed.

MERCER: Little Jacks mail poured in.. We had the children write Little Jack and we employed one person just to answer a form letter. I mean just to address it back to the children. I've got a book I wrote.

COOPER: Oh you wrote a book? Teaching mouth health in North Carolina. A handbook for teachers. Okay.

MERCER: I was pretty dependent on the teachers. Be nice to the teachers.

COOPER: Oh yes, this says Dr. Carolyn Morton Mercer, Education Consultant Division of Oral Hygiene, North Carolina State Board of Health. And is it copyright 1940? So that means that's when it was...

MERCER: Getting kind of old now.

COOPER: This was sort of at a time when, do you remember Jane Ester Kimmons? She was working with the...

MERCER: I just remember about her economics.

COOPER: Okay, she was active about this time wasn't she too? Not the things going on with health at that time but... Well, I know you're proud of this. And I see you've got Jack's travel log in the back.

MERCER: And the children would write such funny things to him, you know. A funny thing they had the girl, one person who just answered his letters, and she was always coming out and interrupting everybody to read something some child had written Little Jack cause she thought it was so funny. It was so cute.

COOPER: That kept you all alive during the day.

MERCER: That kept us alive. So this was really, I imagine an outstanding program in the United States. I do believe the one, it was the Director Dr. Ernest Branch, very smart and innovative and interesting person. Those dentists, we had as many as thirty on the staff at one time. Not always. So that they pretty well covered the state. Because you see what they'd do is just an inspection, we avoid the word examinations and called it an inspection, to see if any.... The dentist did not, unless they were underprivileged. Then the teacher would tell them and the dentist would set up his equipment, they were very portable equipment, and would work for those children.

COOPER: So it was when you were doing all this work, when the general hygiene, that you were doing volunteer work for Meredith. Being the Association president. And I bet you did, you went back to the campus a lot I'm sure. And did things on the campus there, right? But you taught there at one time soon after you graduated.

MERCER: Oh yes, once I tried it.

COOPER: Tell me about that. Do you remember those days? How long did you teach there at Meredith?

MERCER: I don't think more than about two years. I needed to be at home. My mother wasn't very well. And I, that was my reason for leaving. That I needed, they needed me at home. Then I taught, I could teach at home but be there you know.

COOPER: I see.

MERCER: But not like...And every summer as the dentist were taught to teach, learning how to teach. And every summer they would have a sort of procession at Chapel Hill with some of the professors over there. And you know go over the program after ... So it was, I think I'm pretty sure it was outstanding program of the United States. I don't think others had anything to compare with it. I think they took half as many children, underprivileged, and referred all the others. (mumbling) I think I may have, the one that didn't take my own advice. I had my own teeth.

COOPER: Yes I was going to say, you still have them.

M; I have them.

COOPER: Yes.

MERCER: I have a little piece that I forget to put in, put the tooth the inner tooth in here. But I forget about it. But they're getting along alright. But it might change the contour of my face, I don't know. There's so much to consider. It was just really interesting work. I mean, it seems so kind of foreign to me, you know when I entered, from anything that I ever expected.

COOPER: Yes, cause here you were a music major. And then you taught French when you were at Meredith. And you know, well I guess you must have taken a lot of French at Meredith even though you were a music major?

MERCER: Uh huh. Yes, I took all the French I could take. And then I took some in Chapel Hill because we had this staff of dentists that went around to teach and they worked for the underprivileged the teachers classified. And then they sent the notices home to the parents of the children that needed general attention and said they should consult their own dentists. So of course the dentists society approved completely of the program too. And the three of them booked many of their patients and just sent them some.

COOPER: I've just been talking with Miss Hazel Baity I told you, just before I came in here. She remembered that you were the first Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*.

MERCER: She did?

COOPER: Yes.

MERCER: Well, I can't imagine somebody could remember that.

COOPER: That was the first production of the faculty doing Alice she said. And I understand she graduated in '26. You went there in '24 to teach so that was right at her time she said. So, do you remember how they dressed you as Alice? Do you remember how you looked?

MERCER: No I'm afraid I didn't keep my Alice clothes.

COOPER: You didn't keep your Alice clothes.

MERCER: I should have done that. Just like a nice little girl I think.

COOPER: Somebody remembered and they said that you were, "Round faced and wide-eyed."

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: With cross tied slippers and pantalets.

MERCER: Pantalets?

COOPER: Yes.

MERCER: Now I don't believe I had pantalets.

COOPER: _____.

MERCER: I don't think I ever wore pantalets.

COOPER: And you know, well that was just for this play.

MERCER: For the play.

COOPER: Just for the play.

MERCER: Oh yes.

COOPER: Just for that. I also have a picture in Miss Johnson, Dr. Johnson's history. There's a picture of the faculty. And I will see, they tell me this is you. And they say that's you right there.

MERCER: That's right.

COOPER: That's you?

MERCER: Uh huh.

COOPER: And I can see where they said the round face with the wide eyes. I see your...

MERCER: I'd have these arguments with people that my hair wasn't black, it was brown. When I was little smaller you know. I just didn't think it was nice to have black hair.

COOPER: But yours wasn't quite black enough.

MERCER: Once you look at this group of people and I see Mary Lynch, right there she is. I'm not sure... (mumbling too low to hear.)

COOPER: That's the first edition of Dr. Johnson's history. There's a newer edition but I don't have the newer edition. I have seen the newer one at Wake Forest in

the library but, it has more pictures than this one.

MERCER: _____ old people identified along this row here.

COOPER: Okay, when you

MERCER: Maddie Rose.

COOPER: Oh yes, everybody remembers her from, she was there so long.

MERCER: Lois Johnson, do you remember her?

COOPER: No I don't. I know the name.

MERCER: She was, I think she was there when I was, she's a little older. She lived in Thomasville. Her father was the editor, and maybe the beginner of Charity and Children. And they were a very literary family. The Johnson's Kate was Miss Parah. And I think music was her specialty. And then Ella Johnson, I forgot what she did. But they lived in Thomasville when we were there, for a few years, not very long. But I liked Thomasville, it was a nice place to live.

COOPER: Well, now you, when you were president of the Alumnae Association Mae Grimmer was what they called the Secretary then. Now they call it Director of Alumnae Affairs. You, do you remember any funny story or anything about Mae Grimmer.

MERCER: Seems like I should. She was always getting into little cars.

COOPER: And you were helping her out I suspect.

MERCER: Well, I can't seem to think of any right now.

COOPER: She was quite a character wasn't she?

MERCER: Oh she was.

COOPER: A very special person.

MERCER: Mae Grimmer was one of my favorite people.

COOPER: As you know it's been 35 years since you were the Alumnae Association president. Do you remember anything from those two years that you think would be especially interesting to those people now 35 years later? Anything about the annual alumnae day or the dinner that we have? I know we dressed

the doll and presented it to you. A dining hall full of girls, alone with all the women for the luncheon, right? And do you know was, let's see, you don't know who the speaker was? You don't remember any of the speakers for the annual alumnae day?

MERCER: No I don't.

COOPER: Your Dad was, taught at Meredith actually after you did.

MERCER: Yeah.

COOPER: That was funny wasn't it? Do you have any memories of when he was there? You said your mother was ill earlier but was she still living when he taught?

MERCER: Yes. And he enjoyed it very much. He was a kind of a born teacher. And I think the students liked him a lot. He was very proper with not casual. It was, "Miss so and so."

COOPER: Which was very cultured for those days. Well, when you retired from your work as a dental consultant, is that when you came to live with ...?

MERCER: With Annie.

COOPER: Annie Mercer Kessler?.

MERCER: It must have been.

COOPER: Was her husband still living at that time or did you come after her husband died?

MERCER: I was looking at some things the other night and trying to get some of that straight. I think, I don't remember how long was he alive.

COOPER: But you didn't help care for him?

MERCER: No, no. I was just to be with her there.

COOPER: But he was, okay, he was still living there when you came here to live?

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: Cause that was a long time ago. Because I remembered going to your home because you were so gracious, you and she, and had the alumnae in your

home. And that was a long time ago. So he died quite a few years ago.

MERCER: Uh huh.

COOPER: I remember your home as one of the special times in my early days.

MERCER: Oh how nice. Annie was very active in civic affairs in Winston-Salem. I told you that didn't I? She was president of the YWCA. And then she was, kind of helped start the Goodwill...(volume level becomes nearly inaudible).

NOTE: The following sections of the tape are so low in volume as to be inaudible. The sentences below do not represent the full text, but only the portions which can be heard and transcribed.

COOPER: Yeah I had, you know I was at her memorial service.

MERCER: You were at the memorial service?

COOPER: Yeah. They really had lots of good things to say.

MERCER: She helped organize a group there.

COOPER: At the Goodwill Industries?

MERCER: Yeah.

COOPER: Was it the Goodwill Homes?

MERCER: No. But I meant the Meredith group.

COOPER: Oh, yes when she, she really helped keep us going. She and Eleanor Baity were the two that I remember most in Winston-Salem for keeping the alumnae active, giving us a place to meet that was convenient. And large enough to accommodate us.

MERCER: Now I can't remember whether they're meeting now or not.

COOPER: Yes we do we meet twice a year. And on May the 1st we're going to be meeting at my home on a Sunday afternoon. And I would certainly like for you to be able to go. We're going to have the new vice-president that afternoon and Doris Allen Litchfield is now the Director of Alumnae Affairs. But we, and we're inviting the spouses. And we haven't done that for, not in a long time. Not since I have been involved with it. So this will be something that we'll ... But we have a ...

MERCER: Do they have any new buildings?

COOPER: Oh yes, they probably have the new art building since you were there.

MERCER: I was interested in that too because of Mary Sullivan

COOPER: And you were particularly interested in art I'm sure too because of your niece.

MERCER: Yes. I hadn't thought of that but... liking to many of them.

COOPER: Okay. Now your niece Anne...

MERCER: Shields.

COOPER: ... has her own studio in her home? Or does ...

MERCER: No.

COOPER: No. Not in her home.

MERCER: No. On _____ street I believe, there.

COOPER: And those are pictures of her two children?

MERCER: That's Carolyn and that's Burton. And John is not here. We must not have had one of John at that time. There's John by the...

COOPER: Yes. Now did their mother do those?

MERCER: Oh no. I'm thinking of who did the pansies, they're my friend Mary Tillery's. Do you know Mary? You know about Mary Tillery?

COOPER: Well, Miss Baity mentioned that name.

MERCER: She was an art student in art. So I remember one Sunday afternoon picking all those petunias and carrying them to her in Raleigh. We were both living in Raleigh at that time and retired. And so she came and...

COOPER: They're beautiful.

MERCER: This little horse she gave me too. This horse is in the picture.

COOPER: Oh okay it certainly is. How about that.

MERCER: I grew the petunias. ...

COOPER: Oh yes, well they're so pretty.

MERCER: Flowers I think that are easier to grow they must be ...

COOPER: So you were too busy working to have much time for gardening. ... Well, you have an African violet. You do have some flowers here. Okay, what do you remember about Miss Baity? You seemed that you and she were good friends.

MERCER: Eleanor Baity?

COOPER: Yes. She ran the library for 31 years she told me.

MERCER: Really? Well, I don't know. I liked her a lot. She's younger than I am.

COOPER: She's not that much younger than you are. Because she graduated in '26 and you graduated in '22. She remembers about the Depression because she had trouble having a job after college because of the Depression. Do you recall anything about the Depression? You were already working for the state then weren't you?

MERCER: I think so. I'm sure we had to be very careful with funds. This was completely different from anything I ever had to do at Meredith. And then I never took any shorthand writing or anything like that. I had to take up my typing by doing it.

COOPER: You just learned it on your own?

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: Okay, and we were just talking about Meredith. You know most of us still here think about the campus where it is today. But that's not where you went to Meredith when you went to Meredith, right? You went downtown. Near the Victorian house?

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: And down near the Governor's mansion.

MERCER: Near the Governor's mansion. We were next door to the Governor's mansion. Yes, it was a nice place.

COOPER: I've seen pictures of it, it looks pretty.

MERCER: Oh and I had, it was near the First Baptist Church too. And the music department played the organ in the First Baptist Church.

COOPER: Oh okay, who was that?

MERCER: And when there were funerals they would send me to play. And I would cry so loud when I'd see them up there. They were perfect strangers. But it as sad. I remember it was just about two blocks from there. And then I had great plans to play in the Governor's parlor. Blanche too, decided she and I ... But she was quite at home in the Governor's mansion.

COOPER: Was that when she was your roommate?

MERCER: No, no.

COOPER: So you played for the funerals. Do you remember who was head of the Music Department then?

MERCER: Dr. Dingley Brown.

COOPER: Dingley Brown.

MERCER: At one time. And I'm not sure how much of that time. He was quite a character.

COOPER: Sounds like he was.

MERCER: He didn't want to play for the funerals so he sent me. I remember walking those two blocks, you know from old Meredith to First Baptist Church.

COOPER: I guess that was in those long dresses.

MERCER: And I would weep as much as the family afterwards.

COOPER: And if it's like what it is when I've been in that church, the organist sits up and you're seen by everybody, right?

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: Did he help you make a decision about what to play or did he just leave it up to you?

MERCER: Well, I guess the people would choose the hymns they liked.

COOPER: And you were talking about walking those two blocks. I read something about you had to wear high shoes all winter, you know the high top shoes. I guess you had the long dresses that were...

MERCER: Well, they weren't so long. They were longer, but... maybe just not pumps you mean. Shoes like this?

COOPER: Yeah, I guess it meant that they were button ups probably.

MERCER: I don't remember ever having any.

COOPER: Really?

MERCER: It's been so long ago.

COOPER: And whatever you wore was not that uncomfortable for walking then? And did you, in those days did you have special shoes for playing the organ? Or did you just wear your regular shoes?

MERCER: No.

COOPER: Just wore your regular shoes. Cause now you know we have to change shoes. Well, the men don't ... We have them with the large heels. You said you went in teaching French and then going into dental work. You actually did not take a job as an organist after you were out of college?

MERCER: No.

COOPER: You just always had that

MERCER: Well, I lived, at home my father was a minister but I couldn't possibly have an organist job in the church.

COOPER: Yes.

MERCER: But I did teach at _____. I said I wanted to go to the smallest place in North Carolina that had a pipe organ. And I found it in Red Oak.

COOPER: Where?

MERCER: In Nash County. We were living in Red Oak then. My father was a minister there. What are you looking for?

COOPER: I was just looking at the tape.

MERCER: Oh that. And...

COOPER: So you were not too far from him there?

MERCER: No, we were right there. We could go down, you know walk downtown. And I remember this girl who made such good friends with the Governor's daughter, and was quite at home at the Governor's Mansion. They always invited us but they had to make us very much want to go. It wasn't any great thing. Maybe you better not mention that.

COOPER: No, no, no, no, that's fine. When you went to Red Oak to teach then, you did get to play the organ there?

MERCER: Yes. And I was (tape and speaker's voice are breaking up at this point, and for the rest of this side of the tape.)

BEGIN SIDE TWO:

COOPER: Okay, that's just so they'll, they can keep straight if they listen to this. Well, now I'm interested in this. So at one time you dated Annie's husband's brother?

MERCER: Uh hmm. We lived in Thomasville at one time. My father was the minister at the children's home there. And the downtown church. I think, I've forgotten how it was arranged. Maybe two Sunday mornings at each place and a little bit more at the dance at the regular church. Maybe every Sunday night or something like that. I've forgotten.

COOPER: But the Kessler's lived in _____.

MERCER: Yes. But it was there in Thomasville and, see Annie married Dr. Kessler's son, Jack Kessler. And he was a very, Dr. Kessler was quite a kind man, I think in children's home work. I just thought I couldn't stand the idea of going down to see all those children that are, you know, orphaned.

COOPER: Yeah.

MERCER: But they seemed very happy there.

COOPER: Yes, well my home was closer to the Kennedy home. And my father would go there to visit the children and take them things. So the story goes. But

anyway he died when I was five so I don't remember this, people just told me. But the children's homes were pretty new.

MERCER: Yes. ... And nice people. I mean they were, to us, the ones who were already there. But Dr. Kessler started it and Annie married his son, Jack Kessler. And I'd dated Courtney, but nothing ever came of it. I sat next to him, when we were waiting for me to play the organ. That was the worst thing, the worst moment of my life I think. That they would do a thing like that.

COOPER: Maybe there was nobody else who could play it.

MERCER: Well, they could have gone in back with him. I'm sure there were other people who could play the piano.

COOPER: But when you attended Meredith then you went to First Baptist Church downtown?

MERCER: Yes I did.

COOPER: Did most all the girls go to First Baptist then , or Tabernacle? Do you remember?

MERCER: Well, a good many went to Tabernacle I think. But I guess more went to First Baptist. Of course there were some other denominations too.

COOPER: But then when you, later when you worked in Raleigh you went to Pullen. Is that Pullen Memorial?

MERCER: Uh hmm.

COOPER: Dr. Finlater's church?

MERCER: Uh hmm. That was the new, kind of new church down there.

COOPER: Then when you moved to Winston-Salem you went to Wake Forest Baptist Church?

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: Cause that's where Anne went?

MERCER: And Jack. And the new minister, I haven't heard him yet.

COOPER: Dr. Graves is very nice.

MERCER: I've heard about there was a service on the... appalling pulpit I mean, for...

COOPER: Yes, yes it sure is.

MERCER: Well, Catholics seemed to have pretty churches in Thomasville. The orphanage church too. Did I tell you about the circus business?

COOPER: No. Tell me about the circus.

MERCER: Well, there was this funny man in Thomasville, Mr. Ted Thomas. And he owned a good deal of property. And he owned the property the circus wanted to rent, and so they told me they'd be glad for the orphanage children to come to the circus. Well, that just threw them into a, they didn't know what to do about that, whether it was alright or not. So he called Papa up and Papa said, "Well, of course it's alright for them to go to the circus. I went every year when I was a boy." And he said, "Well, will you lead the procession?" And so Papa led the procession of the orphanage children with his daughter Caroline and me.

COOPER: You were glad to be one of them that day weren't you?

MERCER: He was such a funny man. We were scared of him when, he had a beautiful plot of land. And we loved to play on it. But we'd see him come and we'd scatter.

COOPER: So you played with the children at the orphanage?

MERCER: Some. Not much, no. No I really didn't play with them. Because we were a good distance, we weren't right in town. It was more on the edge. I just went to the circus with them.

COOPER: Well, that was nice to be able to do.

MERCER: Yeah. And we tried to do that, every now and then with them.

COOPER: Dr. Canaday, who was one of the long term male teachers there.

MERCER: Math.

COOPER: Maths, yes. But when you were there were most of your teachers male or female? Do you remember, you remembered Dr. Dingley Brown.

MERCER: Dingley Brown.

COOPER: But then your teachers...

MERCER: Mr. Boomhour. He was the dean. And the president was a man. I guess more of them were women actually. I forget _____ English? She was very, very good, very strict. You really had to have, be on the spot with her. What was her name? I didn't think I could ever forget her.

COOPER: How about your French teacher? Do you remember who taught you French?

MERCER: No I don't. Let's see now, see what I did...

COOPER: Do you remember any funny instances about your teaching French at Meredith? I bet your classes were pretty small weren't they?

MERCER: Not so small. Because of all the foreign languages I think more took French than did Latin. Maybe not, I'm not sure though. Cause Latin was required more in those days wasn't it, than...

COOPER: Yeah.

MERCER: ...than French. And of course they had German too. I think my sister took German. My father had done studies in German.

COOPER: Okay. But that was before you were born I think.

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: So did you get to go to Europe? Did you get to go to France where they really spoke French?

MERCER: I've been but I can't remember anything about it. Went with Billie Raynor I think. She was one of the teachers at Wake Forest. And so we had a nice trip to Europe.

COOPER: Okay, that's good.

MERCER: Didn't have any, I mean we were just on our own. We could go you know without having to be in a great big group. And I liked that.

COOPER: So your father studied in Germany?

MERCER: Yes I think at that time, you know, that was considered in the Navy. He

went to the college in Richmond. His home was Richmond. So he went to University. I don't know what the name of it is. It's a Baptist College.

COOPER: University of Richmond.

MERCER: Richmond.

COOPER: How about your mother?

MERCER: She went in Greenville, South Carolina. That was her home. And she went, there was a college there too. And she taught there in Greenville. And he was pastor in Greenville. I told you about the little boy singing?

COOPER: No I didn't hear that one.

MERCER: One of Mama's pupils. When they went to the wedding and I kept _____ a lot of talking. Cause his first wife had been dead some years. We had a half-sister and two half-brothers. And so somebody heard this little boy _____ a little boy and got him. Must have been a little gossip going there. But she went to the woman's college there, the Baptist. I guess Greenville isn't, I'm not sure, Baptist.

COOPER: So she was a teacher?

MERCER: Uh hmm. Course finally I guess, he went of course to the seminary in Richmond, and took that did graduate work too. And then Annie and I were born and went, then we moved to Rocky Mount. _____ then we moved to Little Washington. I don't know how in the world we happened to go there. Little Washington was right near Little Rock. But we enjoyed it. Then we moved to Rocky Mount and lived there for many years. And he built the church, we felt like he did it single handedly. He asked for money and we'd say, "How do you stand going to ask people for money?" _____, "It does them so much good when they give." He didn't mind it a bit. So they built this nice church there, on some property there.

COOPER: Is that church still there?

MERCER: Uh hmm. I suppose they have enlarged some parts of it. I think it was fixed with that in mind. It was on a corner. I don't remember too much about it. But people in Rocky Mount were very nice to us. We enjoyed living there. And then from there I don't know where, was it then we went to Wilson. I wanted to get this written down, what I did in my life.

COOPER: Who would, who do you think back as probably your favorite professor when you were at Meredith? Or maybe you don't have a favorite one. It might be your most feared one. Might be that English teacher.

MERCER: Oh yes. That English we were really, but she was such a wonderful person that we respected her so much, Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson, that we, I really don't remember now much about it. I do remember somebody we all liked so much. I can't, it's been kind of a long time.

COOPER: Yes I know. I know that when you were downtown there were some pretty tight regulations you had. Do you remember maybe any particular regulation that you particularly didn't like? Something that you felt was...

MERCER: Oh I think we just sort of accepted things. Course we could have more privileges I'm sure than the St. Mary's and Peace girls. They were, well younger and cause they were all junior college age and they didn't go beyond that. But we, I think we felt like it was alright. I'm sure we grumbled when something came up they didn't think was exactly right for us to do.

COOPER: But you probably were as grateful to be there.

MERCER: Yes. Mary Lynch Johnson was a real very wonderful English professor. And my French teacher, now let's see, I don't know whether I majored in music or French. In music I gave a recital.

COOPER: You gave a piano recital?

MERCER: On the organ. A proper recital. Without my music.

COOPER: Did you give it at First Baptist Church?

MERCER: At Meredith College.

COOPER: At Meredith. And that was the organ that was moved out from Meredith that was in the Memorial Auditorium at Meredith I guess, when we moved out on the new location.

MERCER: Maybe so.

COOPER: But I gave my organ recital on that. Of course it was, it had been renovated at that time. Because that's when they were, built the Jones Auditorium.

MERCER: Oh yes.

COOPER: And were in the process of reinstalling it. And I had to help sometimes you know, with tuning it and so forth. We probably gave our recital on the same organ.

MERCER: Same organ, that's right. I remember walking, you know when I was there it was right down near the Governor's Mansion. I told you this friend of mine made such good friends with the Governor's daughter. Had such a good time being right at home in the Governor's Mansion. But she always, they always made a reception for us. And we were made to go if we didn't want to go. I mean, that was something required you know. Some of the girls might not have went caroling in there. But we didn't have singing much otherwise. I don't remember what Governors they were either. But I remember a friend of mine who was so much at home at the Governor's Mansion because there was a girl her age, that she enjoyed being with. But it was a nice location. We would walk downtown. And then being in town like that instead of way out.

COOPER: Actually when you taught you taught downtown also.

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: Cause that was before they moved out on the other campus. So all of your, except for being the Alumnae Association president, all of your experiences were on the old campus.

MERCER: Was I the president?

COOPER: Yes, from 1952-54. When Dr. Campbell was there. And Mae Grimmer.

MERCER: Mae Grimmer was lots of fun.

COOPER: Yeah.

MERCER: I'm trying to think where Mae Grimmer lived, when we bought a house in Raleigh, if I'd stopped teaching. Or it might have been while I was teaching, I don't know. It was on Park Drive and just about two blocks up to Hillsborough on the bus you know. And it seemed like Mae Grimmer may have had a room there. We had a good deal of space there. Raleigh is a nice town I think.

COOPER: Oh yes, it surely is.

MERCER: To live in.

COOPER: And I think that Meredith is very fortunate in it's location, has been through the years.

MERCER: Yes.

COOPER: And in reading this book that Dr. Johnson wrote there was always discussion about either joining with Wake Forest or moving, where we would move to. So I'm glad that we didn't join with Wake Forest.

MERCER: Fortunate, yes.

COOPER: And I'm glad we moved where we did. Because we truly have...

MERCER: I think a girl's school is very nice. I mean it's just so much easier. You don't have to be always wondering if you're going to see somebody you're interested in you know. How you look and all of that I mean.

COOPER: Well, it's, and there are lots of colleges around Meredith that do have the opposite sex available, that you aren't isolated.

MERCER: Oh yes, yes. There's Wake Forest and, what was the other one? State.

COOPER: Of course now Wake Forest is up here with us.

MERCER: Oh that's right.

COOPER: In Winston-Salem. But I, that was one of the times according to this book that they talked about Meredith merging with Wake Forest. It was when they were going to move to Winston-Salem. To invite, we were invited evidently to join them. But we chose not to and I'm certainly glad that we chose not to. Because I think Meredith has a strong place in Raleigh.

MERCER: I think so too. And I think it's just easier, better for them to be separate then to be wondering all day long if you're going to see so and so.

COOPER: Well, and leadership.

MERCER: Uh huh yes, and that's right.

COOPER: We were able to take leadership roles that we would not have.

MERCER: Uh hmm, yes. It was well located for availability, for people to have dates.

COOPER: And we certainly are at this point in our history at a very strategic location, with that beltline just going right outside the campus.

MERCER: Oh yes.

COOPER: It's so accessible to activities on the campus. And there are lots of people who come and participate in activities that are going on on the campus.

MERCER: Well, that's good. I have to go to Raleigh to see it.

COOPER: We have, I think a mission...

MERCER: I sold my house there.

COOPER: You sold your house?

MERCER: Yes. Over a long period I think of payments. Anyway I don't have anything to see about.

COOPER: Well, that's good.

MERCER: It's better that way. I got a very good price. Amazing to me. I mean compared to what we paid for it.

COOPER: Oh yes, yes.

MERCER: _____ stretching out the payments had something to do with it. Making the _____, making more.

COOPER: Well, that's good cause you wouldn't want to have to think about that now.

MERCER: But I just put it in the bank.

COOPER: Well, cause a house is a lot to keep up with. And you don't want to have to...

MERCER: Oh yes they really are, always something to do isn't it?

COOPER: Oh yes.

MERCER: But that was a fortunate purchase. A friend of a friend of mine sold it to us.

COOPER: Well, this has certainly been nice. And I really appreciate your letting me

come and visit with you this afternoon.

MERCER: Well, I enjoyed seeing you and catching up on things.

COOPER: It was nice to talk with Anne and I'm going to let them know that this is the end of the tape now so that they'll know that we're at the end of our conversation. And then when they're listening to it they'll say, "Okay we've finished then." As you and I have visited here this afternoon I just want to thank you for letting me come.

MERCER: You're welcome.

COOPER: This concludes the tape for Carolyn Morton Mercer.



GLADYS STRICKLAND SATTERWHITE
Class of 1924

Today is Friday, September 23rd, 1988. I am in the Alumnae House at Meredith College in Raleigh, N. C. And I am with Gladys Strickland Satterwhite, Mrs. Mac Satterwhite of the Class of 1924. Mrs. Satterwhite has come today from Oxford to be here to share with us an interview which will be a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae.

COOPER: Gladys, thank you so much for driving over from Oxford today to share with us. Since you were our Distinguished Alumna for 1988 I know that Meredith has been much in your thinking and mind and reminiscing. You're a busy lady but I'm sure that you've taken out from some of your other things to give special attention to your memories of Meredith. So we feel very fortunate in having you come to share with us today about some of the people that you, friends that you made when you were here, both with the faculty and the students. And what your life has been like since you left Meredith. And how you have been involved with Meredith since you left Meredith.

SATTERWHITE: Thank you Jean. It's an honor to be here. And to have the chance to talk about Meredith. I was headed for Meredith from the time I discovered America. Of course my mama used to tell me that she cuddled me in her arms when I was a few days old and said, "Honey you're going to Meredith when you get ready for college." And to Meredith I came. And it was just like going to Camelot. Dr. Brewer was King Arthur. And all the teachers were the Round Table. And I was at Old Meredith uptown next to the Governor's Mansion. And that was just first class I thought. The old building, the main building full of turrets and tower four stories high was just like Camelot to me.

COOPER: I can imagine.

SATTERWHITE: It's a thrill to be here to remember all that stuff.

COOPER: Yes. Well, I understand that you have a distinction about entering Meredith that is quite fascinating. Tell us what unique position you hold in your entrance to Meredith.

SATTERWHITE: Well, as far as I know, I think you're referring to my age when I entered, I was fourteen when I came. And somebody asked me, "Why did your Mama let you go off to college at fourteen?" Well, I said, 'I had finished high school and she thought it would a good idea to keep on going.' Of course we had only eleven grades in school then. And Mama had given me a good send off. Before I was old enough to go to school she

taught me to read and love books. She had me in the third grade when I entered first year. So that's where I got the jump. And I had a wonderful first grade teacher. I always wanted to be a teacher just to be like Miss Daisy Burn. And she was ahead of her time. She let me progress at my own speed. And so I did, I finished the third under her and did most of the fourth I guess. So the next year my principal, a man that I was scared to death of, let me finish the fourth and through the fifth. So you see I got ahead of myself calendar wise and just finished at fourteen and came to Meredith.

COOPER: Where was this?

SATTERWHITE: That was in Sampson County. Near Dunn and farther away through Clinton which was the county seat. Anyway it was unusual but not unusual. My sister did the same thing. But she was a little older when she came to Meredith, two or three months than I, so I still had the order of entering youngest. But she was fourteen too. But she was fifteen in October and I was fifteen in late November, November 23. I was Gladys skipping girl.

COOPER: Well, you know they had to put in a little thing about Meredith and it's regulations. When you think back and you had fourteen year-olds here it does make a difference.

SATTERWHITE: Well, yes. And I had been rather restricted and protected at home of course in those post Victorian days, still Victorian enough after going through Buies Creek Academy boarding school. So to me the restrictions at Meredith weren't restricted. It didn't bother me a bit. I wasn't old enough to think about dates very well, very much. And even though we had to be chaperoned to go uptown, to a movie or a concert, that didn't bother me. And it was a strange feeling after I graduated, when I was a grown lady and teaching I sort of felt unprotected without a chaperone to look after me. And even today when I'm going on tours around the world people say, "Why don't you leave tours?" And I say, 'Oh I don't want to do that. I want somebody to look after me.' I get more out of a trip if somebody is telling me where to go and making all the provisions before we go.

COOPER: Well, I know now that you are retired you're making some of those trips too. And so maybe right at this moment tell us a little bit about some of the travel you've done in the last few years.

SATTERWHITE: Well, I did the first big trip four years after Meredith, in 1928. Carmen Rogers, an English teacher at Meredith, was getting up a tour to go do the grand tour of Europe. And she invited me to join her. And my sister heard

about it and she said, "Well, I want to go too." And two of her fellow teachers at Montclair said, "We're going too." So the four of us went with Carmen and the group. Right now I can't think of the name of the company, the tour group. But it was a wonderful tour. And we were known by one of the men on the trip who was quite observant as "The three innocents aboard and the other one." We never did know which one the other one was. But he was so adorable, from Bryn Mawr. He and his wife were on the tour. And so that was I guess the greatest tour of my life. And it came at a time when I got so much out of it. We toured about eight or nine countries in Europe. And it colored my living and my teaching from then on, the grand tour. And to climax it all we had a summer session at Cambridge University. And that was really super. I loved Cambridge. I'd love to go back and punt up and down the Cam.

COOPER: And that was 1926?

SATTERWHITE: That was '28.

COOPER: 28.

SATTERWHITE: Four years out of Meredith. Two years for my sister out of Meredith. But I've been running around. I'd say I'm, I tell my friends, since I did tell my students, I was just living up to my initials, GS - Going Somewhere. And they laughed and said yes. But I have, as of last year at least visited all the continents except Antarctica. That doesn't count in my little black book. I did get an attractive brochure the other day though, color, wanting me to join them, a southland tour. And really it would be interesting. But I'm not, I'm not going where it's frozen. I'd rather take my delights somewhere else. But it was been a great joy. Most of my trips have been since I retired. And of course my husband died ten years ago and so I've had to leave everybody at home. I thought when I went to the Holy Land in 1969, the week of Christmas, that that was the most meaningful trip I'd ever had. But they all have been meaningful. So I don't say, people say, "Which trip have you enjoyed the most?" I say, 'Which child in your mama's family of six children does she love the best.' And then they don't answer.

COOPER: I might say, "It's the one I'm on at the moment."

SATTERWHITE: Yes.

COOPER: Well, and I know you're getting ready next week to go to New England. And so you're still at this process.

SATTERWHITE: I'm still going somewhere.

COOPER: But in this process between Meredith and all of your trips you have accomplished a great deal as a professional. Would you sort of cap this for us.

SATTERWHITE: Well, I don't know that I've accomplished much except that I have had a lot of students. And it's a joy to run into them. I've run into some of my former students everywhere I've ever been except to Russia and Egypt and Australia, I think. But it's been a joy. I taught just fifty years, twenty-eight of which were at Campbell. So my middle name, I don't have one, but my middle name ought to be Campbell, Gladys Campbell. Some mail came to me when I was teaching at Campbell that was addressed to Miss Gladys Campbell. And it got into the president's office box you know. And he said, "Well, welcome into the family. You belong in it anyway." And I really felt that I did. Dr. Campbell...

COOPER: Now you've taught English there?

SATTERWHITE: I taught English and some Latin and French. But I was English primarily. When I left I was nominal head of the department. That was it. But Dr. Campbell was such an inspiration. He was my pastor when I studied at Buies Creek Academy. Of course the Academy became Campbell College and then Campbell University. So it was just like having a great granddad looking after me there. And of course taught with him, taught with him after he had been my principal and superintendent and all that. Taught with his son, Dr. Leslie Campbell. And then I taught Dr. Wiggins and his wife Millie, who are there now and have just finished 21 years. So they're among my children. And I sang at their wedding.

COOPER: Oh marvelous. Okay now you taught at Campbell for these many years. And you made quite a distinction as the female alum teacher there. And alumna, you're alumna of that since you went to the Academy there as a student. So would you tell us about that?

SATTERWHITE: I was the first woman ever to receive the Distinguished Alumni Citation at Campbell. I believe that was in '78. And then a few years later I was dumbfounded when they chose me to receive the Service Award. And so I am the only woman that's ever received both of them. And that shouldn't have been. But anyway it was. Last night at a meeting celebrating Campbell College, Campbell University, Dr. Wiggins' 21 years there as president, one woman came up to me whose husband had been one of my students at Campbell years ago. She said, "I want to meet the woman that entered Buies Creek Academy 70 years ago, 1918." I said, "Well, here she is." But it was such a joy to teach so many wonderful kids, wonderful

students. And they're my best friends now. Of course all my faculty peers have been promoted elsewhere. But the students I continue... Of course I taught many students who were older than I at the time I taught them. My oldest student, do you remember, have you ever heard me talk about Mrs. Wallace the wife of Professor Wallace in the business department? I taught their two children, son and daughter. And they had gone on and graduated from University and gotten Doctor's degrees and so forth. And then Mrs. Wallace who had never had formal college training said, "Gladys would you let me take your college English?" I said, 'My dear I would be most honored.' So I always bragged about her as my oldest student. She died two years ago at age 103. She was a little older than my mother when I taught her. Of course she was a joy. She was a good student. And she, I stayed at her home when I was twelve years old, twelve and thirteen. And then I went and lived in her home when I went back to teach at Campbell. So she really was my second mother. But students galore and wonderful wonderful opportunities. And I learned a lot while I was teaching.

COOPER: You talk about all these many years ago but see you started out so early that you're still so young.

SATTERWHITE: In case the record needs to be made, it's 82 now.

COOPER: That's marvelous. No one would guess more than 72 for sure.

SATTERWHITE: Well, I've been blessed with good health.

COOPER: Then you did "retire from Campbell" after 27 years?

SATTERWHITE: 28.

COOPER: 28 years. But that certainly...

SATTERWHITE: That included the what I called sabbatical, the year I was at Cornell. Thereby hangs a big tale too. Go Ahead.

COOPER: Alright we'll come back. Okay, but then you didn't really retire you just started over again.

SATTERWHITE: Yes. When I moved to Oxford to live with Mac I taught in high school there, finishing out 50 years of teaching. And that's a lifetime. But it was glorious. And my two principals that I've taught under in junior high and Gladden in senior high, they said, "Can't you stay one more year?" I said, 'No. After fifty years I think, thought that was a good stopping place.' And they said, "Well, would you be on the list to come and substitute?" I

said, 'No, clean break.' So I never did go back and substitute. And I've enjoyed not being tied down. Because it would interfere with my schedule of traveling, being tied down to everything.

COOPER: Is that when you married Mac?

SATTERWHITE: Uh hmm, in '52. See we were both old folks when we got married.

COOPER: No, cause you were still young when you started all this.

SATTERWHITE: So I rounded out my fifty years of teaching at Oxford. And Oxford is such a lovely place just to be in now, to have retired to.

COOPER: What was he involved with in Oxford?

SATTERWHITE: He was a retired army man and had a small farm out there. So I live on the farm where we lived. And he was a great flower lover and fruit tree planter. And he just loved being out.

COOPER: That's marvelous. Okay, now you mentioned Cornell. Wanna come back?

SATTERWHITE: Yes. When I had been out of Meredith two years I heard that Mary Lynch Johnson was working on her Ph.D. in her second year. And I loved her to death. She had taught me here at Meredith. I said, 'That's a good time for little Gladys to go onto Cornell and get her Masters, while Miss Johnson is there to look after me.' And I did. And it was just providential. And such a joy to be there with her. We lived in the same graduate house. And I had her professors. She could tell me which ones she took. And they were super. Lane Cooper and J.Q. Adams. J.Q. was a great Shakespearean scholar. Incidentally, he was in London one time at the great library, museum too. And he wanted something about Shakespeare. The librarian said, "Well, there's only one man in the world that we know of that might give you the answer. He's J.Q. Adams from Cornell University." And it was J.Q. who was doing the asking. So he did have quite a reputation. And I was so thrilled.

COOPER: I know that your relationship with Mary Lynch Johnson was indeed special. There are also a couple of other Johnsons who are Meredith graduates that you knew that you might share something with us about.

SATTERWHITE: Yes when I went to Oxford to live Kate Johnson Parham, Mary Lynch's first cousin, was living there. And soon Lois Johnson came to live with her sister most of the time. Both of them have been teachers here at Meredith. And Lois was a Distinguished Alumnae winner cited some time

ago. But they were remarkable people. Brilliant, and dedicated Christians. And just great community servants. Speaking about, when I say Mary Lynch I must explain. When I went to Cornell I called her Miss Johnson, as I had at Meredith. Cause she was my dear teacher of 19th century poets and so forth. She said, "Gladys you cannot say Miss Johnson around here. We're both in the same graduate school. We're both in the same graduate house. You've got to say Mary Lynch." I said, 'I can't do it.' She said, "You can and you got to." So one day I tried and it didn't kill me. She said, "Didn't kill you so you've got to keep on doing it." So from then on Mary Lynch was natural with me. And she was my dear dear friend for 40 odd years after that. She was super.

COOPER: I'm sure she was. That was a wonderful relationship.

SATTERWHITE: And I came and took every continuing education class she taught here after I retired from teaching at Oxford.

COOPER: Oh wonderful, wonderful.

SATTERWHITE: Yeah.

COOPER: Okay, you are very familiar with another person in your, that was in your little sister class, Mary Steele Smith. Would you say a word about her since I, there is another tape that has been done in this oral history about Mary Smith.

SATTERWHITE: She's Mary Susan Steele Smith. She was my English teacher the first two years. I went to her room with some trepidation. I had heard she was very hard and strict and required a lot of work. Well, I wasn't afraid of work. I'd been used to that. But she did a great deal for me. And she's the one that said, "Gladys don't you want to major in English?", at the end of my sophomore year. I was flattered that she thought I could even handle it. Cause it was given out to be one of the toughest majors at Meredith. All this reading and writing connected to it. But I'm indebted to her. She did me a lot of good. So she was my English teacher first years, and then Mary Lynch. And Dr. Julia Harris, oh, my junior and senior years. She came here to Meredith to teach in my junior year. She thought and she thought too that we were special for her because we were her first students. And we, especially majors, and I worked my toenails off for her. Shakespeare, literary criticism, and she taught me a great deal about writing. And opened new vistas. That literary criticism started with homework and ended up with whoever was current right then. She was just wonderful.

COOPER: That's great. There was another person in your little sister class of 1926

that you have gotten to renew acquaintance with through a book she's written. Would you speak a little about Daisy?

SATTERWHITE: I wish I could see Daisy right now, Daisy Barnwell Jones. She was a busy busy little girl here. And it was end of the Depression. And she sent herself to Meredith by her own efforts. Her senior year her father did help her a little bit because she said, "Daddy if you can spare two dollars I'll be able to do more of the student government work that I've been elected to." And a few years ago I heard that she had written a book entitled, "My first Eighty Years". Well, I had not been in touch with Daisy since she graduated in '26, with my sister. So I immediately wrote and got it from her. And I've bought two or three others and given them away to everybody else. I sent one to the library in Oxford and one to, I think the alumnae office here. And it's a thrilling book. To see how any one person could live so many lives. In her four years here she worked so hard and did everything. She was a smart girl and she taught school a little bit. Then she was not satisfied not finishing her RN aspiration so she went to Johns Hopkins. One of the few early girls there. And she writes so thrillingly. OH, she's done a wonderful wonderful job of being a nurse. And she made contact with so many loving people in the D.C. area where she's living now with Charlie, her dear husband. They had no children. And her wedding dress and shoes are in the Smithsonian Institute, by request from somebody who was, that knew about her value and her work. She just liked to beautify the city and give up her time. And she was almost called the "leaf lady" by some kids out on the streets, "You know they're going to blow away. Why are you working hard to put them around those trees?" She said to them, "Well, how about your helping me?" She was a real psychologist. Well, one patient she had one time was not with it and he thought something was on the floor that he had to get off the bed and get. And he couldn't, wasn't supposed to do that. So she said, "Let me do it." So she got under the bed and counted, "How many of them did you say? One, two, three." And it satisfied him completely. And nobody could handle him except her. It took two orderlies to keep him on the bed. And she could just go in and calm him down and speak so kindly to him and say, "Let's do so and so." She was just was a psychologist and psychiatrist and everything. As well as an RN. I just admire her so much. I wish every Meredith girl could read that book.

COOPER: You mentioned her wedding dress being in the Smithsonian. And it's not there because it's an elegant dress at all. Maybe tell us the story about that.

SATTERWHITE: She was going to buy a so called wedding outfit. And she got a letter from one of her dear brothers who needed \$200 to help him finish his M.D. work in Chicago. And she said to her fiancée, "Charlie, shall I send money

to that brother or buy my wedding outfit?” He said, “By all means send it to the brother.” So she used what she had. It was a wool dress made from wool cloth from sheep on her father’s farm in western North Carolina. It really is significant. If I had to go back, of course I didn’t know about it when I was there, I’m going to try to find that specimen. And I have a record of it her gift, you know, from the Smithsonian Institute.

COOPER: My goodness, how did you get the record? Did you write to her?

SATTERWHITE: No, she just sent me a facsimile. She sent me a copy cause she knew I would be interested. We enjoyed several communications since I found out about *My First Eighty Years* that she wrote.

COOPER: Well, I, but you did know her when she was a student here?

SATTERWHITE: Oh yes. Didn’t know her very well because she was two years behind me. And she was working at so many odd jobs to make money to stay in school. So I knew her but I didn’t know her personally socially. Of course she was always doing her, holding a job down. And making good grades too. She was a good student.

COOPER: Well, thinking back to Meredith days, you talked about these teachers who were every important to you. And I know you’ve talked about some of the students, relationships that have been friends. Is there anything else about Meredith that you want to say before we leave your college days?

SATTERWHITE: I could never talk enough about Meredith. I was so thrilled. The first day I came Dr. Brewer met us in the hall, my parents and me. And he said, “Don’t tell me your first name. Just give me your last name.” And I said, ‘Strickland.’ He said, Gladys, we’re so glad to have you here.” He had memorized every freshman’s name and her hometown. And so from then on he was just super in my way of thinking. And he was. When I was a senior several of us girls went to a national student convention in Indianapolis. And do you know that sweet Dr. Brewer took his time and money, and he wasn’t paid much of a salary, nobody was, and went just to be with us. And Carmen Rogers went to as our chaperone. We were well cared for, six or eight girls. And on the way back he knew that we had never seen many big shows. He took us to an opera house in Cincinnati and I saw my first musical comedy. And I was just on cloud nine. And that was his treat to us. So he was just always so sweet and superior. And interested in people and a good administrator. And, well a good student himself. And his lovely wife and daughter Miss Ellen. When we were at Cornell, Mary Lynch and I, Ellen was always sending Mary Lynch who was her very good friend party materials. One stands out in particular. Around valentine she

sent party favors, napkins, plates, goodies, everything. And we had a party in our graduate house that a half a dozen of us could enjoy with Mary Lynch, from Ellen. She was so sweet and so resourceful and so thoughtful. She was unique, Ellen Brewer was.

COOPER: Well, I think another unique person in your life was Dr. Vann. Even though he was not your president. But you knew him.

SATTERWHITE: No. It must have before I was ten years-old. Because Dr. Vann was president of Meredith from 1900-1915. And then Dr. Brewer was. So when I came Dr. Brewer was president. So before that time my Buies Creek Doctor, J.A. Campbell, who was my pastor took Dr. Vann to our house, Mama and Papa's, for overnight. Course he spoke in our church. And we children were amazed and amused and thrilled, and delighted to see Dr. Vann, with artificial arms and hands eat just like the rest of us and drink his coffee, dress himself the next day. We were just amazed at what he could do. Have you ever heard what some of the community boys asked Dr. Vann when he became Dr. Vann and head of Meredith, and wonderful scholar and musician; he wrote our alma mater, said, "Dick, what would you have done if you'd never had to do without those arms?" He said, "Well, I probably would have been sitting around this pot belly stove like you guys, spitting tobacco juice." Which is, even when he was injured like that his mother and daddy said, "That boy has got to have an education. He's got to make his contribution to the world with his brain because he can't be a manual laborer." And so he...

COOPER: You had another special relationship with that family. I believe you had an interesting visit with his daughter, Dr. Elizabeth Vann, in Washington once. Would you tell us about that?

SATTERWHITE: Yes. The time we were going, Mary Lynch Johnson and I were going to Cornell, Dr. Elizabeth Vann met us at the train station and took us around to show us the big city. And what a thrill it was, my first sight of the city by day or night. And the reflected lights on the capital dome was just out of this world for me. To sort of like looking down from heaven.

COOPER: And I know that you felt very awed by her probably at that point because she was a physician and she was a good bit older than you were. And now to realize that she has lived to a very what you might quote "ripe old age" and is one of those being put in our oral history here. So it's fun for me to know that you two have had a relationship.

SATTERWHITE: I felt that I was touching greatness when I was with her and Mary Lynch.

COOPER: Well, were you sort of stopping on your way back to school when you stopped in Washington?

SATTERWHITE: We were going to school.

COOPER: Going to school?

SATTERWHITE: Going to Cornell that fall.

COOPER: Okay. Cornell seemed to be a popular place for Meredith graduates to try to go.

SATTERWHITE: Yes. I had been introduced to it by two or three of my teachers, especially Dr. Mary Lynch. Who wasn't a doctor then. She was working on her doctorate and I knew that was a good time for me to go to work on my little masters. She was a perfect godmother to me.

COOPER: And you had some other faculty at Meredith though that you liked a lot, that did special favors for you you felt, went out of their way to be helpful to you.

SATTERWHITE: Yes they were pro-parentists, in the place of my mother and daddy. I remember when in my sophomore year the news came during the night, after midnight, that my mother's father had died. And I was to try to catch a train whenever the schedule called for it to go out. So Miss Evelyn Campbell, our Dean of Women at that time, came to my room in Faircloth Dorm, woke me up, so kind and calming and said, "Yes we can get you on a train scheduled before dawn. Allett Donis, the black custodian at the college campus that loved us Meredith girls and we all loved him, walked with me to the station. But she went out of her way to say, "Gladys, do you happen to have enough money here to buy you a railway ticket?" And I said, 'Yes thank you I do.' But wasn't that sweet? I was just so grateful... [end of side one].

COOPER: This is side two of a tape with Gladys Strickland Satterwhite. And she is doing this as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. And today is September 23rd, 1988. We just were talking on the other side of the tape Gladys about some of the teachers. And I remember a story you told me hesitating to check in one night. It was another one of those stories that you felt that your teacher went the extra mile, or your supervisor or your guardian so to speak.

SATTERWHITE: When we were at Meredith rules were rather strict. Chaperones were

necessary. Well, my uncle and aunt lived in Raleigh, Uncle Mac and Aunt Mary. And so of course the college didn't mind if we went out to do whatever at night. And we signed out knowing we ought to sign in when we came in. But it was after eleven o'clock and I didn't want to wake up Miss Sabrisky, who at that time was Dean of Women. So I just thought I'd tell her the next morning we were back. And next morning she was very kind and gentle and didn't rebuke me or reprove me. She said, "Well, I wish you had though Gladys cause I sort of stayed awake hoping that you back." But she knew we were with Aunt Mary and Uncle Mac, but I always felt a little guilty that I caused her any uneasiness because she was so kind.

COOPER: Another time you sort of got in on the good end of a deal concerned a book that you took out.

SATTERWHITE: Oh yes. It was one of those specials.

COOPER: Reserved.

SATTERWHITE: Reserved book. As usual I took lots of books home over Christmas holidays. And sometimes I found time to study. But that was a reserved book and when I came back the hours that I had it out just mounted up and up and up and if Miss Folgers had used her authority she could have soaked me for a lot of dollars. But she said, "Well, nobody was needing it holidays so I'm just going to charge you the regular rate for about two days." And I felt rich. And I felt indebted to her for her kindness. She was always so gentle and kind.

COOPER: You told me a story that was concerning the nurse "Son," that you referred to her as everybody calling her "Son" because she called everybody else son, and experienced really a sort of strategic one that you had with her.

SATTERWHITE: She was quite an institution at that institution. Everybody loved her. But, and she loved everybody. But she would rake us over the coals if she thought we did something that was damaging to our health. At Christmas time, after the holiday, I came back to Meredith feeling a little itchy when I left home on the train. But I thought, well nothing. And Mama didn't know about it. So when I undressed that night I saw that I was breaking out. I immediately went to the infirmary, 4th floor main building, and reported to Son. She said "The dog's toe sonny boy, what in the world did your Mama let you come back to this college for? Don't you know you'll give everybody on this campus chicken pox?" But nobody else caught it cause she put me in quarantine, isolation for days, about two weeks. I studied for all of my freshman exams. Took my exams up there except

math. I did get out in time to take Dr. Canaday's math. And while I was up there I could look out and see the world go by and I remember when Governor Morrison was inaugurated cause he passed by in parade that day, one of those days I was up there. So I could always remember when Governor Morrison was inaugurated.

COOPER: Okay, Morrison.

SATTERWHITE: Governor Morrison.

COOPER: Okay. Yeah that's right, the inauguration took place in January.

SATTERWHITE: And I appreciated my teachers trusting me to take my exams up there. They didn't know much about me. But I guess they were honorable themselves and expected everybody else to be on the honor system. So I had all my books lying out around me in that isolation but I wasn't a bit tempted. I would have come nearer to jumping out of that fourth floor window than I would have cheated, cause they had so much trust in me. So I appreciated that.

COOPER: Well, that's smart.

SATTERWHITE: That's what made Meredith anyway, my wonderful teachers.

COOPER: Well, you told me about something that I had not heard before, about a walking club you had. Tell us a little bit about this walking club, since the 1980's has gotten to be known for exercise generation and decade. Tell us about walking in the 1920's.

SATTERWHITE: As part of our physical education program, although it was not a planned unit or required. Anybody who wanted to could do extra walking and get some kind of recognition. So my sophomore year I thought, 'Well, I just like to walk.' So I walked and I walked. At the end of the year I had chalked up 600 miles that I had taken that I kept a record of. And the reward was a big M monogrammed for my white college sweater. My sister walked a little bit less. She chalked up 500 miles and she got an MC, which is not quite so important as mine.

COOPER: Tell us about this sister. She was your little sister.

SATTERWHITE: In class yes. I was a junior when she was a freshman. She came with me early cause I had to be there early to greet the freshman, one of the greeters. And she was there with nobody that she knew except me. So that was one of her first homesick experiences. I shouldn't have let her come.

But of course Papa and Mama brought me and it was convenient for her to come along. And it wasn't too long. And she toughed it out but it was a sort of an ordeal for her. She was 14 also when she entered Meredith. But her birthday was in October when she was 15 and mine was not until November. So I did have about a month on her, being the youngest to enter Meredith.

COOPER: And her name was?

SATTERWHITE: Jesse Belle Stickland.

COOPER: And she's still very active also.

SATTERWHITE: Yes, yes and she now lives in Clayton, Jesse Belle Tew. She taught a number of years over 40. I taught 50. She taught first in Greensboro. And her husband died and soon enough after that she married a schoolmate that had grown up with us near Dunn, Dr. Tew, whose wife had died sometime before. So they lived in Clayton. He was a dentist in Clayton. She's cute as a button. When I go off on wild trips she'll say, "Well, if your plane is ever hijacked I hope they'll take you somewhere you've never been." She went with me to Europe that first summer but she's never been traveling with me since then.

COOPER: Okay. Back to Meredith, almost all of your generation talks about Dean Boomhour. But I believe you remember some things that maybe had not been mentioned before. Would you like to talk about Dr., Mr. Boomhour?

SATTERWHITE: Yeah, Mr. Boomhauer. He was just stolid and solid and conservative and a good kind man. You knew he was your friend but he was not the gushy kind. He was not the sweet kind that Dr. Brewer was, exactly. But he was very fine. But he would introduce our guest speakers at Chapel when Dr. Brewer wasn't here to do it. And sometimes when Dr. Brewer was here. And he'd tell everything that was supposed to be told and then he'd end it up by saying, "We will now hear Brother Smith," or whoever he was, "with profit and pleasure." So we students sort of giggled to ourselves, and sometimes maybe out loud, about his introduction. He always ended with "profit and pleasure."

COOPER: So when you were impersonating him, in the dorms and so forth, I'm sure that was always part of it.

SATTERWHITE: Yeah. Everybody knew what we were talking about.

COOPER: Well, as you went onto teach at Campbell College then you were still very

young at that time. Maybe you'd like to be on the other side now and tell us something that you remember about what you in turn did for students at Campbell.

SATTERWHITE: Well, they ought to be here to tell that. They did a great deal for me. But they've been sweet and kind enough lately to tell me that I gave them a good foundation. That I was pretty firm and pretty strict but fair and friendly. And they knew I was concerned and loved them. Wherever I go I run into some of them. A few that I taught those first years were older than I. But I was dignified and they didn't know how young I was. But they thought I was as old as Methuselah. I guess one time I was showing slides of the college, the history of the college, going back to 1887 and the fire in 1900. And they said, "Miss Strickland, were you here then?" I laughed. I said, 'Well, that's what you think.' But my Mama and Papa weren't even here quite at that time. They weren't even married then. One time at a restaurant when we were celebrating a special occasion one of our students saw Miss Powell, one of the institutions at Campbell and a wonderful teacher, go out and he said, "Is that Miss Mabel Powell?" I said, 'Yes.' He said, "Well, she was about a hundred years I thought when I was a student there." I said, 'Yes that's what you thought about all of us.' But we were still living and going strong.

COOPER: You mentioned you taught some students who were older than you were and there was one that turned out to be a very special student.

SATTERWHITE: She was that. Mrs. Wallace, bless her heart. She took me in as a little 12 year-old, in her home to room and board there. Her husband was Professor of Business. And she looked after me just as kindly as my Mama would have. Mama felt so good about my being there. And then after I taught, well after I returned to teach, I lived in her home as a teacher, having lived in it as a little student. And when I was at her house we didn't have good lights. I studied by an Aladdin lamp. But by the time I was teaching she did have electric power in her house, another house. And I taught her son and daughter when they went through University. He became a doctor. And she studied medicine at Duke. And then one day she said, "Gladys I've never had the opportunity to take college English. Would you let me take your college English." I said, 'My dear I would be honored.' And so she made a very good student. We got along just fine. And I've always bragged about her as being my oldest student. She was older than my mother when I taught her. She died two years ago at age 103. One time I was at her birthday party when she was 99 and I began fumbling for my car keys before leaving the porch where we had the party so I could get into the car and go on. I said, 'Miss Wallace when I get to heaven I'm not going to have to fumble for keys.' She said, "Gladys, are

you sure you're going there?" She was a dear, one of my joys.

COOPER: Another student that you had who was just a little older than you were, not the oldest like this one, but turned out to be another special relationship in later life.

SATTERWHITE: You're talking about Mac? Oh yes it so happens that Mac, who was nearly five years older than I, was in my class. And about 20 years later when he was down at Fort Bragg he came to my church for service. And he had been to school with my brother Sam. And when he went back to Fort Bragg he wrote Mama a note thanking her for a good Sunday dinner. And I was already sending letters from the church community to the boys who were overseas in the war, World War II. So I put Mac on the mailing list. And we had a lot in common, friends there and at Buies Creek. And so we just started, you know, doing more than that. And finally Mac and I got married.

COOPER: That sort of ended your Campbell career but started your high school teaching and Oxford career.

SATTERWHITE: Yes.

COOPER: Well, that's great. You have been showing me your yearbook from your senior year. And there's one club that I'd like for you to talk about, the Meredith Club.

SATTERWHITE: It was a second dining room arrangement. Before I came I'd hear about it but thought well I don't know enough about it. So I started boarding in the main dining room. And then I found out that those who worked in the Club, a minimum of 30 minutes day, were able to save seven dollars and a half a month. The dining room rate was \$20 a month. The Club rate was \$7.50. And my best friends worked in the Club. All four of my class presidents were Club girls. And we sort of got a little bit boastful I guess and thought that the best students really were down there in the poorer bracket. But there was no class consciousness particularly. A few I think felt that they were a little bit better than anybody else that ate in the main dining hall. And some felt a little inferiority complex cause they had to eating the Club. Most of us didn't. But I do know that oftentimes our friends would say, "Come over and eat dinner with me in the main dining hall next Friday night." And we thought we were really stepping out, in class, like eating at the Hilton or whatever.

COOPER: Twelve dollars and a half a month.

SATTERWHITE: For our board. Yeah, for our board. Mrs. Cooper was a good organizer. She helped many a student get through college by giving them more jobs than 30 minutes. Some of the worked nearly all the way through by really doing a whole lot of work down there in the Club. It was an opportunity for students to go to school.

COOPER: Some of them perhaps could not have come to Meredith otherwise.

SATTERWHITE: I'm sure they couldn't. Or they'd have left in debt. And then that was an ugly word. We didn't want to be in debt, any of us. I don't think many of us ever left in debt. If we borrowed it was our own debt and not, you know, in debt to the college. College had to be paid to keep going, keep it in the red.

COOPER: Well, I know that there have been lots of depressions but the era you were there is what everybody sort of loosely terms "The Depression, The Big Depression."

SATTERWHITE: Yes.

COOPER: Perhaps you'd like to tell us how your family managed that. Because you and your sister were there at the same time.

SATTERWHITE: Yes. Jesse Belle and I didn't realize that Papa and Mama weren't rich because they provided for us so adequately. We were never extravagant. We were trained not to be. But whenever we needed anything we got it. And when we didn't need it sometimes we got it. We even, Mama sent us some money to buy us a fur neckpiece, apiece, and that was elegant. But that first year I was at Meredith, two years before Jesse Belle came, my Dad who was a farmer and did many other things sold a 500 pound bale of cotton and gave a dollar, a five dollar bill in addition to buy one hog for his breed. That was a special hog and too a special price. But that was how much we, we'd live within our means. And they said, well my only great niece said the other day at my house, "Gladys, how could your parents afford to send you both to college? How could they have?" I said, 'Well, honey, they sacrificed enough. We didn't know they were sacrificing. But they did it.' And she's now planning to come to Meredith.

COOPER: And I believe your mother sort of had a little saying about sending you two to school.

SATTERWHITE: She said it took her six years to get out of Meredith. Because I was here two years before Jesse Belle came and she was here two years after I left. So it was my joy last year, in memory of my Mama, to establish a

scholarship.

COOPER: Can you sort of give us a little bit of the details on the scholarship? I've forgotten exactly what you called it.

SATTERWHITE: It's the Viola Jones Strickland Scholarship. Do you want me to tell you the amount?

COOPER: No the designation...

SATTERWHITE: It was done for any need. It didn't have strings attached. It was a minimal scholarship. I don't think they take them any smaller, \$10,000. That was...

COOPER: But it's not designated.

SATTERWHITE: No, it's not to be used in any special way or for any special group.

COOPER: Well, that's quite an honor to your mother I know. And she lived with you her last six years.

SATTERWHITE: Six years. She was a dear. She was ever so young. When we'd go shopping uptown in Raleigh I'd give out. She'd say, "Honey you sit down here at Hudson Belk on this bench. I've got a little more looking back at the dime store. I'll be back in a minute." She was very vivacious, very young, very active. She lived to be ninety and a half.

COOPER: Well, you mentioned the scholarship. That certainly is a recent contribution you've made to Meredith. But you not only give of your means but of your time. Because as you're here tonight you are also here for the occasion of the board meeting tomorrow. Tell us a little bit about what you're doing for Meredith right now.

SATTERWHITE: Well, for that, for that meeting I'm class agent. I try to keep in touch with my class members and encourage them to come back to Meredith. Especially on special occasions like homecoming or Founder's Day. Homecoming meaning Alumnae Day. And to support Meredith because Meredith, we were very proud and always have been to be called Meredith girls. So it's just to try to keep up with the members of my class, most of whom are no longer here. And many of whom that are here are in nursing homes or homebound. So there are not to many of us that can come. But it's a nice joy to keep up with them.

COOPER: Well, I know when I was serving as the president of the Alumnae

Association I went to your chapter meeting up in your place. And you had quite a good representation for the town of that size. I was just most pleased. You were the regional director then.

SATTERWHITE: Yes.

COOPER: But you finished out that term.

SATTERWHITE: The region comprised of Vance County, Granville County, Person County, Warren County, and what there one more? Anyway, we got together annually from that area and had an alumnae chapter meeting. And it was always a joy to keep in touch.

COOPER: And I was impressed with the number of young people that you had.

SATTERWHITE: Yes I was thrilled too.

COOPER: You had women of all ages there.

SATTERWHITE: Yeah.

COOPER: You might have been the oldest.

SATTERWHITE: I was, definitely. Wherever I go nowadays I'm the oldest one. "A dubious honor," as Mary Lynch Johnson would say.

COOPER: Your place in history during your early years at Meredith is something that is still talked about today. Would you sort of tell us how you, a young girl of 14 and 15, accepted what was going on in the world around you politically and religiously.

SATTERWHITE: I shall always be grateful for a certain Meredith professor, my biology teacher my freshman year, who was a Christian lady and a good science teacher. That year the division between church people and so called educated and really educated people, church people were supposed to be educated too, they almost came to war, to blows over evolution. And we'd have almost knock down drag out debates. We college girls would be bussed over to State College and hear both sides and they were bitter. Sort of like a political campaign today, almost throwing dirt at each other, mud. But I was grateful for Christian gentlemen, scientists like Dr. William Louis Poteat of Wake Forest.

COOPER: Okay, it was Dr.?

SATTERWHITE: William Louis Poteat, president of Wake Forest.

COOPER: Okay.

SATTERWHITE: And quite an illustrious educator and scientist and administrator. He could think straight through things and not lose his cool. And because of his influence I was able to be stabilized I think in my intellectual growth, in my spiritual growth. And I'm forever indebted to somebody like him, and my biology teacher. And otherwise I might have flipped and either lost my faith or gone ultra in either direction.

COOPER: But you feel that you kept the balance?

SATTERWHITE: Yes I did.

COOPER: And I believe you mentioned to me that maybe in the church that you were in at that particular time, perhaps a revivalist?

SATTERWHITE: A visitor had come into town to stir up things. He was ultra conservative and he did his bit to squelch people like Dr. Poteat. But it all turned out I suppose for our good. We didn't give up the faith.

COOPER: Oh me, sort of like our disagreement in the Southern Baptist Convention now. I'd say that somehow or other we've lived through some very divisive things in the past that we'll probably make it again.

SATTERWHITE: We hope.

COOPER: Gladys it's been wonderful reminiscing with you and hearing of your many wonderful experiences in life. And as you said you just kept on the upbeat all the time. Do you have any words of wisdom or any dreams for Meredith that you want to sort of close out our thoughts with?

SATTERWHITE: Well, before I expostulate on that big item I'd like to say that I'm so grateful that I'm a Meredith girl. In fact I've never heard of a Meredith girl who wasn't proud that she was a Meredith girl. And Mary Lynch would say, "Don't say proud Gladys cause that's a sin." I'm grateful that I'm a Meredith girl. And I mean that. It meant so much to me. And I just hope the present students and those who come after this year will benefit from what Meredith has to offer. It has a great deal to offer. And make their input valuable, cause others did it for me. It was just a wonderful experience. In fact, a serious experience. I grew so much, literally from a 78 pounder when I came here 14 years-old to a 112 pounder when I left, at the age of 18. And I'm just so grateful for the opportunity and it's meant so

much to me in my life, and my students that I've taught for so many years. And I don't mind being this old. In fact, I'm thinking about a line from Browning that Mary Lynch Johnson may have imported from him from _____, "Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be." And I really think that.

COOPER: That's marvelous. Well, we hope that you will be around for a lot more years and we'll look forward to celebrating Meredith's Centennial with you in 1991.

SATTERWHITE: I'll be around or up there looking down.

COOPER: Thank you so much.



HAZEL BAITY
Class of 1926

Today is February 24, 1988. This tape is being made as a part of an oral history of Meredith College Alumnae. Today our narrator is Ms. Hazel Baity of the class of 1926. The interviewer is Jean Cooper, class of 1954.

COOPER: We're at the Moravian Home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Ms. Baity, this is a real treat for me to be able to come here this afternoon and just visit with you and to recall things about Meredith. Memories that you have, how you are doing now, and anything that you want to share with us. So, we'll just sit back and relax now and have a visit together. How long have you been here at the Moravian Home?

BAITY: I've been here two years.

COOPER: It's a lovely place. How did you happen to choose the Moravian Home?

BAITY: Well, I came here and looked it over and I liked it and it was getting near my retirement. I had a niece who lived here and one in High Point, and I have a sister who lives at Boone. And, then I was reared in Mocksville, a place near here. And so I had cousins over there. So I just felt like it would be a good place to be and to be nearer my people. So, after being there at Meredith and I had retired, I thought, well I ought to do this while I could do it myself, wouldn't have to bother other people. And then while I was getting ready to come I fell and broke my coccyx and so that delayed it. But then I came and am getting along very well. I remember we moved at Christmas. They asked us to have our trunks packed and that they would move us out while we were at home.

COOPER: Okay, now that was Christmas 1925 then I guess, wasn't it? Cause you graduated in 1926. So you were a senior?

BAITY: And I just don't know how we got, we didn't go into Raleigh to the station. We got off the train out there and they evidently must have had buses or something to transport us up to the new buildings. And, of course, they said that Miss Forges moved the library and she rode on the truck with the books. Now, that wasn't a very large library, was it?

COOPER: No, I don't believe so.

BAITY: Well, anyway, I am...

COOPER: When you moved, when you came in to Meredith back from the Christmas

holidays that year and you got on the, got off the train out there, then I think it's about a third of a mile from the train, where the train must have been, to get up to Meredith. Because isn't that about a third of a mile, supposed to be?

BAITY: I just don't know, but they evidently had buses or something to carry us.

COOPER: I bet it wasn't a pretty paved lane like it is now.

BAITY: Oh no, no. We were in the red mud the whole winter. And they put down boards, you know, across the court out there and anytime of day or night you could hear those boards clicking. And it was, people were all so excited. We had been so crowded there at older Meredith and we had suites with adjoining bath, you know, just four girls to a bathroom.

COOPER: Yeah, I know. That was a real luxury.

BAITY: At the old Meredith we'd have to sign up, didn't have enough baths, and we'd have to sign up ahead of time if we wanted to get a bath.

COOPER: Oh my. Well, talking about the old campus I believe you have a picture here of it and it looks quite elegant from the outside.

BAITY: It was next to the Governor's Mansion and I remember the Governor's Mansion on this side and this is an annex, Faircloth Hall and there's a Faircloth Dormitory out at Meredith now. And I know the Governor's Mansion was in the adjoining square and sometimes they'd be having a dance over there and the band playing and all, and we'd all go out and crawl out on the roof to see what we could see.

COOPER: I bet you wished you could join in, didn't you? Well, this is a lovely building. I believe you said Buddy Lyon brought you this card.

BAITY: Yes, he brought that to me. He comes down frequently to see me and I'm always glad to see him.

COOPER: Well, I know he's glad to share this with you since you're one of the few that are around who know the old campus. I had, let's see, they went there at Christmas of 1925, moved out to those four dormitories. Gracious, they must have almost had more dormitories than they had girls when they got out there.

BAITY: They did. I tell you, there for a while members of the faculty lived out there

in the dorms. And after I graduated at Carolina there were just no openings, it was the Depression. And the colleges, particularly the smaller colleges, just weren't adding people. So I thought, well it'd be better to be getting some kind of experience than just sitting at home doing nothing. So I went down to Raleigh and I asked Dr. Brewer. I told him that if they needed any help I'd be glad to come and work for my room and board. And well, at that time he didn't know whether they'd have anything or not but he would keep in touch with me. So I had this letter from Dr. Brewer one day and he said, "Well, somebody has given us some books for the, some money to buy books for the library." And so he says, "Miss Forges would be glad to have you come down and help her." So, that's what I did. And he says to me, "I hope that then we'll be able to employ you." However, at the end of the year he came and said, "Well, we're sorry that we won't have a place right now." So, I did work in the public library in Charlotte and various places just to do something. And so one day in Charlotte the telephone rang and this voice said, "Miss Baity, this is Carlyle Campbell speaking. We have a vacancy in the library and we would be, if you're interested, be glad to have you come down for an interview." Well, of course I said, "Yes. I'll be down tomorrow." So I went down the next day and we made the transaction and that fall I was at Meredith as Head Librarian.

COOPER: Oh my goodness. So you went at the very beginning then, with Dr. Campbell, as Head Librarian when you went back then? So that was 194??

BAITY: 1941.

COOPER: Okay. And you stayed there for how long?

BAITY: I stayed there 31 years.

COOPER: My goodness. So that means you retired in 1971?

BAITY: 1972. I retired in 1972. '41 and I worked there 31 so I retired in 1972.

COOPER: Uh huh. Okay, and then you, let's see, did you go directly from Meredith when you graduated in '26 to Carolina for your library science degree? Or did you work in between or what?

BAITY: No, I didn't. I taught in the high school at Mocksville. And I had in mind going to library school but my father and mother had given me that and so I wanted to put myself through library school. And then you just get to doing something that you're interested in it and you just keep on. Finally, I thought, 'Well, if I'm ever going to make a change it's time to do it.' And

that was still in the Depression and people thought I was crazy to give up work and go to school. But, it really turned out to be a good thing. Because I was ready then when an opening came. And so I first went to the library school at G.C. in Greensboro and just to see, one summer I went just to see. I took some courses in library science just to see how I liked it. And I was so thrilled over it there as no question in my mind. And so that fall found me at Carolina in the library school.

COOPER: Oh, well, wonderful. How long did it take you at Carolina? Was that a two year course or one year course?

BAITY: At that time they were not giving but just the one year. You had to have a degree, AB degree to enter, and then you took one year of Library Science. It was really equivalent, you had to have two years. But now since that time they do give graduate degrees.

COOPER: But at that time it was sort of like getting your masters?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: What did you teach when you taught at Mocksville?

BAITY: I taught math and English.

COOPER: Oh. Well, so were either of those your major at Meredith then?

BAITY: Well, I'll tell you, I went to Oxford College before I went to Meredith and I had not had any education. All my courses had been in other things and I found out if I wanted to teach I had to have a teacher's certificate and so to get that I had to take so many courses in education. And then I took, under Dr. Freeman, religious education. And so that was the way it was there.

COOPER: Tell me about this Oxford College. It's not in existence now, is it?

BAITY: No. It was a good college. It was just a two year college and, but old Dr. Hartgood had a good school there. And we did good work there.

COOPER: So you were there for two years?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: Now, was that a church sponsored school too? Was it a Baptist school?

- BAITY: Well, it was an independent. Old Dr. Hartgood owned it. I was there two years and then it seemed that after Dr. Hartgood died some man from the North came down and, oh he advertised about, you know this old southern college, you know, and everything. And they had girls coming down and say they were so disappointed when they got there and saw what was there. But, old Dr. Hartgood had a good school.
- COOPER: So you've attended three colleges really then, Oxford College, Meredith College, and Chapel Hill-UNC.
- BAITY: I tell you, I don't advise going to, I believe in going to a college that you're going to your freshman year. Because you take by your sophomore or junior year, by that time, you've made friends and it's, and the teachers... I know that later when I went to Meredith, Dr. Harris who was head of the English Department, she said to me one day, she said, "Hazel, we were hard on you." And I said, "I don't doubt it." I said, "I know all too well." They would say, "Now you have to go back and take the freshman year of this to establish your credit."
- COOPER: I'm sure it had its disadvantages then. But I'm sure that Dr. Harris, you appreciated what she had to offer in later years that she was there.
- BAITY: Oh yes. I thought so much of Dr. Harris. Have you ever heard of Will Nichols in connection with Meredith?
- COOPER: Well, I think I've just seen the name in the history, but I really would like to hear about him.
- BAITY: Well, he was the first person I knew at Meredith. Will brought the mail up to the library and he could do all odd jobs you know. Everybody called on Will. And you know Founder's Day coming in the winter as it does, it seemed that it would always snow or have bad weather, you know. And so that's when we would have Will to don his white coat and go out and help the ladies in and out of the building. And then whenever we had a recital they'd call on Will, again he'd put on his white coat and go up you know, to move the pianos or lift it up for them. And everybody would applaud. But one day Will came in the library and Miss Johnson was in my office talking to me about something and Will came in and saw her and he says, "Miss Johnson, I want your car to go fishing." And Miss Johnson said, with a twinkle in her eye you know, she said, "Well, Will I need that car myself." And I don't think any transaction was made. But you know, we all laughed at Miss Johnson. She had that old car, we all felt like it was going to break down and so she used it until like the one horse shade, it just fell apart.

COOPER: I believe in my day I remember that, her car, too. But Will must have really been there a long time because I remember his name.

BAITY: Oh yes. We just, Will was fine.

COOPER: He was sort of a fixture there then, wasn't he? Well, uhm, I know that you have some special memories about people like that, do you remember Miss Lou, who was in the dining hall? She was sort of the hostess in the dining hall.

BAITY: Miss Lou?

COOPER: Miss Lou is what we called her. Do you remember?

BAITY: She was a tall, yes I remember her.

COOPER: She was like our mother, for those of us who worked in the dining halls.

BAITY: Yes. She was interesting and do you remember Dr. Lane?

COOPER: No. I don't remember Dr. Lane. But tell me about Dr. Lane.

BAITY: Well, Dr. Lane was the college physician for quite a while. We all thought so much of her. And I, Myrtle Barnett was their nurse and well we just...

COOPER: Dr. Lane, was she married or?

BAITY: No. She was Dr. Bessie Lane.

COOPER: Bessie Lane, okay. Did she have a practice out in town?

BAITY: Yes she did.

COOPER: And then she had...

BAITY: And she had an office downtown. And she would come out to campus once, or regularly every Wednesday and then whenever necessary on call and she would come.

COOPER: But the nurse stayed there on campus?

BAITY: Oh yes, and she came. And that was way up on what you might say was the fourth floor. The infirmary was up there, you know we had three floors. And that infirmary was up even in all those little gables.

COOPER: That was when I was there. We had to walk up a lot of steps to get to the sick bay, so to speak.

BAITY: Yes, uh huh, we certainly did.

COOPER: Now that was when you were there as Librarian, that was later that Dr. Lane was there right? That was not when you were a student.

BAITY: No.

COOPER: I do know the name of Dixon.

BAITY: Dr. Delia Dixon Carroll.

COOPER: Yes.

BAITY: And, oh the nurse up there we all called Son. She called us, everybody was on. And so we all called her Son.

COOPER: So S-o-n, "Son" at an all female institution.

BAITY: Right.

COOPER: At an all female institution, that was pretty unusual wasn't it?

BAITY: It certainly was.

COOPER: At calling names, of course the Angel Farm was a very common name when I was there. You don't know when they started calling it the Angel Farm?

BAITY: No, I really don't. But they were calling it that when we there.

COOPER: Most of it's existence I guess.

BAITY: And let me tell you, that when we first went out to Meredith you had to get a bus and go up to State College and there transfer to the trolley. And it cost us 30 cents to get to town. So we would all work hard during the week and save up and we'd go downtown on Saturday afternoon and do the shopping, or anything we needed to, and then we would stay down and have dinner, and then go back out. That was our ..

COOPER: Was your weekly outing, huh?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: Now it seem such a short distance from Meredith downtown, to think that you had to take a bus and then a trolley.

BAITY: I know it.

COOPER: It took you a long time to get downtown.

BAITY: Yes it certainly did.

COOPER: And downtown then meant the Capitol and Fayetteville Street, didn't it?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: That's about all there was to it, I expect.

BAITY: It's just changed so much now. It's just more of a business place. Then it was just a nice college and community.

COOPER: A real community of people.

BAITY: The train ran out there, wasn't far from us I know, cause we could hear it and then we were out there near the State Fairgrounds and we'd have a time Fair Week. The traffic was so heavy. And we all enjoyed the fireworks and every night during the fair when we'd hear the fire things popping the girls all got out, you know, and ran out to see what they could see.

COOPER: Well, when they were deciding on relocating Meredith from downtown to where it is now, I remember reading in the history that one objection to your moving out to where it was called the Tucker Farm I think, was the place that we did relocate to, was it was near the State Prison Farm. Do you remember any discussion about that?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: And they call that little area out there "Method", didn't they? Sort of like a little suburb of Raleigh.

BAITY: And I know at Christmas, when the mail was so heavy, we could go out there to Method and mail packages and send our cards or whatever and just do it so quickly that we would go there so much of the time, to Method to do that. There was a black postmaster there and there was quite a

community over there.

COOPER: It was an all black community at that time, was it, or, do you remember?

BAITY: No, it seems that there was some other too.

COOPER: Okay. We're going to turn this over in a little bit, there's a little more time on it though. Tell me about this cooperative, or is that what it was called where some of the girls worked and cooked their own meals and maybe they had a dining hall under the dining hall?

BAITY: They did. Some of the girls who wanted to make money to pay their way, you know, ate down there in the Club.

COOPER: The Club, okay.

BAITY: Yes. And at that time we had black waiters in white coats in the dining room and then later they changed and they did away with the Club and let the girls who wanted to, serve in the dining room.

COOPER: Okay. Cause the Club sounds sort of exclusive, sounds like they were the exclusive ones down there. But now we call it the president's Dining Hall down in the basement of the ...

BAITY: New dining hall, yes. And the waiters up there, at Christmas, would cake walk for us.

COOPER: Oh, tell me about that.

BAITY: I just remember we enjoyed it so much and ...

COOPER: When you say the cake walk, did they actually walk around with cakes?

BAITY: No, it was some kind of step that they did.

COOPER: Oh okay, alright. It was like a dance almost, around the dining hall, as they were serving. Were they all male or were there male and female?

BAITY: The black waiters were all male.

COOPER: I guessed that, yeah.

BAITY: Then, as I say, they changed and let the students serve up there. And oh it was so nice when we went out there, we had square tables, you know,

down in the old dining room we had these great big long tables, and we had square tables. And the faculty member or two would sit at the head of the table and serve. And the students would be around. And that way we could carry on conversation you know.

COOPER: I guess you sat down for all the meals then, did you? Breakfast, dinner and supper, didn't you, were served as family style for all three meals?

BAITY: Then on Sunday they gave us paper bags for our Sunday night supper. We didn't go to the dining room on Sunday night. And that was the time that we probably planned, and you know, there was a kitchenette on each floor and we would plan to cook something. And Miss Rhodes, during the..

COOPER: Miss Laddie Rhodes.

BAITY: Laddie Rhodes, uh huh, made the most delicious, she got the whole wheat and made the most delicious whole wheat pancakes. And so we'd go in there and she made those and then we would stay and help her and then we would do the dishes.

COOPER: So that was Sunday night supper in a special fashion wasn't it?

BAITY: And the hall out there on the first floor was so much cooler than our rooms, so sometimes we would set up card tables out there in the hallway and eat out there. And then..

COOPER: And that's when you were the head of the library, when Miss Laddie Rhodes was there, right?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: And so you're talking about those of you who were on the staff, that Miss Rhodes would cook the pancakes for?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: So, I remember her. She was around Meredith a long time.

BAITY: Oh yes. She did a lot.

COOPER: And she was the secretary to the president, theoretically wasn't she?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: But I understand she did lots of things besides being the secretary to the president.

BAITY: She had a stroke one day and [End Side One]

Begin Side Two

COOPER: This is February 24th, 1988, in the Moravian Home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Okay.

BAITY: Do you remember when they did that classroom building over there? It was the Arts Building. and the library was built back between, and then the Science Building was back there. and it housed the Science and Home Economics Departments and that was, well that was quite fine we thought. And there's a tulip tree out there at the entrance of the Arts Building. I hope that it still there.

COOPER: Oh I'll have to look when I go back.

BAITY: Well, I tell you, you know Mr. Hyatt came out here before Mr. Lyons did. And one day he brought some pictures and he says, "Now here are some pictures I took for you." He said, "I got over just as close to the building as I could to get this one from a distance, where you could see it, where you usually see it from." And then he says, "This I took right up at the tree so you could see it." And he also had a picture where they were putting up the steeple on the City Chapel. And one day Mr..., it was Pruitt... Buddy Lyons took Mr. Hyatt... Mr. Hyatt came out to see me and he had this yellow box in his hand and I didn't think anything about it and so he says, "Well, Miss Baity as I started out Mr. Weems wanted me to bring this to you." And it was that plaque over there of the President's Club.

COOPER: Oh yes. That's just recently he brought that. Yes, that's beautiful. That's so pretty. That's sort of a shadow box, isn't it?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: The President's Club. That's, have you been in the President's Club I see for four years there.

BAITY: Well, I've been longer than that.

COOPER: That's just when they started giving those plaques I guess. They are really beautiful. And the Meredith plate you have sitting there.

BAITY: Of course that front has been changed now. You don't have those high steps. And oh, let me tell you my senior year, you know, the president of our class got married and she was married in the Rotunda the day after commencement. And we all wore our class day dresses and used the daisy chain and so that was quite exciting.

COOPER: Oh yes. Now who was it? What was the president of your class' name?

BAITY: It was [Weedis?] I believe, Margaraet [Weedis?]. She was a cousin of Carolyn Peacock's I think.

COOPER: She had a lot of excitement going on for everybody to stay over for her wedding, didn't she?

BAITY: Our class did.

COOPER: How many were in your graduating class? Do you remember?

BAITY: I don't remember, don't remember how many were in the class.

COOPER: But there must have been lots of you who did stay over to carry the daisy chain.

BAITY: Well, we had it kind of draped around the balcony over there. We didn't really carry it. We used it kind of to decorate.

COOPER: Do you remember anything about the doll that you all presented to the college?

BAITY: Oh yes. You know, to me those dolls don't mean as much as they did. They really dressed them in the class day dress. Now, it seems just so you wear a white dress. They don't mean quite as much to me. At first they kept them up there in the library, up there on second floor of Johnson Hall. And I had cases made to put them in and then they got so many they moved them up somewhere else. I think up, I don't remember where it was. And I remember Miss Bright, we called her the Doll Lady. She would come about a week before and she'd get out all those dolls and press their dresses and all. And then, I tell you where they had them down in the Rotunda. You know there?

COOPER: Yes.

BAITY: Down in that Rotunda. They say that was an accident, that Rotunda you

know.

- COOPER: Tell me about that. It is, was quite unusually wasn't it? Do you know how it came to be that it became a Rotunda? Because it was so odd how you had to go around it.
- BAITY: I know it. As I say, I don't think it was planned. But in some way the building it was a mistake. You know there were steps in there and we'd have meetings in there and sit on those steps. And that's where she put the dolls out.
- COOPER: Yes, uh hmm. Yeah, I know the Rotunda's not there anymore like that. And in a way I sort of miss it because it was a dark place you went to but it was sort of like a, something that was different from any other place you had a meeting in or anything, you know. So it really wasn't, I didn't have that bad connotation about it. It was..
- BAITY: You know we had the two literary societies. The Astrotektons initiated and the Philoretians installed. Well, I was an Astrotekton. And oh they took us all around these dark places you know, and everything. And having you feel these things you know. 'Now these are somebody's eyes,' and they'd give you grapes you know.
- COOPER: Yeah, we had lots of fun with the societies, didn't we? That meant every girl got included though. It was not exclusive like the sororities. I thought that was a sort of nice part about it. You were there when I was there and I remember that you had, I didn't know that you'd already been there that many years when I was there because you didn't seem that mature to me. You seemed like a young person. I was there, I went in 1950 so you'd already been there...
- BAITY: Oh yes, some time. And we were still upstairs on the second floor.
- COOPER: Yes. We've both seen lots of years for Meredith since then, haven't we? When have you had a chance to go back to Meredith?
- BAITY: Well, I haven't been able to go back ...
- COOPER: Since you've moved up here?
- BAITY: Yes. Because you see, now for instance I don't go anywhere now except to my doctor, to the dentist, and then I order the Bluebird Handicab and they can lower the side and roll me in my wheelchair right up, you know, in the van. And then when we'd get out to Dr. Taylor's, they just let me

down. And they would come out and meet me, you know, and help me in. And then they would just lift me up, let down one side of my chair here, and lift me up, you know. Two people would lift me over into his chair.

COOPER: This is Dr. Gerald Taylor?

BAITY: Uh hmm.

COOPER: I know him. He's very nice.

BAITY: I think a lot of Dr. Gerald Taylor.

COOPER: I'm sure you do. I know his wife also.

BAITY: He has such a nice staff I think.

COOPER: Well, you would really be pleased, I think, at how things look at Meredith now then.

BAITY: Oh I know I would. I'd get lost. Oh I tell you, wasn't the Hunt there one time? Well, now what was the purpose of that Hunt?

COOPER: Well, I think it was just left over maybe from when the farm was there. I'm not sure. And so we just had meetings there, like the Freeman Religion Club and things of that sort. That's the one you were talking about?

BAITY: Uh hmm. And there was a kitchen back there where you could serve things.

COOPER: Dr. Mack used to have us down there for the Freeman Religion Club and eating spaghetti down there.

BAITY: Yes I remember Dr. McLean. He was interested in the Library and he got such interesting books. And he would want me to put them up out there around on the shelves where the girls could see them. And...

COOPER: Yes, he was a very learned person. He stimulated your thinking a lot. He'd give us some pretty hard things to read, that's for sure. But he helped us grow a lot.

BAITY: We had a hard time, when I went there they had closed stacks. And I watched, the girls would stand there in line and some of them wouldn't be served. You know, before they had to go. So I asked Dr. Campbell, I said... well the reserves had been out down in the other room, down there across from where the stacks were and so I asked Dr. Campbell first if we

couldn't open the reserves and he said yes. And so we got along fine. We didn't miss any books at all. So then I said, "Well, now how about opening the stacks?" "Well, all right." He was always very cooperative and so it was quite a treat to have the...then I know when we had trouble we'd close the Library for supper and they'd be rushing up there after supper to try to get there first. So I said, well why not ask the girls who worked in the Library, I said, "Well, would you all be willing to go down and have supper earlier? And someone can come up there then and we can keep the Library open and we won't have to close it at all." And I declare it made such a difference. It helped a lot.

COOPER: Yes, I believe I remember the girls working in the Library coming early to eat. Because I worked in the Dining Hall when I was there and I remember certain people, you know, coming early to eat. So I'm sure that did make a lot of difference. Cause just taking time to close and open too, you know.

BAITY: Yes. And it was so nice of, we didn't lose any time you know.

COOPER: I'm just going to...if you can think of something else I'm just going to...

BAITY: You know I don't guess there'd been but four. Miss Forges the Librarian, I followed Miss Forges. And then Lindsay, you remember him? He was there for sometime. And then Janet Freeman followed him.

COOPER: So there are just four of you who've been Librarians in all of that time? Well, Janet is such a dedicated person. She might be like you. She might stay thirty years like you.

BAITY: Well, she was out here before Christmas and she was worried because the Library had just outgrown and they were planning someday to enlarge it. And I said, 'Well, I'll tell you what the architect told me. I said to the architect, when we are ready to expand, need to enlarge, what will we do?' And he said, "Well, we'll just turn it over and have the same thing on this side." And Chaddy says, "Well, alright that gives me an idea." But of course since the architect had made that suggestion to me so many other buildings are out there and they had the horseback riding and all. But she says, "I think we can get in some space there."

COOPER: Yes I would think so. I would think the Art Building is not, they didn't put it that close to the Library so there is space in between.

BAITY: She said there'd be room for some.

COOPER: I don't know if we could put all of that or not but that's, sounds like it

would certainly be a help.

BAITY: Well, now we have the, there are so many new dorms aren't there? The Poteat Dorm.

COOPER: Yes. But now they're on the opposite side so they wouldn't interfere with enlarging the Library. I'm going to turn this over.

BAITY: ...She was interested in, and she and Flossie, I said I'd get so tired I'd have to go around to all the old graveyards with her and Flossie. And they'd carry flour, you know, to rub in. And they'd say, "Come here Hazel, can you read this?" And I'd get so tired though of taking them around so much.

COOPER: So your mother was looking for ancestors and all that she didn't really know?

BAITY: She and Flossie were tracing it back. And oh I'll tell you something at Meredith that we did. Everybody would have their little flower gardens outside of their windows, you know. Do you remember that?

COOPER: I remember that.

BAITY: And I remember Doris Peterson, she had a big rose garden over there. And we had some of those little hyacinths, you know, those sweet little you know, things. And Alice Keith, do you remember Alice Keith? She had a garden and I took some of those down there for her to plant out there. And she had roses. Miss Anya, do you remember her? She had a garden outside but when Dr. Campbell came he didn't particularly like it so he had, he wanted just grass.

COOPER: So all of you had to give up your gardens?

BAITY: The first summer I was there was the first summer school that they had. And they, he thought that it'd be better to have the buildings in use, you know. Of course there wasn't very many at first. But when, at night to entertain the students we'd make ice cream. We had a great big ice cream freezer and we would take turns, you know, of fixing the mix, get the milk and all and fix that and have it ready to pour in. So that was one thing we enjoyed.

COOPER: Now you lived on campus all of that 31 years or?

BAITY: Oh no.

COOPER: No.

BAITY: I lived out in town. Lived out there about ten years. And then Alice and I and Doris Peterson, Doris wanted to bring her mother, and Alice and I just thought it would be nice to get off the campus. And so we noticed out there on the Vanderbilt Avenue there was a duplex being built. So we'd go by there and watch everyday and see how well it was getting along. So finally we went, when it was about through, and Mr. Murkeson was the man who was building it and he said, "Well, I'm not interested in renting it. I'm just building it and I'm going to sell it." So we finally persuaded him and so we moved out there. Alice and I had one side. And then Doris Peterson brought her mother and lived on the other side. And so we had quite an interesting time.

COOPER: Oh I'm sure you did. So you lived on campus for about ten years and then moved out?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: Well, but now people like Miss Rhodes lived on the campus all of her days there didn't she?

BAITY: Yes. And you know the Ellen Brewer Practice House? Well, you know they, on the first floor on the dorm over there, they'd have to, in order to give the girls that training you now, they used that end of the, I don't know which Hall what that first Hall was named...

COOPER: It wasn't Stringfield, wasn't Vann.

BAITY: It wasn't Vann, might have been Brewer.

COOPER: One was Stringfield, maybe it was Stringfield. Yeah, maybe it was.

BAITY: And it's interesting how Miss Brewer, you know that was a suite that room in between, and how she had built things over and all in there. So they could be used. So that's where they, that was the beginning of the Ellen Brewer Practice House.

COOPER: Okay, so she made a, what did she do make a kitchen out of one of the rooms? And the living room out of the other. Is that the way they did it?

BAITY: Uh hmm.

COOPER: Since I was not in Home Ec I'm not sure I ever went in the suite but I

know that's what they used when I was there.

BAITY: Well, now when they moved the Science building and the Home Ec building were all in one. I know they even had to overdo a piece of furniture there to have a piece of furniture. Oh and do you remember how many years that the competition, the Meredith girls would win in their sewing outfits over at State College? It was some kind of, I don't know whether it was a celebration or, but anyway, our girls would take first place everytime. We were so proud of them.

COOPER: Well, I'm still hearing good things from our Home Economics girls as I go around to the different chapters, you know. I hear good things from the Home Economics Department. Music was my field, so I know you remember Dr. Cooper.

BAITY: Oh yes.

COOPER: He had many years there, so...

BAITY: And old *Alice in Wonderland*.

COOPER: Oh yes. And I understand Carolyn Mercer was the first *Alice in Wonderland*.

BAITY: I was going to say Carolyn Mercer was that. I was a student then. And that was the first time I had seen it. And so then Jane Massey was Alice for some time.

COOPER: We all, you know I'm going to see Carolyn Mercer when I leave here today. She's at the Methodist Home.

BAITY: Yes. She and her sister moved out there. They say that they just weren't able to do at home and so they're out at the Methodist Home.

COOPER: Yes. Well, her sister has...

BAITY: Has passed away.

COOPER: Yes. And I went...

BAITY: Mrs. Kesler.

COOPER: Yes. I went to Mrs. Kesler's service at Wake Forest last summer. And so of course Carolyn is still there. And she gets around very well but she

won't be able to remember as many things about Meredith, I don't think, as you are able to.

BAITY: So you tell her that I asked about her.

COOPER: I surely will.

BAITY: And I remember the pleasant times we used to have there at Pullen.

COOPER: This is at Pullen Memorial Church?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: That's when she was working for the state and you were working for Meredith, is that... and you both went to Pullen Memorial Church?

BAITY: And May Grimmer lived upstairs in Carolyn's house when she came to Winston. And then the Tilleries, Mary and Doris Tillery, lived downstairs.

COOPER: So Carolyn had lots of people living there?

BAITY: Yes.

COOPER: Okay, well I certainly have enjoyed my visit with you this afternoon and, in sort of thinking about our time being almost up now, is there anything you would like to say, particularly words of wisdom to the Meredith generation who is there now?

BAITY: I just thought about the Crook.

COOPER: Okay. Tell about the Crook.

BAITY: They still hide that , do they?

COOPER: Well, you know I don't know. But they did when I was there and...

BAITY: Oh you know it was just awful if they didn't find the Crook.

COOPER: Can you tell me some of the places maybe they did find it? Do you remember any of the places it got hid?

BAITY: Well, I remember one time it was up in the attic. It had to have parts showing. They required that. There was something in the rules and

regulations in regard to that. And up in the rafters they had let it stick out just a little bit. And I know finding that Crook was...

COOPER: Oh, I think that must have been one of the last places for it to be found, right, was in the attic? Now was that in Johnson Hall attic?

BAITY: Beg your pardon?

COOPER: Which attic was that in? Do you remember, was it Johnson?

BAITY: I don't remember which one. And do you remember Stunts?

COOPER: Oh yes, yes. And they do still have that, now I know that. I'm not sure about the Crook. And I have one of the dolls that represents May Day. You know, when they had the Doll Symposiums on the campus a couple of times, the Doll Society. And one of them is dressed like the May Queen of '52 I believe. So they were having that when I was there and that was a very pretty...

BAITY: I wish I had kept my dress and the doll that was...1926 doll. Her dress needed to be, and I gave my, I had saved that old dress. And so I took it down and I guess I gave it to Miss Bright. She seemed to be the one to make a new dress for our doll.

COOPER: Okay. So I didn't know that. So she redressed the '26 doll and made it from the material from your original dress. Oh how nice. So I guess she just made the dress the same as it was before but just used the

BAITY: Yes, she made it just as it was. You remember, we had Stunts at night and in the afternoon, what was it we had, Palio?

COOPER: Uh hmm. Tell me about Palio. Because you know they stopped that when I was, in the early days that I was there at Meredith. So I don't know much about Palio.

BAITY: Miss Helen Price started that. Do you remember Miss Helen Price?

COOPER: I certainly know about her.

BAITY: And they had a paper mask, they had Mr. Tyne's head, and Dr. Campbell's and they would walk around out there, you know.

COOPER: Sort of like a parade?

BAITY: Yes. But they decided it was too much to have that in the afternoon and Stunts at night. So I think they kind of stopped that.

COOPER: Well, it does sound like a lot because getting those Stunts together is a lot of work.

BAITY: Yes it is. And I tell you it's wonderful what they can think of to do.

COOPER: Yes. I think it's a really fine thing. I surely do. Well, this concludes our interview with Miss Hazel Baity and her wonderful, wonderful memories of Meredith. And we appreciate very much your sharing your time and your memories with us.



MABEL CLAIRE HOGGARD MADDREY
Class of 1928

Today is Tuesday, March 15th, 1988. We are in the Wedgewood Apartments in Raleigh, North Carolina and I am here with Mabel Claire Hoggard Maddrey, class of 1928. She will be the narrator today and Jean Cooper will be the interviewer.

COOPER: Mrs. Maddrey you've had such a colorful life as a volunteer, as a homemaker, as a political activist. We just are looking forward to hearing you this afternoon share some of these experiences with me that we will preserve in the Meredith College library for those who come in later years to be able to hear first hand some of this weaving of your life. The ups and downs, the routines, the highlights, the valleys, whatever you wish to share with us today. So you just begin and I'll stop you if I think I need to.

MADDREY: Thank you Jean. First, it's a privilege to have this visit with you and to have you in my home and Meredith alumnae ought to be congratulated in having you as leader and our president. We thank you for the time that you are giving and your interest in what you have contributed and will continue to contribute in the years ahead.

I do not see that I have any, had a life that has been any different from that of many other Alumnae of Meredith. Perhaps if there is a difference it's the fact that I have never been a professional in anyway, unless it's a professional volunteer. I did not intend to spend my life just doing volunteer work. It just worked that way somehow. When I was graduated from Meredith I did go that September to New York, to Columbia University. And was intending to come back and teach on the college level. A college in Raleigh had indicated that it would place me on the staff of the department in which I was getting my masters. But somehow during the time that I was at Columbia I felt a desire to do something a bit different. I had studied hard at Meredith for four years and perhaps made the mistake of trying to get, of getting my masters degree in one year. I studied very hard to do it and along the way I became tired of the classroom, I guess one would say. I decided that I would branch out a bit temporarily, so I left Riverside Drive after completing the requirements for my masters in American history, a certain era of it, and went over to the other side of New York City to the National _____ Training School. There I saw a different side of New York and had some six weeks there. And in the course of the months I was offered a position preceding the certificate from there, from the Training School. I was offered a position as Y10 secretary with the YWCA of Danville, Virginia. I had never been to Danville, never had belonged to a YWCA because in Ahsoskie they didn't have a YWCA. But it sounded like it would be fun and stimulating and quite different from the academic halls that I had spent my time in for five years.

So to Danville I went, much younger than I am now. And I was very fortunate in the fact that the president of the YWCA in Danville was the wife of a well known _____. They had no children and so, though she knew I was rather young and inexperienced, perhaps she was not prepared for my lack of experience.

Anyway, she took me under her wing and I had two wonderful years there in Danville, working with the Y10 and it did give me a different outlook on life. I saw some things that I had not seen in my own time, that I had not seen in Raleigh, that I had not seen certainly and I emphasized. And I saw, and I have a perception of life in Danville that not everybody has. Many people have an idea that Danville is a class conscious work place and that it's a closed society. But I found it quite different and everybody was so gracious and I enjoyed those years there.

You mentioned that perhaps you might like me to tell you a little bit about my years at Meredith. I found little or no difficulty in adjusting, going to Meredith from my hometown, in that the pattern of living at Meredith was simply a continuation of what I had lived those sixteen years. Because I had lived in Ahoskie. My mother was a very strong person. She has been, I'm sure, the dominating influence in my life. She expected the best of me. My full potential not the impossible. She herself was a person of many talents. She was multitalented. Her mother and her grandparents were of the generation of, of a generation far back. However, they believed strongly in educating women. And my mother and my father both expected that I would take my place in the world as if I were a boy. I being an only child they expected me, I guess, to be both. My mother monitored my schoolwork. She, my father was not quite as high in his expectation. He was a businessman and provided well for us. I'm from a small family and so my mother, she herself had been a teacher upon graduating at the end of three years from Chowan with the highest academic record that is on in the history of that Chowan College. She taught in private, did private tutoring for a year and then married at age 19. And in 1907 she was elected to the town council. She served a year and I came along and so she, and then about four years later she was ordained as a deacon at the Baptist Church there. And they did not have the rotating system which they have now in many churches, in most churches. And she continued to serve as a deacon until 1935.

So when I hear a great deal about "women's place" and taking their places, it's nothing, it seems so surprising to me that it's a big deal. Because I was brought up, my mother took her place, she spoke out in church conference and she saw to it that the budget of the church provided 50-50 for the Cooperative Missions, 50 for the local expenses. So I never, if I were restricted in my having a living and what I was allowed to do at home, I did

not realize it. Like they say, maybe you were poor but you didn't know it.

I had never done things that maybe would have, that when they got to Meredith would have concerned and bothered other girls. I did not hear a great deal of complaining in 1924. We were all glad to get there. And the restrictions that we referred to were not, they were there, but we were not aware of it. Because the world, the families that most of us came from, the parents had given strict supervision. I was reared in a home where alcohol was not served and nor was dancing prevalent. So that was never an issue with me at Meredith. I didn't think about it. There were always so many things to do that somehow, in life, I never worried about the things that I was not maybe able to do financially, or maybe I was not able to do mentally. There were so many things that I felt that I could do so I have tried to zero in on those things. And the things that were just not for me I just thought, well somebody can do them and it's wonderful that they can. But I think there is a place for the talents and the abilities and the service and the financial contribution of everybody. The Bible says that we have many different talents. And so I've been very pleased and grateful for all the talents that I have had and have tried to multiply them. Realizing that my mother, for instance, was a much brighter IQ'd person than I was, or have ever been able to be. But, as I said, she always expected me to do my very best. And she would say, "If this is the best that you can do then that's fine."

Meredith, I would say, I was very fortunate and really maybe it was a coincidence but, and good fortune and providential that when I came to Meredith, my father brought me in the fall of 1924 and I did not go back home until December 1924. But I was never homesick. There was so many things to do. It was a little different having been, shall we say an only child. You do not have to share bathrooms. You do not have to share in the day by day as you do. And when I got to Meredith we, I was placed in the Old Myatt, not Wyatt, but Myatt, across the street from the building, from the main building, well the building at Meredith. And with five, with four roommates. And to have lived 16 years in a room alone and to suddenly have four other people is a little bit of a shock.

COOPER: I'm sure it was.

MADDREY: However, I tried to adjust. I think my studies suffered, my schoolwork suffered. I did not know how to find a spot. I did not know how to concentrate and to ignore the activities around me. We had one large room and of course there was a library across the street in the main building, but I did not win any A's my freshman year. However, I was just as happy as if I were making all A+'s. One of the roommates, and this was not pre-arranged because at that time as I recall there was no writing in advance as to whom

your roommates would be so I had no idea, one of them was from Dunn, Annabelle Noell. A lovely, lovely person. One was from Cary, though her mother had recently gone to the home in Kinston, the Kennedy Children's Home in Kinston, that was Mary Rivol Hunt. The other one was from Edenton, Natalie Elliot, and her mother had been born in Ahoskie but had married and had moved to Edenton. I did not know her. There had been no contact with any of them. But my mother had been very active, she had been recording secretary of Woman's Missionary Union in North Carolina, and had known of...in fact I remember Miss Hegg visiting in our home. I do not remember how she looked because I was much younger, but I do remember that Miss Hegg was there, and spent the night in our home. Mrs. Wesley M. Jones came several times, either as president of the Woman's Missionary Union, it was during her presidency that I met her. It was during her presidency that my mother was recording secretary. So, I was familiar with the name, so the first year Madalene and Mary Rivol and Annabelle Noell and another girl who dropped out very shortly thereafter, and I, so we had only four for most of that first year-and-a-half. See we moved. Our class came to new Meredith at Christmas time in 1926. That was my sophomore year.

One of the things, very shortly after I came to Meredith, I joined First Baptist and then more, it appears to me than now, Meredith girls, if they were willing, again I saw it's however the person approaches it... If you want, by having to stay in Raleigh, I learned, I fell in love with the city and the Raleigh people. And at First Baptist we had opportunity to go into homes of the Raleigh people. That was my first acquaintance with the Weatherspoons, Laura Weatherspoon. I guess that would be my second year, I cannot remember which it was. But anyway, I was in her home. The Weatherspoons were very active of course at First Baptist. And their homes were opened to Meredith girls. And I was one of the fortunate ones to meet many of the old families that were active in city life and in First Baptist. That of course was when First Baptist, before it became the mother of about thirty other Baptist churches in Raleigh. It may be that my love for Meredith is not limited to the way I fell in love with it, is not limited entirely to the campus, as I think back, but all of these things. I felt it was an opportunity to continue the things that I had always done, since by the time I was five years of age I can remember my mother when my mother stood me up in the pulpit of that church and she said, "You stand up and have no notes and you say what you..." I had to memorize. There were no such things as notes in those days. And to this day I don't know how to use notes. I can't find my place. But at Meredith it was simply, as it seemed to me as I think back on it, a continuation.

But a _____ we would do, we went to all the places, to the Dorothea Dix Hospital and did the things that the Meredith girls are doing now, maybe more, simply because we were here more. You see we did not have the

opportunity to leave. And so Meredith and Raleigh were, and the church and the campus, assumed a great influence upon us than is impossible for it to now. In that we were here. If you say stuck we were stuck. But we did not look at it that way. We did not know anything different. So, you don't miss what you never had.

COOPER: I think that your feeling of this relationship between the town and the college is very strong. I know there've been several occasions when it's been brought up, "Should Meredith stay where it is or should it stay in Raleigh," and this sort of this. Were you able to play a role in any of those decisions? Were you in a position to help to make the decision?

MADDREY: Well, now, now you see, as a student we moved out there, you now, that had nothing to... of course we were very much opposed to that, as you know. Oh because Fayetteville Street had been our... Yes, as shortly after graduation, but it was not while I was president of the Alumnae Association but I was vice-president of the Woman's Missionary Union at the time, that of course it happened, the question had come up long before but this particular time when the final decision was made not to consolidate with Wake Forest, the last final decision, I went before several committees representing, I wouldn't say representing Mrs. Farmer, because she certainly... who was president of the Woman's Missionary Union at that time, but she could not get everywhere and so I hope I had a part. I felt very strongly. I could see both sides of the coin. The Depression years had taken their toll on Meredith. Registration was low, finances. But I trusted the decision of others who felt strongly and I concurred in it. I'm not sure that I played such a major part in it. If so, I don't recall any specific instances, just a couple of times I think that I do remember having been sent out, asked to go and speak out on behalf of keeping Meredith at the present location.

COOPER: And I would say that at this point you are pleased with the decision that was made to leave Meredith..

MADDREY: Oh yes. Very very much so. It's interesting that the question of integration, of making the college coed, should have arisen somewhat recently, at a time when it would seem to me that women's colleges are coming into their own more. That, with the other time that we considered, it was considered at Meredith to consolidate with Wake Forest, there was not the greatest women's movement as there is now. But I feel very strongly that Meredith should remain as a single sex college, a women's college. And that there is a definite place for it.

COOPER: There certainly are lots of things that are indicating that in the news and so forth.

MADDREY: Oh yes. I feel strongly. I hope I do not see the day that a degree is granted to a man.

COOPER: Okay. In that winter of 1926 I think, while you were home for the holidays so the story goes, they moved Meredith and you came back there. Would you like to comment on anything about coming back after Christmas?

MADDREY: Yes, yes, that's rather vivid in my mind. It was a very cold time. My father brought me back. I will interrupt myself to say that I had an advantage I think in that my mother knew many of the people that were prominent in Baptist life at that time. And also that my roommate, the suite mate that joined us when we moved was Katherine Madry, the only child of Dr. Charles E. Madry, without the e, who had transferred from another college. So, we drew straws I guess, I can't remember, but Katherine and I became roommate and Mary Rivol and Madalene, this was in 1926 when we came to Meredith at Christmas time... For several reasons that change was made. One thing about the four others, all three of us were only children. Katherine and I were only children. Mary Rivol is not an only child but she was the only child of a second marriage by her father. And her sister, Miss Eldgley was treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union, but was much older, that was her half-sister, much older of course than Mary Rivol, and so Mary Rivol had been reared as an only child just about. Madalene had one sister. But as I look back I never remember that we had a cross word during the three and a half years that we roomed together. Or since then. We knew that we all went our ways. We all were very busy and involved on activities on the campus and otherwise. And we were opinionated and we knew we could not change one another and so we just didn't try. And we don't until this day.

My senior year, one thing about Meredith, our junior year they permitted our suite to move over to the senior dorm on the condition that we would keep it orderly and would allow chapel visitors or anybody that came that they would come in there to rest or to use the restroom or what. So we were tickled to get from third floor back over just right near the classrooms in the senior dorm. And so we met many interesting people who came to chapel.

One of the first ones I remember was Mrs. Josephus Daniels Sr., whose husband at that time was ambassador to Mexico. I think I had never met an ambassador's wife before. As I've come to know the Daniels I always remember how she went in and used our bathroom and so we always went in and put a little sign that said Mrs. Daniels used this bathroom. But anyway I told Frank in those days, she was a very strong, very interesting woman and in her picture she was ... [Tape Break.]

Let's see, you asked about the romance, the boys. There were always plenty of them around, you know. You thought when we went out there and left State and Wake Forest that we would be leaving them when we left Old Meredith. However, they found their way out there. One of the people that I dated, I don't remember whether he would claim it or not, but anyway, was a senior at Wake Forest and was I. Beverly Lake. And so our paths crossed and went different ways. He was quite courtly. I was an underclassman and he was a senior, and so my stock rose a great deal in dating Beverly. Then through a friend, Marguerite Mason Birkins, whose mother and my mother were friends. She was from Winston-Salem then. I guess Marguerite's father had been a, was a minister at Winston. So I came to know and to date Edgar Davis.

COOPER: Yes I know Edgar.

MADDREY: And he was a year younger so we dated two years. But I graduated a year before he did and I went on to New York so that took care of that. And then there's a Meredith alumna by the name of Pullen Beldon and she was a friend of Katherine Madry's. You see Katherine's father was the general secretary of the Baptist State Convention. And Katherine lived just a stone's throw from Meredith where her family, because she was an only child, had her to live on the campus. But, I was in and out of her home a great deal cause we could walk there. It was not far from the college. The house is still there. But, she introduced me to Pullen Beldon who lived not too far from the Madry's on Hillsborough Street, not far from where the Velvet Cloak is now. I'm tempted to say it was the next block, but anyway, she had a most good-looking brother named Charles. So, I dated Charles. There was never any lack of, I can't remember, any lack of boyfriends. But I had to study. As I told you I wasn't all that smart. My first two years I studied very hard, very hard. But then, there were always enough to do to take up the time that I had. But I knew that I would fail my studies because at the end of the semester my mother wanted to know, "How are your grades?" and was utterly fooled that I didn't, hadn't done my best.

COOPER: Okay, you are getting very close and so I'm going to stop it. [end of side one]....

COOPER: ...class of 1988. Jean Cooper interviewer. Okay, we were, on the other side Mrs. Maddrey, we were talking about the friends. It sounds like you had a multitude of friends and never lacked for both male and female friends. That sounds very wholesome to me. Anything else you want to say about that?

MADDREY: I was, would not infer in any way that I had more boyfriends after we had moved out, than others. I think all of the Meredith girls felt that they were

not neglected but that their boyfriends and the boys found us there very quickly. Wake Forest was still at Wake forest of course and State was there and Carolina. So, the social life seemed quite adequate to me in that it was comparable to what I had been accustomed to. And it seemed to suffice the needs of my friends. I heard very little complaining about it. However, I'm inclined to hear what I want to hear and my mind is on many things. All was not perfect. There were many positive things.

COOPER: Since you had such a strong Baptist background and knew so many of them will you tell us, I know before there was BSU on the campus there was something that had to do with the Y. Since you mentioned that you worked for the Y...

MADDREY: Yeah I believe there was a YWCA on the campus. Then there was a Baptist Student Union when I was there.

COOPER: Were they both there at that time?

MADDREY: Yes, yes, yes. They were both there, as I recall. Annabelle Noell from Goldsboro was very, very, active in the YWCA. I was more active in the Baptist Student Union, as you know, because of my strong Baptist background. And my suite mate Madalene Elliot had the same kind of, perhaps that's why we were always so congenial, we had the same rearing, the same interests... Madalene stayed on but Katherine, upon our graduation Katherine Madry, now Mrs. Everett, went to Carolina, I believe for her masters. Mary Rivol Hunter went straight from Meredith, the next week I believe she went to New York to study to be a medical technician. And I did not go to New York until September. But Mary Rivol had been there since June.

COOPER: So you knew her when you got to New York. You knew she was there?

MADDREY: Yeah, yeah, she met me at the train. But she, her work was over on the East Side, clear across the city from Riverside Drive and you know, when you're in school, certainly for me, that became my world. And I did not see Mary Rivol very frequently. We would make dates and try to get together but she was very busy and she was there less than a year, in receiving that specialized training.

COOPER: Now that means that three out of the four of your suite went onto graduate school...

MADDREY: Yeah, immediately.

COOPER: ...in 1928.

MADDREY: Oh yes. Well, we just expected to do that. My mother had, I had never thought of going anywhere but Meredith. My mother very early sort of indoctrinated me that that was the place to go. But she also thought that, she thought also that I should go on to a coed, to a city to get a broader outlook on life. Since I was from a small town. And then Meredith of course was an enlargement but it was still limited. And so it was the plan all along that I would go. If I had not gone to Meredith I would have gone to Wellesley. I think that was second on my list. So the three of us went on and I think Dr. and Mrs. Madry always thought that Katherine would do graduate work. So, all of these, you know now, and there was no problem in getting accepted at Columbia or Carolina or wherever Mary Rivol's school was as a medical technician in there. Meredith ranked very high at that time, as it does now in its accreditation.

I was going to say, one thing crossed my mind as we were talking. Back at Meredith the teachers that made the greatest impression and perhaps helped me more were the members of the English department. Which I'm sure is repetition of many other alumnae that you will interview. Particularly Dr. Julia Hamlett Harris remains in my mind as one of the great people that, with whose path I have crossed. She had the knack and the great gift of bringing out what was hardly in one. It was so embryonic. But I remember some of the themes, and I was fortunate in that my freshman year I had her. Every year for four years I had classes under Miss Harris. And I remember my freshman year, and I had had good preparation I thought, certainly perhaps above average in that with my mother's tutoring and this school, I was prepared for Meredith. But I did have to apply myself certainly. But early in my theme writing I'm sure I was no expert and I can remember now Dr. Harris saying, "You know I had not thought about" and I'm sure that she had and it was all wrong I know. She said, "You know maybe if we do it just this way." Never did she pick at a thing or say, "Well, you know that was not good." She would always find something positive to say about it and you know if you had anything in the world in you she would bring it out and accentuate it and it would grow.

I find I had that same experience with Lillian Parker Wallace, Dr. Wallace, in the field of History.

COOPER: Now was that your major?

MADDREY: I had three majors. I had no minor I guess. Anyway, English, History and Latin. And I had Helen Hull Law in Latin. And so, I'm not sure that I remember as much Latin as say my friend Laura Weatherspoon, we sometimes

talk... But what has helped me most is the interpretation of the place that Greek and Roman and that civilization had. It was the periphery of the Latin, not just the translation, that Dr. Law made come alive. As you saw the place...

Let's see, what else about teachers?

COOPER: Dr. Brewer was the president.

MADDREY: Yes, I mentioned that. My mother had known Mrs. Brewer in Woman's Missionary Union work. And you know the Brewers, as you know, had their home, their quarters on campus in one of the dormitories as we called them then. It would be I believe it was in what would be C at that time. And because of our friendship, and Dr. Brewer had been to our home several times on several occasions, I had the privilege of being with the Brewers just sort of as friends. I never felt any distance between him as president and us as friends. He was, made life seem almost like a second home. So I think perhaps my love for Meredith is attributable to the fact that I did, that those extras came along and maybe I was unusually fortunate in that. I just do not know. Others perhaps loved Meredith and profited from being there for other reasons. I did. I certainly learned a great deal. I'm not saying that I didn't. But particularly the, many of the facts...I loved history always anyway, so it was, it naturally came easy, somewhat easy, to me.

My freshman year my classmate Ula Hodges, we were both H's and that's the way our close friendship began, and for some reason, as you realize they did not have a structure of guidance for students then maybe as they do now. Anyway, for some unknown reason as freshmen we got into Mr. Riley's class and he had an unwritten rule that he taught no freshman. And so we didn't know that, we were somehow placed in there. So there we were. Anyway, Ula and I were next door to one another. It was not easy at first but we didn't realize that he had that thing against having freshman in there. And it was not the easiest course in the world but I loved the history anyway. And so I came to consider him and his family as close friends through the years. I'm just devoted to him. As a teacher he had his way. But, and there were so many areas of his teaching and his personality that seemed to make us compatible and draw us together. So I cherished his friendship and that of Mrs. Riley, aside from having been one of his students. And he always referred to me as "that freshman who got into his class." Even when I was a senior. So, but over the next years I had Dr. Wallace. I had Mr. Riley only the one year and then I had Dr. Wallace for three years. So, my underfaculty, because of my interest not because the other teachers, the teachers in the other fields were not capable and were not as stimulating, it was because I was interested in the history and the Latin and the English. And how grateful I am for the good

grammatical teaching that I did receive at Meredith. I had some, but I regret...I guess of all the things that I learned at Meredith would be to nail down what is grammatically correct even though I do... the years have failed and sometimes I get my participles split and so on in speaking, but I know better anyway.

COOPER: That's great. I guess with all of those three interests that you've had you didn't have a chance to participate in any of the college plays or...

MADDREY: No I did not. I stayed on the, I was on the staff of the *Twig* most of the time. And my junior and senior years, half of my junior and my senior year I was the editor, the editor of the *Twig*. I had been as a freshman, I don't know how I got in there, but anyway, that was where I, the thing that I did most, I guess more than anything else, in addition to my studies and my, and the BSU, the religious activities. And First Baptist activities, of course I came there during the week.

COOPER: What sort of activities at First Baptist did you participate in?

MADDREY: Yes I did. And they would have the College Department, we had opening exercises in the _____ Department and the College Department often had it at least once a month. And I was sort of in charge of that so I came to know the wives and the Weatherspoons and the Briggs. And always on Sunday we would go into the homes.

My junior year at about Christmas the editor, for several reasons found it necessary to resign. And so since I had been on it longer I assumed that position the last part of my junior year and then my senior year.

COOPER: That was a big responsibility.

MADDREY: Well, that was my own thing. And I did not do any drama that I recall. My, Katherine was president of the student body her second, our senior year. And Madalene was head of Baptist Student Union our senior year and Mary Rivol was an assistant to the head of the Department of Chemistry. So we had varying responsibilities.

COOPER: You had a lot to talk about with each other then.

MADDREY: Yes we did. When there was time, when there was time.

COOPER: Well, it sounds like you made good use of your time while you were at Meredith and received a lot of maturity probably during those years. But you have served us well at Meredith in turn in several ways, both as Alumnae

Association president and as trustee. Maybe you'd like to share some of your feelings about this.

MADDREY: Actually I have forgotten exactly how long I had been out of Meredith when I was asked to be president of the Alumnae Association. I must admit I've even forgotten the years I was president. But, I surely, it's been about fifty years in that during this, at Christmas...

COOPER: It was 1935 to 1938 that you were president.

MADDREY: Okay. Well, in 1936 it would be, '35, '37, anyway it was in December of my second year which would have been my last year as president of the Alumnae Association that May Grimmer our Alumnae Secretary, was [bell ringing in background]... and was involved in a very serious automobile accident which necessitated and resulted in her having years of having to be absent from the college. Two, about three weeks after her accident my first child was born. So, May and I had sort of made our plans around the birth of my first child. However, May was out of the picture so I was faced with a brand new baby and no Alumnae Secretary. But, my husband was always, he was Superintendent of Schools in Halifax County. We were living in Scotland then. And my, we had arranged, my father had arranged earlier for the sister of one of our tenants, long time tenants on one of the farms, to come from where she had been working in Philadelphia to live with me. My father felt I would not be able to look after my baby. And I did not disillusion him either cause, you know, I wanted to keep on with my little activities. And I could be domestic if it's necessary but not by choice. So anyway, Martha was there and my husband was home at night, and anyway it seemed necessary so I came and stayed up here a great deal. At least two nights a week during what remained of that year. And then, because nobody else seemed in a position to give that much time they gave me the privilege of serving an extra year. In time Charles had gotten older but Martha stayed on. And I have a sister-in-law who was a nurse and she came for the first, stayed off and on, for the first month. So, always there have been those who have provided when there was something that I wanted to do, and really it seemed I needed to be doing it. And I've been exceedingly fortunate in that I have been provided for through ways such as that, to do. It's been easy, life has been very easy, made easy for me to do the things outside of the home or what not that I have been engaged in and have wanted to do. So I feel so grateful and a real sense of spiritual and good health and good help always, in every way.

COOPER: That's two very important...

MADDREY: Those years we had the first seminar. I cannot remember what else we did. There is the routine that must go on. And we were trying to raise money for

a swimming pool. I do remember that. And anyway, I did those years and then not so long after that I went on the Board of Trustees for the first time. And have in the years since then been on the Board of Associates. So I have enjoyed keeping up with Meredith even though at times I have not lived in Raleigh. But I always felt very close to it and tried to... chapter. You know there are ways that you can keep your contact, if you really want to do it.

COOPER: Well, I know that Meredith kept you busy lots of time and especially in these particular instances, but, you certainly haven't been limited to just activities for Meredith. The phone has rung twice and I know that at least one of those times I believe it had to do with political activity here in Raleigh. So, maybe you'd like to share just a little bit with us about ...

MADDREY: Well, I don't know exactly, I got backed into it and it is a very, I feel a commitment. I feel that to having a part, however limited it may be, in the government under which I live. I think it's as much a part of my obligation as my church. I put it on a par with that. In that I think the Bible, certainly Paul did teach, and the Lord himself, Christian citizenship, and that we have a loyalty and we have an obligation to those in authority. I was sort of backed into it I guess. My husband ran, was in the General Assembly. I guess that would be, it was about 1950 I think, before I became really active. And I do not consider myself an activist, I just do. He was, he served six terms in the General Assembly and at the end of those years...meantime I had become, I came and stayed, we stayed at the Sir Walter, at the Sir Walter Hotel, during the times both my boys were pages for the term. They didn't stay just a week then they stayed for the entire session of the General Assembly. So they were taken out of school and they stayed at the YMCA. Not at the same time because there's 4½ years between them. But both times they stayed and they'd go home weekends to receive their school assignments. And they did their homework and exams at home when they went back.

When he no longer was in the General Assembly it had rubbed off on me. And perhaps the first, shall we say, a recognized role aside from helping him,...and being active in the Sir Walter Cabinet, I'd been vice-president several times and Provost Chairman of the Sir Walter Cabinet, which is made up of legislator's wives. I first joined in 19??, let me see I was president of the Federation of Women's Clubs during the years, some of the years that he was in the General Assembly at that, so he... I first joined the Sir Walter Cabinet in 1951 and am still in the Cabinet. Though, of course he has long since not been in the Legislature. One month after we came to Raleigh and he was to be executive secretary of the Baptist State Convention, Richard Pryor of Greensboro came here, and we were still unpacking I think, and asked, said that he was going to run for Governor and at the same time that Dan Moore and Beverly Lake had announced. Gordon had known

Richardson Pryor, who served as chairman of the Probation Commission under Luther Hodges. And Gordon, after he was, one reason he was out of the General Assembly, I had been asked by Governor Hodges to head up the Probation Commission, and Richardson Pryor was the Chairman of that Commission. I had not met before, Mr. Pryor. Gordon thought so highly of him. But anyway, Rich came and sat, I remember sitting there, and he said he wanted to do something that had not been done before. He wanted to set up a women's division of his campaign, and statewide, that before had not been done to his knowledge by any gubernatorial candidate. And gave me the privilege of serving in that capacity. Well, I, it was a challenge. I had not ever done it. I had been president of the Federation of Women's Clubs. And I knew a great many people over the State and had been president of the Women's Missionary Union. So, and Gordon had been with the Textbook Commission and was then with the Baptist State Convention. So we did have statewide contacts. But, it was the first time that I had ever had an office in the, in connection with a gubernatorial campaign. And it was a challenge. As I said, that was 19?? November, last of November around Thanksgiving in 1964 I believe. And perhaps that was the first thing that I have done in an organized way.

Later I worked on county level for, as campaign manager for one of several candidates. Then, I have just been, I'm a good indian whenever the time comes to do work. Because I feel that it's part of my stewardship as a citizen of the United States. It isn't because, of course I've never run for an office. I have had some very nice appointments. I was on the Steering Committee for Jim Hunt. I worked hard for the Lieutenant Governor, at the same time that my friend Margaret Harper from Southport was running for Lieutenant Governor, but I felt that Jim was the stronger of the candidates. And then I was on the Steering Committee twice that he ran for Governor and then when he ran for Senate. So I've won some and I've lost some. But it has been fun. And then this time I became involved in the Gore Campaign. Not intentionally, but I had never worked for a presidential candidate, these things are new. It's a different angle. And we'll just see how that comes out.

COOPER: Well, I think that's marvelous. You sound as if you're going at the same speed you went when you were an A resident in 1935-38.

MADDREY: Well, I guess I do. I think somehow I'm busier than I was then.

COOPER: We need a two hour tape instead of a one hour tape for you to share your many things with us, but we are about to run out of this tape. So, let me ask you do you remember what year you served North Carolina Baptist's as the WMU president?

MADDREY: 1951-1956.

COOPER: Okay. Five years, that's good.

MADDREY: Succeeded Mrs. Farmer, or Johnson-Farmer. I was her vice-president for five years. And then I succeeded her.

COOPER: So for ten years you were very much involved in that?

MADDREY: That really has been, Woman's Missionary Union, my mother emphasized that even more, though she taught Sunday School and that, but the Woman's Missionary Union I guess is my first love in life, next to my family. Other things found a place but that seemed a natural perhaps with me. And it was a wonderful, they were a wonderful ten years, five years and I love working with Miss Foy and she was a real blessing to me. We, I hope we complemented one another. We were different in many ways, but completely compatible. And she was a real benediction to be with.

The class of 1928 this May will be observing it's 60th class reunion. We will not attempt to do anything like we did for our 50th which was, to as we say to Dr. Weems when we asked if we might take as our class reunion project, the building of a chapel at Meredith. This year I was warned not to try to start another building. We simply are adding to what we think was perhaps the best thing that our class as a group ever did, was to take the idea of a chapel off of the drawing board and bring reality to it. When we look at the Jones Chapel we're so very grateful that we have lived to see that spire as it rises there on the driveway, symbolic of what we think is the real purpose, the primary purpose of Meredith, is Christian education as it will be exemplified in the lives of the girls and young women who now are at Meredith and who will go there in the future.

COOPER: Thank you so much Mrs. Maddrey. We appreciate you sharing with us today. This is Mabel Claire Hoggard Maddrey, class of '28. And this is the end of our interview.



MARIAN FISKE WELCH
Class of 1929

Today is Friday, March 25th, 1988. We are in Moyock, North Carolina with Marian Fiske Welch, class of 1929. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper, class of '54.

COOPER: Marian, thank you for letting me come to this beautiful little Eastern North Carolina village, to hear today some of your memories of Meredith and what your life has been, both before and after Meredith, that you would like to share with us. You were in the class of 1929 so that meant that you did go to the campus where it exists today.

WELCH: Correct.

COOPER: And Dr. Brewer was the president at the time you were at Meredith.

WELCH: That's right.

COOPER: Okay. What are your fondest memories of Meredith? Just right off the top of your head.

WELCH: Well, I wouldn't take anything for having been able to attend the Old Campus. The medieval structures just enchanted me. It was unbelievable coming from a little village to find myself plopped down in between the Governor's Mansion and the Capitol. And it was great to sit in the dining room or in the chapel and see Governor Cameron Morrison walking his dog across the campus, I mean across his yard. And we were allowed to go through the Capitol grounds and go down the back streets to buy donuts. Of course we were not allowed to go down Fayetteville Street except on certain days. But it was a real treat to me to be able to go down through the Capitol, everyday if we wished. And we could go past the Governor's for blocks to go to a little drugstore where we went for our morning coke in between classes. But the main building looked like a castle and the East building that I lived in I thought of as a castle also. But if you go in it today you'd think you were, or even when we were there you would think of it as an attic. There were bare floors. And even some of the dresser drawers had no bottoms. No place to put your clothes. One bathroom on the hall. But you could sit in the casement window every night and State College boys would come by and serenade with saxophones. So that in itself made up for all the inconveniences. But the atmosphere, the things that I had not been accustomed to, the dining room for instance.

We went on the, we had to go from Moyock to Raleigh on a night train. It

was an all night trip. And the train stopped at every little station. At Elizabeth City and Herckton, and Edenton. Right on until after 1:00, and picked up not only Meredith students but State College students so there was little sleep until early, early morning. And it was always my luck to get into an upper berth. We arrived in Raleigh in just time enough for breakfast and I shall never forget walking into that dining room where there were extremely long tables and at the head of each table there was a hostess. Either a faculty member or a senior. And I was told that we were sure to be particular about our manners because we would be corrected. And then it was quite a shock to me when I thought about the wardrobe that I had brought, that every dinner meal we must dress, really dress. Not in a suit, not in a sport suit, but in a silk or a woolen dress and heels and silk hose. Of course there were, nylons came after I was a graduate. But it was a glamorous event. It was almost like a banquet. There was Dr. Brewer and his family sat up at the head table. In fact they lived in the dormitory. And the faculty sat in a section by themselves. A good number of the faculty lived in the dormitory. Of course the dormitories were not filled the first year.

I don't know how Dr. Brewer and his wife ate a meal because for every five minutes he had a little bell on his table that some officer or chairman of a committee would come by and tap the bell and make an announcement of some important meeting that was going to be held that night. But it was a very glamorous event and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

There's one thing I didn't appreciate. And that was the fact that some of my best friends walked with me to the dining room and when we got to the dining room doors we had to separate because the other girls who did not feel that they could afford to eat in the dining room had to go down the steps to the Club where a very nice lady, Mrs. Cooper, supervised a Club where all of those who could not afford to eat in the dining room could prepare their own food, set the table and do all the cleaning. That was later to be discarded because it was quite a contrast between that and sitting at the tables that were served by white coated black men.

COOPER: Yes, I've heard a little bit about this Club and you used to think about the Club as being the exclusive part. There was the opposite, wasn't it?

WELCH: I suppose it served a purpose.

COOPER: Yes. But I'm glad that they were able to work that out for later, not to have that.

WELCH: Then we moved over to New Meredith in January and that of course was not landscaped at all and all of the walks were of red sticky clay. And the

buildings, the auditorium and all of the classroom buildings, were temporary. And they remained temporary buildings throughout my college career. But I do not believe it interfered in anyway with our instructions.

COOPER: What professor do you have that probably brings the fondest memories?

WELCH: Well, there were two, Dr. Julia Hamlett Harris and Dr. Lillian Parker. Dr. Harris was head of the History Department and Dr. Parker of the, I mean Dr. Harris of the English Department and Dr. Parker of the History Department.

COOPER: And I believe you had specific interest in both of those.

WELCH: My major is English and my minor History. I also had a minor in French.

COOPER: Do you, what do you remember about your roommates or classmates, anything that, any particular story you'd like to share with us about roommates?

WELCH: Well, we had four roommates over in Old East. But when we moved to the new dormitory we had to divide. And I was asked to room with Lillian Wheeler from Scotland Neck and we remained roommates throughout the remainder of our time in college. One of my very best friends was Sarah Cook Rawley, whose been quite a benefactor to Meredith in recent years. There were very very many friends. And one of the nicest things that I remember about Meredith, I knew the name and address of every girl on campus. And I knew the faculty personally and it was gratifying to be met on the way to class and called by your name by the professor. Something that I believe does not happen now.

COOPER: That's quite a contrast to today. Well, you had a very good experience at Meredith from the sound of things. When your Meredith days were finished did you come back to Moyock?

WELCH: Yes I did.

COOPER: And shared with some other young ladies, and other young men probably, what you had learned as your English and History was concerned, in the public schools here?

WELCH: I did not come back to Moyock. I went, I came back, I lived here, pretended to live here but only on weekends or probably once a month. I taught about sixty miles from here at Chowan High School for twelve years. I declared that I would not teach. I was determined to be either a journalist or a social

worker but I was discouraged in both and I happened to graduate during the Depression. And you grabbed the first job you could get. And I was offered this job at Chowan High School and I liked it so much and loved every day of teaching that I remained there for twelve years.

COOPER: And then after that?

WELCH: I was married. I taught one more year and then I was married and had two daughters. For the first year I was the first appointed Librarian for Currtuck County, for after they had received State aid. But I received a temporary certificate, good for life. I think I was Librarian for about two years and then after that I did not work except to help some in the family business. I was able to stay at home and rear my daughters.

COOPER: You said you did not work professionally but you've done a great many things in this town. Would you like to tell us some of the things you have done?

WELCH: Well, I did everything in the Baptist Church except become a Deacon or preach. We did not have women Deacons at the time that I could have been really active. But I did everything else, teach, lay the urn, sing in the choir, headed the Missionary Society. Just about everything that came along. I was president of the Woman's Club for, which will be 65 years old this year. My mother had been a charter member. I was president for two terms. During the time that I was president I think the two things that I remember the most is that I helped to institute a community series which lasted for many years. We sold tickets and invited distinguished guests, lecturers, singing groups from Norfolk and even farther away, and at the close of each season we had a community wide concert that was directed and written by club members. That was the most popular event of the season.

And the other thing that I am proud of is that I helped to organize a community planning board. Since Moyock was not incorporated I thought we needed a governing board. And three things that stand out in my mind as being the most helpful; we were able to secure streetlights before they were, when they had to be paid for by the inhabitants, and street signs, and we got the first fire department. The first one was with a secondhand engine and now we have a full fledged fire department rescue squad and so forth that is paid for through the tax department. I belonged to county historical society, served many years on the library board. I was on the board of the Museum of the Albermarle, the Albermarle Arts and Fine Arts Council.

COOPER: Right. And just recently you have, to some extent, compiled your interests and involvement in Moyock in a very special way for this community. Would

you tell us about your book?

WELCH: Well, in 1982 I was fortunate to have published a book on Moyock. *Moyock, A Pictorial and Full History of Moyock 1900-1920*. Now I was not born in 1900, I was born in 1907. But some of the pictures date back to 1900. It has about 300 pictures I believe. And about 30 stories. The pictures were made by, most of them, by Mr. Rupert West and the late Senator Bagley, who were amateur photographers at the time. They were young men who went about with the very unsophisticated camera and took wonderful pictures of practically everybody and every scene in Moyock. And they had been preserved by their wives and their wives very generously gave them to me. I also had my uncle's album and a good many pictures that I had made. But the stories were stories that I had told to my children and to the neighbor's children as bedtime stories. They were getting tired of the bible stories and nursery rhymes and Mother Goose and fairy tales and so I began to tell them about the things that I did as a child here in Moyock. And that constituted most of the book.

COOPER: I have just recently browsed through the book and it's really a treasure for you and for the community and for the State I think, to have such a storehouse of history through pictures and stories.

WELCH: I was pleased to have it requested by the University of North Carolina and it's there in the North Carolina section.

COOPER: I know that in this book there is a picture of your mother and a little bit about your mother. Would you tell us a little bit about your parents?

WELCH: Well, my mother was a teacher. She taught I believe for about six years. She was a Virginian. She married my father who was a Virginian but they, he was working in North Carolina at the time. And they came to Moyock where they were married. He was a merchant. He had a country store and he also bought soybeans and corn and then would sell these as a commission merchant along with his brother-in-law. They were very much interested in seeing that I, it was just understood from the very first that I should go to college. The question was where. The only other place that I considered was West Hampton in Richmond. And then I luckily fell upon Meredith.

COOPER: And how did you decide on Meredith?

WELCH: Well, it's a very strange question. I had an aunt from Maine who had been principal of the school here. And she did not believe that Meredith could possibly be as good, she was not familiar with Meredith and she did not believe that it could possibly be as good as some of the schools in Virginia.

So she was adamant that I go to Westhampton. And one Sunday she brought with her the student advisor from Mora High School in Norfolk Virginia and this advisor said, asked me, he said, "Well, Marian where do you plan to go to college?" And I said, "I'm thinking _____ Westhampton." And she said, "Oh why on earth don't you go to the best school in North Carolina? Meredith is right there at your door." So that settled the question.

COOPER: Oh well that's a good story.

WELCH: I had known other friends from here who had been to Meredith but she was so much determined that I go there.

COOPER: So both your parents were influential in your being sure that you were college bound then?

WELCH: It was understood from all of my life. It wasn't a question of "Are you going?"

COOPER: Just where. That's good. You mentioned the performances that you did in Fine Arts here. Was the school auditorium, was that the place that these were held?

WELCH: Yes. You wanted to know about some of the changes that I tried to change?

COOPER: Yes.

WELCH: When I entered Meredith one of the things, I loved every minute of it but there was one thing that disturbed me my freshman year, although I could do very little about it then. That I noticed that the, not the student government president, but the people who worked on the student council, were not the outgoing people and they were not accepted or they did not look for the job. We didn't run for jobs at that time. But people shunned being asked to serve as House president or Proctor because they hated to be on a committee that would prosecute someone for something that they probably would do themselves. So luckily, I don't know how it happened, I was nominated for the Student Council when I was a sophomore. So I got to see it first hand and I made up my mind then that what I could do, while it probably would never materialize while I was there but I was going to spend my time trying to see, to raise the standard of the student government, not the president but the government. So that people would really be willing, the leaders, the class presidents, the presidents of the societies, of the religious organizations, they all stood out. But it was hard to get someone to serve on the Student Council. So I wanted to make it so that the people on it were so attractive and so outstanding that it would become a popular organization. It did not

materialize until my senior year. But my senior year had a magnificent Student Government Council. I was elected president of the Student Body. I don't know why cause I would have made the poorest that ever came off. But as luck would have it, it's funny to hear this called luck, but in the second week that I was a senior I had to be rushed to the hospital with appendicitis. And something happened at the first operation that infection set in and I was on the critical list for at least eight weeks. So the vice-president had to take over. And Frances Barnhill, one of the most attractive girls on campus, was vice-president. She took over and made a marvelous president, far better than I could ever have done. And I just thought that was a real break. And everything went along very smooth.

But one thing that I'd like to comment on is that my mother spent the eight weeks at Meredith, was given a private room in the dormitory, and the president's two daughters transported her to and from the campus, to and from the hospital everyday. And the girls on the dormitory had her in for tea every night. And the faculty members entertained her. And all the ministers in Raleigh, I attended the First Baptist, but all the others came to see her and did everything that they possibly could. I was not supposed to live so everytime I've been back they said, "Oh here she comes. I didn't think she was supposed to be here."

COOPER: Oh I love that story. I'm sure that was a horrible experience and time.

WELCH: Then there's a dark side of this. You ask someone about the dark days, I missed the entire first semester of my senior year. So when I went back I was in the infirmary three months after I left the hospital in three weeks. Then I came home and stayed until the beginning of the first semester. And when I went back the doctor wouldn't allow me to go upstairs so my roommates and suitemates and friends brought all the books to me. And I had to do my first semester's work as well as the second semester. So I stayed there day and night for the entire second semester, didn't even come home at Easter let alone for weekends. And I was beginning to think toward the end that I wasn't going to make it. And Dr. Lillian Wallace would have me come to her office at least once a week and she'd give me a pep talk and she'd say, "Marian, you can make it."

It so happened that this English Professor, Dr. Harris, was taken sick the second semester and I had to have my English under someone else, which made it that much more difficult. So it was difficult but I give the credit to Dr. Wallace and all those who helped me. I was really there 3 1/2 years.

COOPER: You really had an unusual last year at Meredith then.

WELCH: I know the porter, we were real friendly with all the help, the porter and the waiters and the maids, we knew them all by name and they were so helpful. And I went back two or three years after I graduated and he said, "Is that Miss Fiske?" And I said, "Yes it is." He said, "Oh I done thought you were in heaven."

COOPER: Ah that's great. Well, then, between trying to be Student Government president and making two semesters in one...

WELCH: I was not, the vice-president took over. I was relieved.

COOPER: Okay.

WELCH: Luckily. I would have been terrible. Oh, I would have been terrible.

COOPER: No. But that was great then that you...

WELCH: There were rules, like if you were walking on the driveway and a boy that you knew was driving by, as long as he kept driving and as long as you kept walking you could talk. But you could never stop. Or if you met a boy that you knew, and there were several there that I, were just good friends from State College. When you were downtown if you met a boy that you knew you could speak and talk as long as both of you walked. But you could not stand still for one minute nor sit down. It was rules like that that I thought should go off the book.

COOPER: I see. And they did.

WELCH: The New Meredith, after we moved out to the new campus which was called Uncle Charlie's Angel farm and it really was out in the country. We were so far away from civilization it seemed. The walks were beautiful. The part that I liked and my friends liked the most was the grove. The grove was, I wish we could have a picture of the interior of that grove. I had been used to groves but I was always warned of snakes or red bugs. But there this grove was clean and peaceful and that's where my roommate and I and my friends and I studied for exams. That's where the May Day was held. It was just a perfectly beautiful spot for meditation and for walking. My roommate was so much in love with the grove that when the beautiful lake was built she as so infuriated that they had to take the grove to build a lake that she never returned. She's now passed away. And she never returned to Meredith. She said she could not face Meredith without the grove.

Then back of Meredith, back of the dining room, there were wonderful trails that you could walk back to lakes. And we would pack lunches and hike

back to the lakes. I walked more at Old Meredith and New Meredith both because of such wonderful places to walk.

COOPER: Okay, I did... The grove was not used as much when we were there but that would be sad for somebody who had spent a lot of time there.

WELCH: We did spend a lot of time there.

COOPER: That amphitheater there too. And I guess the, where you were talking about in back of the dining hall was sort of now where the president's house is now. Is that...

WELCH: You go out through right back of the dining room, nothing back there, nothing. And we did have Beehive, an old building, just a...

COOPER: Yeah, that's okay. Beehive, tell about the beehive.

WELCH: The Beehive was an old building, old house that sat in between the quadrangle and the temporary building. And you could go there for drinks or snacks or any small article that you'd like to pick up. You could go after the study hour at night.

COOPER: The Beehive, I think that's probably as unanimous a word of what everybody mentions, is the Beehive. I have not found out how that name came to be.

WELCH: It's the old meeting place you might say.

COOPER: But you don't know how the name came to be Beehive?

WELCH: No I don't.

COOPER: Okay, you mentioned Uncle Charlie's Angel farm. Now that was Dr. Brewer's first name, Charles.

WELCH: Yes.

COOPER: And so that's how you got that.

WELCH: Uh, hazing was done away with very dramatically when I was a freshman. Did you know about this?

COOPER: No.

WELCH: Well, I was thoroughly enjoying and fearing the sophomores who used all the ingenuity and ideas for some of the most interesting ways to taunt the freshman. The way to keep from being personally punished was to stay as inconspicuous as possible and to go along with anything they asked you to do. If anyone refused or was the least bit obstinate about any of it then they might be asked to come and wash the bathroom floor of the sophomore's, which was a very demeaning thing for some people. But the thing that cracked the camel's back, we marched into chapel one morning, we had been asked to come to class by the sophomores wearing a green dress hand picked before, and to bring all of our books in a suitcase. There was something that we had to do about our hair and face but I cannot remember what it was. But when we walked in, everybody in the freshman class walked into chapel, I looked to the stage and I noticed that Dr. Brewer's face had turned blood red. That happened often when he was confused or worried about something. And I noticed beside him a very distinguished man who was to speak that day. And when we came in we were the worst looking bunch of hoodlums you've ever seen. It was very very embarrassing even to us. But, a special meeting was called that very day or night by the faculty or the trustees or somebody. But that put the end to hazing. Of course we were sorry as sophomores because we knew we'd never have a chance to do all those things that they had done.

COOPER: Well, that's a new story.

WELCH: You've never heard that one?

COOPER: No. I haven't heard that story. Okay, but now...As we capsuled this side give us a quick recap about your feeling about your Meredith education.

WELCH: When I thought, first thought about graduating from Meredith I thought I would be an educated person when I graduated. But I found that it was just a stepping stone. They gave me the tools, they gave me the knowledge and the ability to look for the answers and the questions that I would ...

COOPER: [Side 2] This is side two of a tape by Marian Fiske Welch class of '29 in an oral history of Meredith College Alumnae. Today is March 25, 1988 and we're in Moyock with Jean Cooper, interviewer.

Marian, I know that having worked in student government during your time at Meredith and having been elected as Student Government president, there were, you did a lot of work there. Some you saw the results of immediately, some you saw the results of later. Tell us about a couple of things you mentioned that your dreams were fulfilled after your time at Meredith.

WELCH: These were dreams I had when I was in junior year. I'd often thought that it was wonderful for the Kappa Nu's, Kappa Nu Sigma Society to be there. I was a member. But I didn't think it fair that the people who made good grades should be the only ones that should be honored with a special society. We had many wonderful leaders who had to have decent grades in order to run for office in the first place, or to be elected to office. But they were never honored in any group. So our junior year we suggested that there be an organization for those who had been leaders. Who had not necessarily made the average that you have to make for Kappa Nu Sigma, but they had been leaders all the way through school. And the outstanding leaders should be elected at the end of their junior year for that as much as for Kappa Nu Sigma. And as a result years later, not while I was there but in a few years, the Silver Shield was organized. So we left silently but we really accomplished something.

COOPER: Yes. That's wonderful. Well, even though in your time this was not, you were not able to accomplish this, you personally were able to have some rewards of it I'm sure, because you were able to send your daughter to Meredith and some of these things that had been worked on she was able to reap the benefits of I'm sure. Would you tell us a little bit about your daughter and your granddaughter?

WELCH: Well, my daughter was there in the '70's and she loved it as much as I did. Course her, she had great many more freedoms than we did and I used to think she spent most of her time dating. But she must not have because she also made the Kappa Nu Sigma Society. She was president of the sophomore class and she is still surprised and so am I to this day that she decided at the end of her junior year to get married. She was so much in love and he was going into the service that she married and when he came back, he went into National Guard, and he came back the next year and he had already graduated from State, and took a job in a furniture manufacturing in Hickory. So rather than going back and forth weekends, they decided to get married and she went over to Lenoir Rhyne and Meredith at the end of that year gave her, tapped her for Kappa Nu Sigma. I thought that was amazing. And she won the award for the most outstanding teacher, practice teacher in practice teaching school. She went into social work however. Today she is a branch manager of Les Rock Home Health in Chesapeake, Virginia.

COOPER: Oh, so she's back in this area.

WELCH: They came back here when my husband died in 1966. She and her husband came back here to live.

COOPER: And now is this the, is it her daughter who is now at Meredith?

WELCH: Her older daughter is now at Meredith, a junior at Meredith. She likes it very much and she is in the Chorale. Went to Europe with them, went to Scandinavian countries last year. She did not go to New Orleans this year. But she is doing part-time work in...

COOPER: And what is her field?

WELCH: Her field is social work and music.

COOPER: So she's following somewhat in her mother's footsteps with the social work. Okay maybe, you mentioned your husband. Would you like to tell us a little bit about your married life?

WELCH: My husband was from Chowan County where I taught for twelve years. I met him the first day I taught school. As I was coming out of the building he was waiting. He was the one who stood up in the auditorium and said, "All I can say is that you have a good looking group of teachers this year." So when he came out he introduced himself and asked if he might take me home. And I dated him all of that year. He came back when he was a senior at State that year, in chemical engineering. And at the end of that year he went to Chicago to work. And I did not see him for twelve years, twelve or thirteen years till the war broke out, World War II. And he was not able to enter the draft because of his heart. He'd never told me that however. And he got a job at Norfolk Naval Shipyard and we met again and married shortly thereafter. I had been dating other people all that time and I suppose he had too. He worked at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in the, he was second in command and in charge of nuclear subs, pure water for nuclear subs. It was a highly classified job. And he also started his own electrical and mechanical contracting business here.

COOPER: And was that the business that your son-in-law came back to help with?

WELCH: That's no longer in existence.

COOPER: Do you view the college as being true to it's mission as a Christian college?

WELCH: Yes, I surely do.

COOPER: Of what value was the Christian foundation of the college to you?

WELCH: I liked the way they got the message across to me. There was no force or pressure from anyone. There were a few zealots on the campus but they turned me off rather than on. But the faculty and the leading students on the

campus were truly Christian but they showed it by example and not by anything spectacular or emotional or forceful. And you were, but you could easily become a free thinker and be lead in the right direction without any pressure.

COOPER: Marvelous. Did you, I'm sure you've already answered this then as far as your spiritual growth during your time at Meredith. Do you want to say a word about that? As far as your change of views, your expansion of your outlook and the depth of you religious faith.

WELCH: I think my depth of my religious faith certainly grew. There was such freedom of thought that it made it possible for you to expand your thinking more than I have been able to do in the past or thought of doing.

COOPER: Who...? I'm sure you took at least the religion course that everybody was required to take, who was heading up the religion department?

WELCH: Robert Freeman.

COOPER: How did your involvement in the community church contribute to your memories of Meredith?

WELCH: Well, of course we were compelled to go to church every Sunday. We were allowed five cuts and five visits and I took advantage of the five visits. I imagine I could have took advantage of the five cuts but I enjoyed it thoroughly. I'm glad we were, I'd say forced to go. I'd always gone. I'd grown up going without thinking anything about it. So it was perfectly natural for me. But I can say that the First Baptist Church where I attended, the Meredith girls and the State boys all sat in the balcony. And as I think back I remember very little about what the minister said because our minds were elsewhere.

COOPER: But the environment was there.

WELCH: I would like to say that the First Baptist Church had a wonderful program through their Sunday school class that I surely took advantage of. We had a quiet hour at Meredith every Sunday afternoon from 2:00 until 4:00. And at that age I didn't want to be quiet Sunday afternoon. And they would take us, one of the teachers or someone from the church would take a group of State College boys and Meredith girls who wanted to go to some institution in Raleigh. We would go to different areas of the penitentiary different Sundays. We went to Dix Hill, to the epileptic colony, to homes for the aged, the Bryan School, and it was just a wonderful outing and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

COOPER: And you felt like you were finding out more about other people other than just yourselves.

WELCH: It was very interesting. I shall never forget it.

COOPER: Okay, you mentioned getting out in the town of Raleigh and being a part of the people in these institutions and so forth. You also mentioned that you were in school in the Depression. So how did you view the world, outside world in that time?

WELCH: I think I was oblivious. We were not, I'm a newsaholic now. I watch every news program and then go to cable to watch what's left. But then I, there was so much going on right in the college that we were not as much tied up, particularly in politics, as the students are today. Or even in my daughter's day. Or my group was not.

COOPER: Okay.

WELCH: You wondered about the travel that I had been on.

COOPER: Yes. And I also, is there a Meredith group in this area that meets?

WELCH: There was one in Elizabeth City but I haven't heard anything about it recently. I've had no invitations.

COOPER: Okay. And there's not in Norfolk either?

WELCH: Yes, there used to be. I've been to it but I don't know.

COOPER: There's one in Richmond I know that I was at yesterday.

WELCH: There used to be one in Norfolk.

COOPER: Okay. You have been a widow since 1966. I'm sure these last twenty-two years has been sort of a different phase of your life without family obligations and so forth. Would you like to tell us a little bit of how you've spent time since then?

WELCH: Well, I've stayed very very busy with grandchildren. They were always wanting to go someplace. One was, well I took them to dancing lessons and music lessons and opera. There was a children's opera in Norfolk and I was the chauffeur that carried them back and forth. And of course I was interested in church and the Woman's Club. And then I have done some

traveling that was interesting.

COOPER: Tell us about that.

WELCH: I've been to, I was in Paris in April one time for a week. Came through the countryside of England but I've never been to London. But a group from Moyock a few years ago went to, took a trip to the Holy Land. But we flew from New York to Athens, from Athens to Cyprus, and from Cyprus we cruised across the Mediterranean to Port Said. But I would never suggest that. If I'd read the Bible more carefully I'd have know that that was the time of year that Paul was shipwrecked so much. I'd have never gone across in the spring because it was a rough rough trip. I think I was the only one who wasn't seasick and I was telling everybody to take four pills of what the doctor had given me, instead of one. So they all passed out I think. But we came back across and then we flew up, no we cruised up to Tel Aviv. And then we spent about ten days touring the Holy Land. We went out as far as Egypt. I mean as far as Cairo in Egypt, and saw the pyramids. And then we came back and went up to Tel Aviv and went to the Sea of Galilee and to Bethlehem and spent about, oh several days in Jerusalem. And down to the Dead Sea and the Jordan River and it was a very very good trip. And on the way back we took time out to go to Rome and to Athens.

And I had attended a lecture at Meredith while I was there, just about the Parthenon. And I had always talked about I would love to see the Parthenon. Well, of course you go and it's wrecked now. And all around the Parthenon, I had no idea it was so bit, it is just strewn with rocks. Just big pieces that have fallen away. And a friend of mine said, "Marian you're going to walk around this building." And I said, "Oh no I'm not going to walk around that building." She said, "I've heard nothing since I've known you except you wanted to see the Parthenon. Now you're going to walk around it." So I walked around it but my feet broken when I got through because it was a rough walk. But it was a great experience.

And we went down, in Rome we went down into the dungeon where Paul wrote his brother, "Bring my coat because the winter is cold," and so forth. I said all ministers should make a trip to the Holy Land at least some time during their time in school because it all seems so much more meaningful after you've sailed on the Sea of Galilee and been to see the Dead Sea Scrolls and so forth. It really was a good experience.

When I got back, I took notes all the way, we had wonderful guides. And when I came back I wrote out the whole story and had a copy made for everybody that was on the trip. So it was, I have to go back now and read it to remember some of the things. St. Peter's was so interesting in Rome, too.

COOPER: That was a marvelous contribution you made to everybody who was on the trip I'm sure. Because...

WELCH: Well, I've enjoyed it myself because I just keep forgetting, what came first and the schedule when we'd go to such and such a place.

COOPER: And as you read your Bible now all of these things can really live for you.

WELCH: They really do. I'd just love to go back. Not the whole trip but I'd love to go back to Jerusalem because it's so confusing some of it. You were seeing it so fast and you're taking in so much in such a short time. I understand they're not going to do the, the Catholic Church is not letting them have the Easter celebration at the _____ make the trip in March this year.

COOPER: I had not heard that. Okay, you have been, had connection with Meredith off and on since your days there through your daughter and your granddaughter. And of course we've just recently been hearing so much about women's colleges. And so many of them are either no longer being in existence or going coed, that sort of thing. What are some things that you see as far as Meredith that you wish were different, or things that you're glad are the same?

WELCH: Well, I'm glad it's the same. I hope it will continue to be a women's college. In fact my dream for it is that it would be recognized as the number one girl's school of the South. I still think it is. But it isn't recognized as that. So many people when they write Meredith write Meredith, North Carolina. And it burns me up. You don't see Randolph Macon, and then Lynchburg written beside it, or Sweetbriar or Salem even. But Meredith they always add North Carolina as if no one would know where it was. Someone at Meredith said it was the biggest secret, the most unsung school in the nation. People don't realize how great it is.

COOPER: Now one thing we do, are being well recognized at this point is that we are by far the largest all girls' school in the southeast. With Salem being...

WELCH: Salem's the oldest isn't it?

COOPER: With Salem being very much below, in fact all of them are much below ours in attendance. So maybe...

WELCH: All of my daughters went to Salem, went to Peace to high school and then for two years to junior school and then college and then went to Salem. And

it's a great school but I, I don't think it measures up in everyway to Meredith.

COOPER: And you have certainly made a contribution to Meredith through your influence to others in this town who've made decisions and a lot of things we're not aware of probably. But certainly being in your church and giving to the cooperative program and in that sort of thing you've been a support to Meredith. And it's because of Ann Edge Dale that I knew to come to share with you today. Would you like to just briefly tell us what your relationship is to Ann Edge Dale?

WELCH: Well, the Edges have been friends of ours, with the whole family, ever since they moved to Moyock. They moved here I believe when my children were very small. And they have been real, quite an asset to this community. Mr. and Mrs., Norwood and Coralee and all the family. And I was certainly glad to see Ann go to Meredith. I bet she was influenced by a Meredith teacher at the High School she attended, to go. I believe that was one of the reasons she went. I'd like to think that Mary and I had some influence but I think she was influenced by a teacher.

COOPER: Okay. Well, perhaps it was a combination of things but I'm glad you mentioned the teacher. Because I think we as alumnae do feel that we have an important role in helping to influence other people to go to Meredith. And those of us who are teachers are that part, that segment of Meredith alumnae who do have one of the greatest opportunities.

WELCH: Do you know Sarah Cook Rawley? You should know Sarah and Bud. They've been benefactors of Meredith for so long. Sarah was an art student under Miss Ida Poteat. She has also been, well she was editor of the annual our senior year, my best friend. And she has been a North Carolina Poet of the Year. A very interesting person. And she's probably sent more students, given more parties and sent more students to Meredith than anyone I know, any alumnae that I know.

COOPER: Wow. And you said she used to entertain your class on a reunion time?

WELCH: After our, beginning with our 50th Anniversary, Sarah and Bud entertained the class of '29 at one of the Motels in town in Raleigh. And it's been missed very much since they've not been able to come.

COOPER: Okay now since your 50th year, and after your 50th year you were invited to come back each year, right? So if you return to Meredith in May of this year for reunion this will be your... which reunion?

WELCH: 60 something, I don't know. It was '59 from '89 then '89 would be what? 29 from 89 would be?

COOPER: That would be your 60th.

WELCH: So it would be next year, the year that Meredith, when _____ will graduate should be my 60th.

COOPER: Oh yes, your daughter, granddaughter will graduate and it will be your 60th reunion.

WELCH: Well, she was there for commencement last year and I wanted to go and I just couldn't get there. I don't drive that far anymore. I drive to Norfolk and Elizabeth City and Virginia Beach but to drive to Raleigh I don't. And Marian couldn't get away to go that day. But I hope to, she had to stay to sing in the Chorale. So I guess she will this year.

COOPER: I hope she will yes. Cause we will be hearing from them. You mentioned, of course that you have the daughter here whose daughter is at Meredith this time. And then you have another daughter, there are the two girls right? So would you like to tell us about the other daughter, even though she did not go to Meredith?

WELCH: Molly graduated from the High School Department of Peace which they had at that time. Then she attended as a college student and graduated from Peace Junior College where she won many many honors. And moved onto Salem where she received her B.A. in Elementary Education. She married Robert Rasko of Winston-Salem who had recently been taken into the FBI and as soon as he finished FBI school they were sent to Illinois, Springfield. And from there to Andrews Air Force Base. And Robert decided at that time that he would either have to go where they would send him, which would probably be Texas or California, that he would like to come back to good old Winston-Salem. So he got out of the FBI and went into law practice in Winston-Salem. Today he is head of Commonwealth Title Insurance in Winston-Salem and Molly is teaching second grade.

COOPER: Where does she teach second grade?

WELCH: I can't remember the name of that school.

COOPER: Okay. And she has a daughter.

WELCH: She has, they have daughter Emily, who is quite an athlete. Today she is on the traveling team with Forsyth County Day.

COOPER: So you have quite a family of females then don't you? Cause you have...

WELCH: We wouldn't know what to do with boys. They used to tease John in the chemical lab in Norfolk Naval Shipyard that all the chemists in that laboratory had girls, not a one had a boy. They said it's something about the fumes and this was why. Would you like to have set this on? Is it on?

COOPER: Yeah. We've got just... As we're coming close to the end of this tape Marian, would you like to just share with us what your priorities in life are?

WELCH: Well, this is not original to me but I heard a well known author speaking on television the other day and he said that his priorities in this order were, "Faith, family and friends." And I think that's probably mine also.

COOPER: That's a marvelous way to capsule. Thank you so much for...

WELCH: Well, I'm sure you'll have to edit it because I was talking all in between and laughing too. I'm sure it was the worst one you've ever made.

COOPER: No, no we will, we treasure this and we'll be looking forward to the next twenty years of your life to add to this later on.

WELCH: Do you know Ruth Lily Creekmore?

COOPER: This name was given to me.

WELCH: Well, she lives over in Virginia, Great Bridge which is about twelve miles from here. Perhaps she was, I don't know of any particular office that she held at Meredith but she was very popular. She goes back to all the alumnae meetings. But she has done more, won more honors since she has been out of college. She has been the Teacher of the Year in Virginia. She's been the Woman of the Year in Great Bridge. She's been, well the list is this long. I sent her in, her name in for Alumnae of the Year but she didn't get it. But she is a very interesting person and she has been speaker, she belongs to about four different organizations and she can still swim and she's very very active. She comes, we have a breakfast club, just come if you want to. And no, one day one man stopped me and said, "Will you please tell me what this group is?" I said, "It's just the most wonderful group I ever belonged to. You don't have to come unless you want to. There are no dues, no business, no anything." He said, "That sounds great." And she comes over sometimes to that. But she belongs to more different organizations, but she has received a host of honors since graduation. And she was an outstanding student too.

COOPER: What year was she?

WELCH: She was two years ahead of me. She's younger than I am but she was tutored at home and so I don't now whether she started in the third grade or what.

COOPER: At this point we went across the street to the home of Genevieve Holloman West, an affiliate of the class of 1918 for Meredith. Genevieve's deceased husband made many of the photographs which Marian Welch used in her recent book. Marian and Genevieve have been neighbors since Marian was 7 years-old. They are shown together on the videotape that I made of Meredith alumnae. Genevieve showed us her yearbook and the many times that she appeared in her yearbook from her year at Meredith. She also, on the tape you see a number of paintings that she has done which are hanging in her home. At the age of 72 she had her first art class and has since that time painted a number of things that hang in buildings, offices, in the area. She is known as the Grandma Moses of Moyock.

This is the end of the interview and visit with Marian Fiske Welch and Genevieve Holloman West. Two other persons that were mentioned as Meredith's alumnae in this interview were Ruth Creekmore and Sarah Cook Rawley, as in addition to Marian's own daughter.



MARGARET CRAIG MARTIN
Class of 1930

Today is March 31, 1988. We are in Bermuda Village at Advance, North Carolina near Clemmons, North Carolina. And I am here with Margaret Craig Martin, class of 1930. I am the Interviewer, Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954.

COOPER: Okay Margaret, share with us some of your early impressions of Meredith.

MARTIN: Well, my first impression of Meredith was when I was a little girl about five or six years-old when I went with my mother by train from Marion to Raleigh to visit Old Meredith. And I remember seeing Miss Ida Poteat, Dr. Vann, who had visited in our home numbers of times, and Dr. Delia Dixon Carroll. And I remember especially the college girls playing with me in the courtyard while my mother visited her friends. There was no question about where I would go to school because when I finished high school it was just understood that I would go to Meredith. So that's where I went, by train again.

COOPER: Now you said that Dr. Vann visited your home in Marion. How did he know your family? How did he happen to visit your home?

MARTIN: Well, Mother had known R. B. Vann and his sisters and he had stopped by to have dinner with my grandparents, with whom my mother and I lived after my father died. And I remember Dr. Stringfield coming by to get money for Meredith too, in those particular days.

COOPER: And you said that you knew who else, Dr. Poteat?

MARTIN: My only aunt was Mrs. Hubert Poteat of Wake Forest. And so I've always had a close connection with Wake Forest too, and visited there since I was a little girl.

COOPER: Okay. So that's how they knew your family.

MARTIN: That's right.

COOPER: Okay, now you wanted to tell me about arriving on the new campus when you actually entered as a student.

MARTIN: My first daylight impression when we went down to breakfast was just a sea of red clay and green fields and wooden walks going across to the various dormitories and back and forth to the main building. I was quite excited

because going off to college was quite an event in those days, and one you'd look forward to a great deal. We made many many friends, some I had known before but some who remained friends over the years. In fact my whole suite has kept up all these years. One's in Pittsburgh, one's in Durham, a third is in Virginia Beach and here I am in Winston-Salem. But we all got together a year ago here in Winston.

COOPER: Wonderful, wonderful. And you said your big sister was Mabel Claire Maddrey.

MARTIN: That's right.

COOPER: So you see her a lots of times now even too.

MARTIN: I see her from time to time. I saw her a lot before I moved to Winston six years ago. At First Baptist Church and at Meredith functions too. People I remember from those early days, Dr. Harris and her mother who lived in the dormitory with her. Dr. Price who lived next door to our suite on second floor. A dormitory it was there. She was a Quaker. And we could hear through the walls and she and her mother would address each other as thee and thou. And we remained friends for years and years. And I majored in Latin under Dr. Price. Not only because of Dr. Price but because of my Uncle, Dr. Poteat in Wake Forest, I majored in Latin. I used to go every summer to Columbia with them and I attended classes and he encouraged my going ahead with it and then I went ahead and got my masters in Latin.

COOPER: You mentioned your cousins, Hubert Poteat and who was the other one?

MARTIN: Bill is dead now but Hubert and I have just grown up together.

COOPER: And Hubert is a physician. He's a physician in Smithfield.

MARTIN: Yes he is. He's a surgeon, retired now.

COOPER: So you were the only grandchild for a long time in the whole family.

MARTIN: For a long time. That's right. I had four happy years at Meredith. I did a lot of things. We represented Meredith in the '75 Visions campaign, going around and making speeches at various churches. I remember one time I got to one little church out from Greenville and they asked me to teach the Sunday school class, which I had not prepared. But I got up and got through some way or another. But you have a lot of experiences there. And there were all kind of things that I enjoyed at Meredith, in the Student Government and in the junior class. We won the Stunt our junior year, our class did. I

was active then at First Baptist Church. I was president of the student department down there at my junior year. And I went on a lot of trips for Meredith. I went to New Orleans. I went to the National Student Federation in Palo Alto, California. And on that trip we had a wreck in the Feather River Canyon coming back and we were delayed a day. And we had to, when we got back on Pueblo, Colorado I was the only one in the Pullman and I remember the porter says, "Miss if it gets cold I got 54 blankets." And I came across the United States in a private car, all the way to St. Louis by myself. Didn't see a soul I knew. And nobody knew where I was. That was quite an experience. I got back late and as soon as I could I called my parent, my mother and then I got back late to Meredith and I had to report in chapel on all my adventures on that trip. But it was a grand trip, one that will stand out.

Has anybody told about the old Beehive? The old building down there, it was a college store that Dr. Kennedy had charge of.

COOPER: Yes we'd like to hear from you on that.

MARTIN: Well, it was just a little college store. And it stood, it was a little red building right next to, on the way down to the old classroom buildings, on the way to Poteat today. And it was there until they built the new auditorium and they left the theory room which became the college store and they tore down the little building. They added to it but that later became, you probably remember that.

COOPER: Yes.

MARTIN: But there are a lot of things, you don't remember the water tanks. Some of them would become adventurous and climb the water tank and paint their names up there. Then they would go all over the county getting daisies. In those days daisies were not so scarce s they are today. But May Day was quite a big event because your fun was on campus in those days. Freshmen had dates once a month on Saturday afternoon in the Rose or Blue parlor or around the Rotunda. And that was it.

I never thought when I finished Meredith that so much of my life would be connected with it. But it was. After I went to New York and got my masters in Latin I didn't have enough education to teach in North Carolina, education courses. So after fall at home I went to old Wake Forest and took 15 hours of education. And the teacher got sick two weeks after I was supposed to take this and Dr. Bryan, who was chairman of our school board as all, and also dean of the college said, "Margaret you'll have to take over." I said, "How will I pass my classes?" He said, "We'll make up for that. You'll

have to write some papers but we need a teacher.” So I taught there and then they elected me the next year and I taught there until I was married.

But they were days of the bank closings, the Lindbergh kidnapping, a lot of things happened during those days. But they were very happy days I must say. I think I made \$35 a month that first half year because I had to divide my salary with another teacher because she needed it at that time and she'd been sick, so...

Dr. Brewer was president of the College when I went to school.

COOPER: And you said until you were married, how did you meet Zeno?

MARTIN: Zeno. He came to Marion as Superintendent of Schools. And so he was a bachelor and so I met him that fall I stayed at home after finishing at Columbia, when I was at home. And so, I had been in school with his niece, Edwina Martin, who was at Meredith a few years after I graduated. But I knew her quite well. So Mr. Hamrick died and Zeno had gotten out of school work and was in building and lawn work. But he was never happy out of school work so Dr. Campbell called him one year and we had built our house and were going to live in Marion forever. But anyway, he wanted him as sort of, not business manager, but development. But that involved a lot of traveling and he didn't want to leave Zeno and me. But the next year when this other position developed and Mr. Hamrick died I knew he was going to take it. And so I knew he was never happy out of school work because his father had been in it and nearly his whole family at one time or other had taught school. So we went to Meredith in 1943, ten years after we were married. And we lived in the dormitory for one year, two rooms. And that was during the war. And we hadn't found a house to live in. But we did the next year and moved out on the corner of St. Mary's and Stone, where I lived for 19 years. And Zeno died quite suddenly in 1953. But he had seen one new building go up, the Auditorium. And they were, at that time they talked a little bit about Meredith moving with Wake Forest to Winston-Salem. But that did not transpire. And I remember Gerald Johnson wrote an editorial that said, "Meredith is a Gone Gosling."

But I was president of the Alumni Association so I answered him in the Alumni magazine and I said, "Maybe he's heard the other story about the ugly duckling that turned into the beautiful swan." And so Meredith has turned into a beautiful swan of which we're very proud.

COOPER: That's very significant, yes.

MARTIN: The budget when we went to Meredith was just \$400,000. That was in

1943. And you can imagine how that compares with the millions today or the total budget. But that's an interesting fact to see how times have changed. But everybody had a good time and Meredith was just like family. The faculty members, they didn't have much money but they had a good time. And the students, there was a relationship between students and faculty that's hard to get in this day, this era. And you remember that.

COOPER: It was significant when I was there even in the early '50's.

MARTIN: That's right. They had a big snow in 1927 and it just closed up the school. They also had a small pox epidemic because one of the cooks had small pox and we all had to line up to be vaccinated by Dr. Carroll. So we've had all kind of adventures in those early days.

COOPER: Did anyone else get small pox?

MARTIN: No, thank goodness. Nobody got it. And Zeno introduced riding at Meredith. See they had stopped having cavalry horses and cavalry in the army so he bought up some old army horses, seven army horses and that was the beginning of the riding at Meredith. I don't know what the state is today. But it was very popular and the riding ring was over there close to where the Wetherspoon Gym is now. They already had a barn over there so they didn't have to build a barn for the horses.

About my teaching at Meredith, it was in 194?, '53. Jonathan Daniels who was Editor of the News and Observer called me and said. "I understand you were a Latin major." And I said, "Well, I was." And he said, "Well, my daughter needs to be coached and given an exam this summer." I said, "Well, Mr. Daniels I haven't thought about it in years. But I would like to review it just to see if it comes back." He said, "Well, I would appreciate it if you would, since she's going to George School and she flunked it and they said they would, if she reviewed it and they sent the exam and then you grade it and send it to them they would accept it." I said, "Well, I'll be glad to." Well, I took Mary Cleas for six weeks and she passed her exam. I sent it off. It all came back to me, it's amazing how it all comes back.

And it wasn't three weeks after that, we'd been on a trip to New York, that Zeno died of a heart attack. And Dr. Campbell had not been able to get a Latin teacher. He'd had a substitute for one year. So he asked me to take three classes. And I did and it was good for me and I enjoyed it thoroughly. And I taught there. I went back to Columbia. I went to Peabody and to Vanderbilt for review courses in both English and in Latin. And I enjoyed my classes very much.

COOPER: How many years did you teach there, do you know?

MARTIN: I taught from '54 until '62. And then I went back later to Meredith. And I went back to Marion for about 15 months and then I went back to Raleigh. And at that time Miss Grimmer was retiring and they hadn't gotten anybody to take her place. So that's how it happened to go into the Alumnae work. So anyway, I worked with Miss Grimmer that spring trying to learn the ropes. And I went to UNCG and I went to Duke and I went to State, to see how they kept their records and what programs they had. And my first thing, Miss Grimmer had been there for 37 years so she was the Alumnae Association. But I set up a new system of records and addresses there and had it all in place. But the year after I retired there in 1970 the computers came along. So a whole new system had to get set up again.

But we won the US Steel Award for Annual Giving during the time I was there. But we worked on the groundwork that Miss Grimmer and the others had planned. But I had to go to Atlantic City to get the US Steel Award and we won \$1,000 there, so we were all very proud of that.

COOPER: And you did that until, how many years? About four or five years? How many years?

MARTIN: Oh in the Alumnae Association? No, I was there seven years and then I decided I would just stop, take early retirement and do some things I wanted to do. But you were still connected with Meredith some way or another. But I was able to travel to do some things that I hadn't been able to do before.

But we saw a lot of new buildings in those years, the wings to the Alumnae House. Jack Kessler had made plans for the Alumnae House. That was planned at a Raleigh meeting. I remember bringing it up at Laura Howell's that we needed an Alumnae House because Miss Grimmer was outgrowing one room over there in C Dormitory. So we managed to get the central unit of it and then later the wings, the office wing and the bedroom wings were added to that. And then we saw Joyner go up. We saw Hunter go up, the classroom buildings, the Ellen Brewer House. And then the Library, which was named in honor of Dr. Campbell. And that was a great day when the girls all lined up taking the books over to the Library. There are many other buildings that have been built since I was there.

Dr. Campbell's, any of you who will remember, Dr. Campbell's chapel talks were wonderful. And I hope that they will be collected and published sometime. Somebody said Norma Rose might do it and I hope that she will because they really were gems. In the Alumnae work we visited all kind of

chapter meetings and I told Doris it was just like playing spin the plate cause you'd get lunch after going and then you'd go to get another one and there'd be another one and that other one would drop on you and you'd have to go back and start in all over again. But that's like, that's just natural in Alumnae work and you have a wonderful time visiting the girls all over the country.

Dr. Heilman came when I was in the Alumnae office and the Alumnae office, instead of being a separate unit became a part of the development office, as all schools are doing this day in time. And we got our first alumnae directory and in the Alumnae House there were Miss Kate Matthews how worked on the Biblical Recorder, Elizabeth Chamley, Hannah Carter, and then Evelyn Posey, worked with me. Some of them were part-time but we had a grand crew over there. And there were all sorts of gifts for the Alumnae House until finally we had to have a committee for the Alumnae House to specify what could be used. Because sometimes you can get some things that can't be used. They might be used elsewhere and you're glad to get them but you have to have somebody to, who will help with that particular declaration.

Another time during our, Martin Luther King was killed. And Dr. Heilman told us that we were having a *sub rosa* meeting over there at the Alumnae House for all the State college presidents, black and white, and he said, "I want you to set up coffee hour and just arrange things like a trustee meeting and then do everything you can and then you're just secretary without portfolio. You just disappear." So they met all day and the Governor was out there with No. 1 and the engine was kept running for hours because they didn't want the press to find out they were meeting out there. And then they did go for lunch and then they met all afternoon. And then when they'd have some coffee breaks some of the college presidents would come in to examine how we kept our office and what we did. And later I heard people asking, "Why was No. 1 out in front of the Alumnae House all day today? I couldn't say. I said, "Well, sometimes we just have distinguished guests over there."

But a lot of things happened during those days. But during these years I have continued my interest with Meredith. I go back whenever I can. I've served on the Board of Trustees and Board of Associates. And I can't go to all the meetings now, I hate that. But it's just a matter of accepting things. I go whenever I can. But it's been a long and happy association with Meredith.

COOPER: And you're now this year the Early Meredith Alumnae...

MARTIN: I go out as president of that group and we're having our dinner on Friday of commencement this year. And I hope we'll have a good crowd, particularly

of the 50 year-old graduates.

COOPER: Yes, they're planning a big affair.

MARTIN: I talked to Doris yesterday and she has everything all lined up. I said I've had two Latin mottoes that have meant a great deal to me. My old high school one was *montrine sempre libere* - Mountaineers are always free. And the Meredith one, *lux* - Light. And those two mottoes have meant a great deal to me. Because when one goes to high school, when one goes to college, you get a lot of light on a lot of subjects.

COOPER: That's a good way to feel about Meredith then. Meredith was a liberal education in itself. One learns to study. If you had been, if you had not taken exams in high school you learn how to take exams in college. You learn how to write term papers and things. It really is just a good well rounded education and it exposes you to so many things. And I've enjoyed the thinking people that the presidents have brought to the campus. Margaret Mead and _____, he stayed over at the Alumnae House. And then in recent years we've had a prime minister, an ex-prime minister, former president Carter and prime minister of Great Britain. And then years ago Dr. Campbell got a number of the great thinkers to come back in the summer for a funded program there, from all over the country. And there was one from Columbia University that I remember particularly and I did not know he was so famous when I was in school up there or I would have tried to get a class under him. So Dr. Campbell asked us to have dinner with him and he was just plain as an old shoe. Great men usually are.

COOPER: Yeah, that's right.

MARTIN: But you met a lot of people coming and going on the campus at that time.

COOPER: And being where you were in Raleigh you had exposure to lots of other things in Raleigh.

MARTIN: Oh Raleigh is a great place to be. I loved Raleigh, living there. Because when I think back a great deal of my life has been connected with Meredith one way or another, even since I have retired and been up here. I go back whenever I can as I said.

COOPER: Let's end this side with your little antidote about the classroom.

MARTIN: I guess I'm the only person who ever went to Meredith who had to stand in the hall for giggling. I had a class under Miss **Hoagler**, Psychology. And she

wanted me to learn to juggle tennis balls before the class. And I did but I got tickled and I couldn't stop laughing and she says, "Miss Craig if you cannot control yourself please go into the hall." So I did. I came back and I giggled again and the whole class giggled. But anyway, I soon learned to compose myself. But I guess I was the only one who ever had to stand in the hall at Meredith.

COOPER: Well, you still kept your sense of humor all of these years right, so you have laughed a lot since those early days at Meredith. [end of side one.]

MARTIN: Frances Barnhill and I had planned to go to a National Student Federation at the University of Missouri but we had to go by way of Atlanta and Birmingham, by train. When we got off in, it was in Birmingham instead of Montgomery, we had the station manager met us and said, "I have a message from Miss Biggers, Meredith College, who says for Miss Craig and Miss Barnhill to return to Raleigh immediately as there's a flu epidemic in Missouri and she doesn't want you exposed to it." So we had to turn around and go back to Raleigh. There was no space on the train so both of us had to stay in an upper berth at night, but we managed.

COOPER: Oh my goodness.

MARTIN: A lot of funny things happened at Meredith. We had one, an episode, you couldn't dance at Meredith and you couldn't smoke. But the girls couldn't even dance together. And so one time when I was president of the student body they were trying to get dancing, even with girls, on one of the floors. So I had to go to see Dr. Brewer and we had to bring it up to the Trustees to see if we could have dancing by girls on one of the halls. But that did not pass in those days. And in those days I guess some of the others have told about having to wear hats and gloves downtown whenever you went to, whenever you went to town. And I hope somebody mentioned the Old California Fruit store which used to be in existence on Fayetteville Street, not far from the Capitol.

COOPER: No.

MARTIN: That was a gathering place and that was, it was sort of a soda shop and the street car stopped right in front. All the State College boys and the girls got on. This was torn down in the late 40's and Zeno bought four mirrors that lined the wall in the California Fruit Store to go in the four dormitories. Because in those days the girls dressed up for dates. And he wanted them to be sure to see themselves before they went out. I don't know whether they're still there or not but those four big mirrors came from the California Fruit Store. Which was there when my mother was in school.

COOPER: So your mother was a Meredith graduate also?

MARTIN: No. My Aunt was but my mother went three years. One prep year and two she had finished her sophomore year and then my grandfather sent her to Europe so she wouldn't marry my father. But he followed her over there where she and Aunt Essie were supposed to be studying art with a group. And they were married in Florence and then later at Canterbury. And I said I made my Canterbury pilgrimage back there to the little church where they were married, several years ago.

COOPER: Oh how wonderful.

MARTIN: It's just about a block and a half from Canterbury Cathedral but I found the little church. But he had no objection to my father except that he was much older, he had joined the Catholic church and he had an arrested case of tuberculosis which was taboo in that day in time.

COOPER: Is that what caused his death then?

MARTIN: Uh hmm. But I always lived in the house with my grandparents after I was born. And I have thought how much, if people knew as much about it today as, than as they do today, how different my life might have been.

COOPER: Yes.

MARTIN: But I've had a good good happy life.

COOPER: What was your grandfather's trade or profession?

MARTIN: He was a man of many hats He was in banking. He was in farming. He was in leather He brought the first electricity, he built the first light plant and brought the first electricity to Marion, the old Marion Light and Power Company which was later sold to Duke Power Company. So he did a lot of things.

COOPER: So you had an interesting childhood as well.

MARTIN: That's right. And he loved me even though he didn't want my mother to get married. He loved me and he was very, very good to me.

COOPER: Ah, that's great.

MARTIN: I went everywhere with him.

COOPER: Your mother was an only child?

MARTIN: No. My Aunt, Ms. Hubert Poteat, my Aunt Essie.

COOPER: Oh that's right, the two of the.

MARTIN: They were the only two. But my father was an only child so, and my grandmother had met my grandfather when he was in the legislature down in Raleigh. And so they were married and they moved back to Marion.

COOPER: So you had a connection with Raleigh even before you were born right?

MARTIN: That's right, that's right. And I still, and I still have some things, the old Peskin house in Raleigh was closed, was torn down for some of the state buildings there. And I have some wood, in fact that little flower stand over there was part of the den molding that came off and I just had a stand made out of two of those little things, so I could keep that. And I have a bookcase made out of some paneling that came out of my old house. That's up in the mountains though.

COOPER: At Ginger Cape right?

MARTIN: Uh hmm.

COOPER: Maybe you'd like to tell us about your place there?

MARTIN: Well, I've had this little house up on Ginger Cape Mountain for 22 years and I have enjoyed it very much. Ginger Cape acres adjoins Pisgah so it can never become commercial and that's what I like, just the plain country mountains. And it's right at the end of Linville Gorge and it's close to Wiseman's View, which is a view of Linville Gorge. And then Table Rock Mountain you can see in the distance. And when the nights are clear you can see the lights from Hickory to Marlinton to Glen Alpin. And it's, the trees are growing too much but I can't do anything about that. They're all part of the mountain.

COOPER: So you get to go back to your roots to spend your summers?

MARTIN: That's right. It's cooler up there than it is in Marion. That's the reason I picked out a high place rather than, it gets warm down in those mountain towns, at the foot of the mountains. But when you're up on the mountains it's cool up there in the summertime. Cause I remember we could drive, before air conditioning, we could drive 20 minutes and cool off...to the mountains from Marion.

COOPER: Mrs. Martin, I know you've lived in a number of different places and you are just a beautiful adjuster wherever you're living. Would you tell us about going back to Marion and about the family situation there?

MARTIN: My whole family is gone now but I lived, I was born in one house on Morgan Street in Marion and I lived in five different houses on that street. My grandfather cut that street when he came to Marion from Rutherford County in the 1800's. He had a sister who was living not too far away and my, he met my grandmother when she was visiting an Aunt in Marion. She lived down in close to Statesville in Catawba. So they planned to be married and he was going down on the train to be married and then bring her back. But there was a snowstorm and the trains didn't run so he was one day late for his wedding.

But anyway the houses I lived in on Morgan Street, I lived in the house I was born in which was on the other side of the flower garden from my grandfather's house. Since my father was an invalid he and his mother lived there but they wouldn't let me live in the house with him on account of tuberculosis, his having tuberculosis. So I lived with my grandparents and then when he died we continued to live with my grandparents until mother was re-married. Then we moved to a house on the other side of my grandparents. And the old house where I was born was later torn down. And then my mother and her husband, my stepfather Walter Chambers, built a house on the other side of my grandparents. So when Zeno and I were married Zeno had to ask my grandfather for my hand cause he ruled the roost in our family. And he gave me away when I was married. So we lived in a little house on North Garden Street for about three years and then he gave us about five acres down at the end of Morgan Street and we built our house down there at the foot of the mountain. And all that is a development now but this house and the acreage are still in existence and they're still keeping it, the people who live in it now, are still keeping it up. So I'm glad to go back and see things really kept up there.

COOPER: Well, that's great. Okay, you remembered another funny story from Dr. Price. Tell us about that.

MARTIN: Mabel Bagby, Pauline Kitchen, and Margaret Tropp and I lived next door, in the suite next door to Dr. Price and her mother. So we went to call on them one time and we all left our calling cards. And she thought that was hilarious that next door neighbors had left their calling cards. So she came to visit and she left her calling card. But we were good friends all the years and Dr. Price visited me in Marion before I went back to Meredith.

COOPER: I think that's another beautiful part of Meredith, is so many of those early professors became good friends with a lot of the students, right?

MARTIN: That's right. And you maintained that relationship through the years. So many of the old timers are gone now but there's still this summer plans to get together with Mary Bland and Norma Rose and Leslie Syron and Lois Frazier, up in the mountains for a weekend.

COOPER: Oh they're coming to Ginger?

MARTIN: They're coming up to see me and so we'll have a good time. I told Lou Leake that, she's over at Wake Forest, that she could come too if she would sleep on the couch.

COOPER: Well, good. Because she was associated with Meredith at one point.

MARTIN: Yes. She was there as an assistant dean and we danced the Lobster Quadrille in Alice and Wonderland, Lou and I did. And then later Elizabeth Chamblee and I did the same thing, in our red stockings and our red costumes.

COOPER: Do you remember Marion Fiske?

MARTIN: Oh yes I remember. In fact I saw her oh I guess within the last five or six years.

COOPER: Well, I had an interview with her last week and I know you're just one class apart.

MARTIN: Yes. She got sick. She was president of the student government and got sick and that's when Frances Barnhill had to take over. And so I saw her. She was visiting up here and I recognized her after all those years. And she recognized me.

COOPER: Well, and because she has a daughter she comes to Winston-Salem a lot, she has a daughter here.

MARTIN: Yes, yes.

COOPER: And she's written a book on Moyauck. Have you seen that?

MARTIN: Oh no I haven't. I'd love to see it.

COOPER: Yes, well she gave me one of her books and I really was thrilled with it. It

was a mostly pictorial book. It's really nice. And then it tells stories of her memories of when she was a little girl.

MARTIN: Well, see I'm so much older than my sisters and I remember things that they didn't remember about the family and funny little stories and so forth. And so they said write it down and I did. And, but it ended up being more or less my story but I've given it to Zeno now and, but it's sort of divided up into chapters and the Meredith days, I have one whole feature about Meredith days in there.

COOPER: Oh wonderful.

MARTIN: Because so much of the time was connected with Meredith.

COOPER: But Zeno has that in his possession.

MARTIN: He has that yes. I gave him, cause he had more room to keep things and I've made a scrapbook of his father and then one of me with picture and things and then one of himself that I had kept so he has all those records over there, family records.

COOPER: Mrs. Martin I know you've been so busy in recent years seeing a lot of things. Would you tell us a little bit about your travels?

MARTIN: Well, I have enjoyed traveling. I've been to Europe a number of times. I first went in 1932 and took the Grand Tour for nine weeks. That's when we went over on the old Aquitania and traveled by train all over Europe, and went with Dr. Lyons from Chapel Hill, a group of us did. And then I didn't go again until, oh I guess it was 1960. I took the Scandinavian Baltic trip for six weeks. And I had such, I didn't know a soul but I had such a good time I could have turned around and done the whole thing all over again. It was a wonderful trip. We got into Russia right after the U2 incident and it was really scary. This last summer a year ago I was back there and things had certainly changed. But I've traveled to various parts of Europe and then I went to Tokyo and Honk Kong several years ago. I've never been to South America and I've never been to Asia. But this last summer, or this last month I spent two weeks in Spain and that was my third trip to Spain. But it was the first time I'd ever stayed in one spot and then just worked out from there. And at this age that's a good way to do it.

COOPER: That's marvelous. You have a lot to reminisce about I'm sure. Now would you sort of capsule your memories for me now as you did for me a moment ago on the other tape?

MARTIN: Beginning where?

COOPER: Well, in your different capacities at Meredith.

MARTIN: Well, when I was in school I served as president of the junior class. I served on the SG for three years and I was president of the student government, and represented Meredith at lots of places and things where I was sent by the president. And then I was a faculty wife for ten years and during that time I served as president of the Alumnae Association and then as a member of the Raleigh/Wake County Chapter. And then later I served, I taught at Meredith for a number of years. I taught Latin and freshman English. One year I taught down in Florida before I went to Meredith. But that was good preparation, I was at a prep school down there for Miss Johnson's freshman English and I enjoyed it thoroughly. And I had to supervise a lot of term papers down there, this was down in Pinecrest down in Ft. Lauderdale. And then I served as Director of Alumnae Affairs after Miss Grimmer retired after 37 years. I remember Dr. Campbell says, "Mrs. Martin I don't know what you do you will just have to learn." So I tried to learn. I went to Duke, I went to NC State, I went to UNCG to study their programs and how they kept their records. And as I told Jean I just had a new system set up when, then after I left the computers came in so they had to do it all over again.

COOPER: And now since you left that job you have served...

MARTIN: Well, since I'm retired I've served on a number of committees in the Alumnae Association. And then I have been on the Board of Trustees for two times. And then I have been on the Board of Associates and I'm still on the Board of Associates. But that just meets twice a year so that, attending those meetings are not difficult unless something else interferes. But I've always enjoyed every association. And I have known practically all the presidents of Meredith, except the first one, Dr. Blasingame. I knew Dr. Vann, I knew Dr. Brewer, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Heilman and Dr. Williams. But Dr. Blasingame was before my time.

COOPER: And he stayed there such a short time really.

MARTIN: He was there for such a short time.

COOPER: Yes. And you probably knew Mr. Stringfield's daughter.

MARTIN: Oh yes I knew, I remember the Stringfield son also visited in our house as a little girl and some of the others were in school, the sisters were in school with my mother and my aunt. So I heard Meredith from the time I was born.

COOPER: Well, I certainly do appreciate you sharing your thoughts with us today.

MARTIN: Well, I've enjoyed it. It's fun to reminisce because when you get older it's fun to think back to the old days some of the funny things that happened, some of the serious things. And things you haven't thought about on years and years and years. It's been great Jean.

COOPER: Well, I have appreciated you through the years in seeing you in these different roles that you've been playing for Meredith during my time of association with Meredith. I want to tell one thing for this tape that happened a couple of years ago when Meredith was having what they call their Visions Campaign. And they wanted us to have a regional campaign here in Winston-Salem. And since I was serving as the regional director for the Alumnae Association they sort of came to me and asked me if I would serve as the chairperson for this campaign. And I thought, 'Oh well, since I'm still, already so involved with Meredith you know, I'll just go ahead and do this.' Which turned out to be three months of very concentrated effort.

MARTIN: Well, you did a great job.

COOPER: But one of the keys to the whole campaign was that Saturday morning you came to my house with several other people to plan how this campaign would be conducted. And you were just sort of like the torch that set our flames in motion. And your wonderful spirit, your optimism about what we could do and how we could do it. And you just set the pace for that meeting. And I really think that that was the beginning of a very successful campaign. Had you not just gotten us off to such a wonderful start that Saturday morning I doubt that we could have bragged on having one of the best campaigns.

MARTIN: Oh you're just bragging now Jean. You just did a wonderful job with that. We had such a good time at your house and that lovely place out there. I remember it and remember the pond and the ducks and so forth. And I know you're enjoying it these years. Your whole family must be.

COOPER: Well, we are. But I do want to just say thank you for what you have done for Meredith and for the things that I have been involved with your tremendous assistance.

MARTIN: Well, thank you for letting me share my thoughts about Meredith and remember all the things that I have this afternoon. It's been fun.

COOPER: Well, thank you so much. This is the end of our conversation on March 31, 1988.

ROXIE SIMPSON LAYBOURNE
Class of 1932

Today is October 2, 1988. We are here at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., for Roxie Collie Simpson Laybourne, class of 1932 to narrate a tape for an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. I am Jean Batten Cooper, class of '54, the interviewer. This is side one.

COOPER: Roxie, thank you for letting me come here to the Smithsonian this afternoon, in this place to hear about what you have done since the days that you left Meredith, in particular and with your job here at the Smithsonian. Would you share a little bit about your life since you left Meredith?

LAYBOURNE: Well, right now I'm involved with, mainly with identifying feathers, well anything obtaining to a bird I'd say. Whether it's feathers, bones, whole feathers, bits of feathers, and... Because back in 1960 my, I was involved in a bird strike that occurred at Logan International Airport and in that instance there were feathers ingested in the aircraft engine and they were sent to the Smithsonian to be identified. And since it had to be, they were chewed up and had to be done microscopically, I was given the task of the identification. And from then on I was given, whenever bird strikes came in it was my task to identify them. So I, because of the fact that the feathers were chewed up and so much of them, you only had parts of feathers, I tried to begin to work out a way to identify the feathers by the microscopic structure of the down. And I didn't know whether it could be done or not. But I just started in, and Chandler who did the work back in, he did a Ph.D. dissertation in 1916 on the microscopic structure of feathers. But most of his work was on the fenacious part of the feather which is mostly like primaries and then the tail feathers and that was the main part of the feathers he worked with. He didn't work, he did a little bit of work on the down so I took what little bit he had in his dissertation on the down and then just started working with, from there. And as time went along I, the FAA gave me a microscope so I only had, didn't have a comparison scope of course back then so what I'd have to do if I had my unknown, I'd look at it on the scope and make a drawing of what I saw. Then I'd try to figure out what was a possibility or what make might look like what I had. And then I'd go get a known and make a slide of that and check it against my drawing and it was just kind of a trial and error thing. But I finally began to realize the characteristics that distinguished the family *anatady*, which are ducks, geese and swan, and so... Then there were a few other groups that were, stood out more distinct and all. And as time went along why I'd learnt, kept learning. But I always have to go back to repeating because I didn't know whether what, how to evaluate what I'd seen. And even the fact of making slides was a thing that we had to involve.

Well, eventually I did work for the FBI back in those days also. And I decided that the FBI should have their own expertise so one, I guess it was about ten years ago, _____ only agent came to work at the FBI and one of the agents brought me some feathers to identify, brought Douglas Diedrick over to meet me and so I asked Doug if he were interested in feathers. And he said he didn't know. But I said, "Well, if you are give me call and you can come to my skinning class." I teach a class every Tuesday evening on how to prepare scientific specimens so, with what we call study skins or birds. The bird just looks like a real night, a real dead bird. But of course in museum collection you can't handle mounted birds and they're supposed to be, they're too difficult to store and our study skins kept in air tight cases and not exposed to light anymore than when they are just being used.

But even then as time has gone along I'm working with fresh feathers, comparing them with museum specimens. I realize that everything fades and some species fade more rapidly, change color more rapidly than others. And so even that you have to be able to interpret what has happened if your feather doesn't look exactly like the museum specimen. You've got to know how to correct that in your line. So, and you have a piece of a feather and you've got to see it as a whole feather. Then you also have to know, that's why I told Doug he'd have to come to my skinning class, cause he has to learn something about how the feathers on the different parts of the birds vary in shape. And you have to know if you have a piece of a feather you've got to know whether it's a breast or a back or a tail feather, a wing feather, or upper tail cover, or under tail cover, all that or otherwise you can't match it up. Even if you have the right species you'd still have to be able to match it up.

And when you realize that just an old chicken has over 8,000 feathers. A house sparrow over 2,500. So, then you, you got to know something about feather texture. You have to know something about color of feathers. And you ain't just working with the whole feather, you have to know all that. And I've often laughed and said I'd write a key to identifying feathers by washing them. Because some certain species you can tell whether, what the family is by the way they handle when they're doing the washing process.

COOPER: Well, I'm sure your Tuesday night class must be interesting. You're helping Doug become an expert in his work too. But when you began back in 1960, of course you didn't have all of this expertise of somebody who had worked on it like you have worked on it since 1960. Plus, in addition to your own expertise and your own trial and error type of work that you have done, is that the microscopes have been improved upon so much that you also do have a technical expertise that you didn't have back then. You want to sort of name the process that the microscopes have gone through?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I'll have to tell you what Doug said after he decided to come to work with, to learn feathers. Doug said, when he looked at my old AO scope and says, "If she's learned that much on that old scope what can't I learn on my good scopes?" He had a Lights Ortholux and so anyway that had a bearing on I think influencing him to go into feather study. Of course Doug was interested in research anyway. And he was in the microscopic analysis unit of the FBI. So it gave him a little more varied work than just the regular work that he was then in.

COOPER: Okay, so you've gone now to...?

LAYBOURNE: Now I've not only, not only have the Light microscope to work with, and a comparison scope...

COOPER: Is that what you called the skinning?

LAYBOURNE: No, the electron microscopes, I've been working with the scanning electron microscope for over four years now. And that's been a big help in helping me understand the, well the shape of the structures that I consider key to a family. Right now I say that a Barbuile which is the smallest division of the feather and the downy barbuile is the soft, that's the basal part of the, tape a breast feather and you have the soft downy part that's at the base of the feather. And that's the part of the feather that I work with mainly when I, if I don't have a whole feather. If you have a whole feather most of the time, except if it's a passalrings, one of these small birds, why if you just have a few of those you may not still be able to identify it. But most of the time on the non passalrings, which are hawks, owls, chickens, I mean galforms who are grouse and turkeys and that group. And you, if you have the whole feather you know what family you're in so you don't have to go to the microscope. And you just go on color comparison. But if you didn't have the, didn't have access to the collection here at the Smithsonian I wouldn't be able to do my work very well because I work with birds from all over the world. And even if you know the bird in the field, you know the bird as a whole bird, doesn't mean you're able to identify a single feather.

COOPER: You have certainly gotten it down to such fine points and with the scanning electron microscope and all the things that you have today. But before you came to the Smithsonian you were back in North Carolina I understand. You started right back in Raleigh with your work. Is that correct? At the museum there?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I did and I didn't. I went, when I graduated from Meredith at one time I wanted to go into aeronautical engineering but that didn't work out very well because my sophomore year at Meredith they decided that it would

interfere with my work there and I couldn't go to State College to ground school. And so then I just, I was just interested in aviation but I did do some work at the airport, working on aircraft engines and things. Anyway, but by the time I left school. I was always, all my life I've been interested in natural history. And anything that crawled interested me. And so I went to work at North Carolina State Museum to, just to learn more about it. And I was interested in art so working in a museum, a small museum, you had, you could paint, you could sculpt, you had the scientific part learning the habits and about all the different animals. Particularly because, in the museum you worked with reptiles, fish, birds, mammals and even marine forms. So you just learned a whole bit there. But when I was offered a job at the Smithsonian the Bird Division why then I began to concentrate on birds.

COOPER: I think it's really interesting that you were interested in aviation even back when you were a student at Meredith and now that you work with the FAA as a part of your work. I know that you told me that you actually do work for about three agencies. Would you just name those agencies for us?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I work with the Division of Law Enforcement of the Fish and Wildlife Service and my job there is to identify whole birds, parts of birds, skeletal parts, feathers, beaks, talons, anything that pertains to the bird. And that is in illegal and game violations, in commercialization or legal commercialization of migratory birds. And then I not only identify them but if the case goes to court and I am often called upon to appear as an expert witness in these cases.

COOPER: And then I believe with the FAA you help to identify things there. And the military through the Airforce, so you really are involved with the air and the aviation part. And I can see how that was very exciting back in your days at Meredith too because aviation was just in what we would now call the infant stage almost. Wasn't it?

LAYBOURNE: Flying then was a lot more romantic. Now in the big planes it's more like riding a bus. But those days you were in old cockpits and you really got the feel of flying. And that was a lot different in fact.

COOPER: Oh I'm sure it was. And I believe you mentioned to me that in your court work that you do have, when you have to go to court that even something that happened back in your days at Meredith has been advantageous to you there. That you were one of two freshman who was taken into the dramatic club or the Little Theater and you want to tell us about you and the other person?

LAYBOURNE: Mary Lee Register and I were accepted as members of the Little Theater our freshman year and we were very proud to have been. Because as a rule

they didn't accept freshmen. You had to wait to be a sophomore to be accepted. But we were lucky enough to, well I must admit that the way I even got noticed was the first, in the fall they gave a play and I sold more, they said that the freshmen could sell tickets. So I sold so many tickets that they decided they wanted me in their organization.

COOPER: Okay.

LAYBOURNE: So that's when I got my toe in. And then when they gave the play, "She Stoops to Conquer" I tried out for the part of Tony Lumpkin. Because in those days girls had to play men's parts. So I played the part of Tony and some of the students, I went by that name all of my four years, from the fact that I played Tony.

COOPER: How nice. And I believe you told me that from that experience you are able to, you feel like you have more confidence when you are a witness in court, so I knew that... That's really a very good connection. But probably an equally significant or maybe more significant role is what you have played on TV recently in taking this very complicated task that you have here and your expertise in it and reducing it down to something on a child's level. And that you've been on, you have helped to develop several children's programs for TV and for radio. Let's see, would you like to name two or three of those for us?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I was on, the first one was "That's Incredible" and I was real happy that I survived that and came out okay. And then the next one was "321 Contact" which is a program for 8 to 12 year-olds. So, we had a lot of fun. They have a real good film crew. There were five of them in the crew and we really had a good time working together. It took two days to film the show and...

COOPER: And that was called "Stuff" I believe.

LAYBOURNE: It was in the series "Stuff" and my show was feathers and rubber. And the feathers were the last ten minutes of that show. And Ann McLeod the co-producer said when they showed, did a trial run of that show up in one of the schools in New York State, the school kids called me Magnum P.I. And then I've been on National Public Radio. But the show and the Smithsonian Telecommunications Radio Show is my favorite show of all of them. We have such a good time. Carolyn Hopewell was the one that interviewed me. She and I work together real well and have a great time working with the show and doing the tape.

COOPER: Was this the Sherlock Holmes Centennial?

LAYBOURNE: Yeah, that was the Sherlock Holmes Centennial.

COOPER: Okay, the Sherlock Holmes Centennial that was the big thing. And that was just last year?

LAYBOURNE: That was August 16, they aired it the 16th of August of '87.

COOPER: I see. And then you've got another one coming up that hasn't been aired yet.

LAYBOURNE: That's right. That's the television show, it's National Public Television again and it's in the show called "Living with Animals" and it's to be put on satellite the 30th of October. And it's half an hour show but I'm about 5-6 minutes. Or I have about a 5-6 minute part in the show.

COOPER: I'm going to certainly go home and try to find out when my area is going to show this. And I think that this work that you're doing with television now and using your expertise and simplifying it for those who can only understand it in very simple terms, shows how you have adapted to the change through the years. Because when you were at Meredith there was no such thing as television. And yet you've continued your interest in this area and have made a contribution to radio, which was something that was available in your Meredith days.

You mentioned about one advantage that you feel radio has over TV, would you like to share that with us?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I think that radio stimulates the thinking and you, the picture you make if you have good sound, I mean and the programs presented properly then you can put a better picture in your, make a better picture in your mind than you can see on the television screen, in my opinion. Because you're concentrating more on what you're hearing. You're thinking about it instead of just spending your time watching the action. But you have more time to think.

COOPER: I think and in looking back on this aviation and the progress that's been made there and the switch from radio to TV, these both show how our world has changed since your Meredith days. And I think that you realize even more that when you, than you could ever have imagined when you left Meredith how things were going to change. And also in the making of your job you had no idea what was out there when you left Meredith. But perhaps Meredith left you with a confidence that you could ...

LAYBOURNE: Well, I don't know. When I left Meredith I mean, I did more or less, I've

done the same thing I did at Meredith. I just took each day and tried to, and I didn't worry too much about the future. I mean, you work hard one day and the next day you work hard again. Most of it is just applying yourself as you go along. And of course when you're younger you have more areas. I think the worst part of being young is you're interested in so many things. And you feel like you've got to learn so much about everything you are interested in. Well, as you grow older you realize you don't have to learn everything about everything. And you, then you begin to realize if you're going to get anywhere in a field you've got to concentrate a little more and not try to draw in so much. But in youth you need that broad background. Otherwise if you specialize too early you don't have the same perspective. And you need that, or that background material in order to develop a specialty.

COOPER: Okay. I had no idea you were going to say that but I think that that's what we're saying when we say a Liberal Arts undergraduate education, right? And that that's what Meredith gave us.

LAYBOURNE: That's exactly. And that's one reason I went to Meredith, was because I wanted to, I knew Meredith had a good scholastic standard. And if you're going to spend your time you want to go to the best school. And that's what I thought I was going to when I went to Meredith. In fact, I think there were five people, well I know there were five of us from the same school at Meredith. And in my class there were let's see, there were four of us. In a class of 19 four of us were at Meredith.

COOPER: Now where was, what school...

M That was Farmville High School.

COOPER: From Farmville. Okay. Out of 19 students four were...

LAYBOURNE: Out of 19 students, four of us were at Meredith.

COOPER: Okay. Do you recall who those four students were?

LAYBOURNE: Well, there was Rosalee Lang, Lurlene Bass, Nan Moore, and myself. And Nancy Lewis was, I think she was, I believe she was a junior when we went there. And she was from the same school.

COOPER: I see.

LAYBOURNE: But she graduated earlier.

COOPER: Now your major at Meredith was?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I started off with, I was going to do history and Latin. Then when I got, wanted to go into aeronautical engineering I changed to general science and math. Anyway, Mr. Kennedy was one of my math teachers. And Doris Tillery was a math teacher. I had good teachers at Meredith and I enjoyed all my teachers. Dr. Harris, Dr. Johnson, Miss Anna Liza Brewer taught me English one semester there. And we always enjoyed it cause when I was in school I lived, at that time it was called C Dormitory. And Dr. Brewer and his family were on the second floor. We were, the students were on the third floor. Second floor belonged to the president of Meredith and his family. And Miss Ellen Brewer had a great big cat. And we could see her cat walking around the stairs sometimes. And then the first floor was the Dean's office and I think there were teacher's rooms on the first floor. We had, one third floor you always had one teacher. And my freshman year the teacher was Dr. Stuben who taught German. And when she found out I was going to play the part of Tony Lumpkin in "She Stood to Conquer" she told me to come by to see her and she would teach me to laugh. So I went in there and so she asked me to laugh. She said, "I don't have to teach you to laugh. You already know."

COOPER: Oh, how interesting. Did you take German from her?

LAYBOURNE: No I didn't take German.

COOPER: No you didn't take German. She was just going to teach you to laugh?

LAYBOURNE: Yeah just, she just wanted to teach me to laugh. No I took Latin all the way through until my senior year. I took three years of, let's see, guess I took Latin all four years. But anyway, cause I, when I, I didn't take any education courses. So what amounted to, I had enough credits for a minor in English and Latin and Math because I didn't take education courses. Cause I knew that that was one thing I knew I wasn't going to do, was teach. And the rest of it I didn't know cause I was just sort of playing it by ear whatever came up. So then when I went to work at the Museum cause I felt like that would give me a chance to figure out, give me a better idea to do what I wanted to do. At least I knew I wanted to go into natural history. And I wouldn't, so that was, took care of that. Cause I realized that as far as...[end of side one]

COOPER: This is an interview with Roxie Laybourne, class of '32. Roxie, you were telling us on the other side when we were turned off at the end of that side that about how you have to adapt to your time I think, as far as...

LAYBOURNE: Well, circumstances have a lot to do with, I think, in what field you're going into. You go in, in the first place you want to pick something that you're

really interested in. Don't try to do things you're not interested in because if you do you're not going to enjoy your work. And most of your life, most of your hours are spent on your job. And if you're not happy in your job no amount of money can make up for that. So choose something that you're going to be happy in and just get into something, and find you're not happy get out. There are plenty of things in the world everybody can do and you're just bound to find something that you can enjoy. And so that's how I think is one of the prime, prime reasons for selecting something, a job. And so...

COOPER: Well, you went through the process but you certainly, early in your life...

LAYBOURNE: Well, I've enjoyed everything I've done. And so when I reached a point I didn't enjoy it I'd move onto something else. But circumstances have played a lot. You have to be open. You can't have your mind set in one direction and just go hell bent to do this in spite of everything else. Because sometimes things will just go against you so much you're just working against the tide. And there's no point working against the tide if you can go with the tide. So anyway, you take advantage of what opportunities present themselves. Just like the time I decided I wanted to go back to graduate school. And I went over to North Carolina State University and talked with Dr. Z.P. Metcalf in the Zoology Department there, and I asked him, I said, "Dr. Metcalf I'd like to go back to, go on to graduate school." And he said, "Well, it's a good idea." I said, "If an opportunity presents itself and you have the qualifications then you're ready for it." Then I says, "If you don't then the opportunity presents itself and you're just out of luck." So I wanted, decided to go back to graduate school and then right after that I was offered a job at the Smithsonian. So I came here.

COOPER: Okay, so you did get a graduate, you did graduate work at N.C. State?

LAYBOURNE: I did graduate work in Zoology at North Carolina State University.

COOPER: Okay. Now how long did you go to graduate school there?

LAYBOURNE: I guess it was about a couple of years. Because I was going, in fact when I came to Washington I came here on a one year appointment. And Dr. Metcalf told me to go on to George Washington. At State you had to have a minor, if you had a major in zoology you had to have a minor in botany. So I was going to George Washington University to take plant ecology and evolution to go back to State. So when I got here why my, after my year's appointment Dr. Whitmore said he wanted me to stay on another year. So I kept going to George Washington and taking botany courses, and ecology courses is what I've taken. And then eventually I got a permanent job. And so I kept going to G.W. and ended up with a masters in plant ecology. And

it turned out that the work I did there is really the basis for the work I do now. The technique is the same. So I was...

COOPER: So your credits transferred from N.C. State to George Washington?

LAYBOURNE: No, because it was zoology. I didn't transfer any credits from State. I just made up all my botany credits undergraduate that I didn't have and then went on and did my masters.

COOPER: I see, so you did, but you did a couple of years at State then started over.

LAYBOURNE: Yeah I did, I started over again. Because by the time I found out I wasn't going back I had too many credits at G.W. to switch to go into zoology. And I liked the botany anyway and everybody and we had a good great group there. In fact, most of my fellow students, well just about all of my fellow students we've kept together at G.W. And so it...

COOPER: But all of that time you were working full time for the Smithsonian?

LAYBOURNE: Oh yeah, I was working full-time.

COOPER: Well, now I know that in 1980 you were selected as the Distinguished Alumna. I believe that you have also had that distinction at George Washington?

LAYBOURNE: Yes, at George Washington in 1984. GW gives five, as a rule gives five alumni awards each year and I was fortunate to be chosen for one of those awards.

COOPER: Well, I know that Meredith is very proud of what you've done since you left there, and is happy to have you as their Distinguished Alumna. Both for what it means to Meredith and what you've meant in these other institutions as well. Now I know that somewhere along the way in this you began to combine a career with a family. Would you like to sort of inform us about how you managed this?

LAYBOURNE: Well, I don't, I'll tell you, I really don't advise... If you don't have to work and you want to have a family it's best to spend full-time with the family and get that job taken care of. And then go back to your work. But if you have to keep body and soul together while you're raising family why then you do it. But it's not the ideal way. I, there is no way that, I don't care how well, how hard you try or anything, there is no substitute for your mother being there full-time with the children.

COOPER: But you did manage.

LAYBOURNE: I managed. But I'm not, I don't think I did the greatest job in the world. Of course the thing that amazes me about, being a parent is the most difficult task in the world. And it's the one task we go into it with absolutely no preparation. And it's the most important job in the whole world. And I don't know. There are some people who are just natural born parents. They know how to do it, how to do the job right. And it's too bad that we can't have, I don't know it seems...

COOPER: Can't have better preparation for it.

LAYBOURNE: Well, some of us just don't have that natural ability and some people do. And when you have, everybody has natural ability in some field or another. And some have more in being a parent and, I don't know, and some have... Well, it's just like some people are better at music, some are better at painting, some at sculpture. And there are just so many things that, and the whole point is try to find out what you are best in and go that way.

COOPER: Well, I understand that you feel a deficiency there and I think we all feel deficiencies in areas and most of us do feel that we had some deficiency in raising our family, no matter how well we actually did. But I know that your son is with you now in helping to care for a 26 acre farm you have. And that's quite amazing this, that you can be close enough to the Smithsonian to drive back and forth everyday and live on a 26 acre farm.

LAYBOURNE: Well, it's not exactly a farm. We have, well we have I guess about eight acres of pasture. And the rest, most of the rest of it is wooded. And we have a pond. And right now we're in the process of... Well, when we moved out there it was rural and there were only, well we could only see one house from our place at the time. Now it's turned into suburbia. We had to buy two lots above our pond just to protect the pond. And right now we're in the process of trying, Rob's trying to find a contractor to build a fence around these four acres, connecting up with some of the fencing we just put in.

COOPER: Well, I'm sure that must be a challenge. I can have an idea that it is.

LAYBOURNE: He took off this summer just cause somebody has to, when you're contracting work out somebody has got to be there full time to look after it.

COOPER: And when you say this, I realize that you've been managing this on your own now for at least twenty years. Because your husband died, I think you said in 196_?

LAYBOURNE: 66.

COOPER: Okay, so for 22 years actually, you've been managing this on your own right?

LAYBOURNE: Well, Rob's been helping with it. But I can't say, eventually I just sort of, well for the last, that's one reason we got, why things got kind of out of hand. Because I was concentrating on my work and not, here in my research and all, instead of spending as much time... Cause now I work weekends. I work practically all the time here at the Museum cause it takes that time to even begin to keep... Well, I don't keep up with it but I, to even keep from being swamped.

COOPER: Well, I think that must be, I'm sure you appreciate his cooperation and support, as a journalist to take off time to help you with this when he realizes that your work is at such a strategic point and that you have so much going on that he's willing to help you.

LAYBOURNE: Well, the whole thing is he's doing it also for himself because he said all his life, he's trying to make the place look like he pictured it as he grew up, the way he wanted it. And so that's what he's trying to do right now. So anyway, but it's a lot of hard way.

COOPER: I'm sure it is and I'm sure that Manassas, Virginia is fortunate to have you there.

LAYBOURNE: No, they don't know I'm there. I'm not a part of Manassas, I'm still Washington. I've never, that's one place I've never...we've lived outside of Manassas. Up until this past couple of years I didn't even go into Manassas except to have to go to Southern State to buy horse feed.

COOPER: Well, I know you are so busy in Washington. But whether they know you're, whether you go into town or not you're there preserving that little spot of land. And in this area to preserve that much land is quite a challenge and they will eventually appreciate you for it, whether they do, are aware of what you're doing there at the moment or not.

LAYBOURNE: Well, I bought the land cause we, well the land across the road that I wanted, I wanted it for the birds cause I knew eventually everything would be cut down. And it's just about that way cause if I didn't have six acres across the road from us we'd have houses right there. And so at least there'd be, be no less, there'd be three houses there. And then the two lots we bought above the pond that'd be two more houses. Plus I want another fifteen acres then we'll, as long as we can pay the taxes we'll be there.

COOPER: Well, I think that's marvelous. And you mentioned the birds and of course we've talked, your whole life is around birds these days. But by your having this preserve, wildlife preserve sort of there, do you have a lot of birds that do, are attracted and come to your house?

LAYBOURNE: Well, we, the bird population has changed considerably because of the development. Now most of our forest birds are the warblers and a lot of the finches we had are gone because, now we have more doves and crows. And fortunately we don't have too many starlings. They come in the winter but they're not too bad. The grackles come through and they're not too...

COOPER: They're not too good.

LAYBOURNE: And house sparrows, for some unknown reason there are house sparrows in the area but outside of trying to take over my bluebird houses why that's the only time I see the house sparrows. So anyway, but we've been doing a lot of work on the pond and we've got the great blue heron coming by and the kingfishers so that's been nice.

COOPER: Oh how wonderful. Well, and it's my understanding that there are some other efforts are preservation in the Manassas area. Because it is a historic district sort of. There's so much history in that area as well as trying to preserve the wildlife. So maybe between everybody progress will be made there. Not progress in the sense that we have thought of it for the last few years being when a few more buildings or houses were put everywhere.

LAYBOURNE: Well, that was what I was saying, I think that was one of the blessing of Depression. During the Depression they couldn't cut down trees and built houses. So a lot of land went back to the forests. And so that was one of the pluses.

COOPER: Okay, and you mentioned earlier the Depression and that it wasn't as bad as those of us who are living today, when they talk about it really was not as bad as it seemed.

LAYBOURNE: It didn't seem to bother me. I mean it didn't, I went ahead and do more or less what I wanted to do. Of course I didn't worry about, I didn't have to have a lot of money cause I, it was kind of funny, cause back then you could, for a nickel you could ride into Raleigh from Meredith on the bus. And rather than spend a nickel I enjoyed walking so I'd walk into town on Saturdays. And so by the time I walked there and back I already had my afternoon taken care of. And after I left Meredith I bought a bicycle and so I could ride anywhere I wanted to go. So I had, I enjoyed that.

COOPER: So life was exciting for you in spite of what we now look back and call the Big Depression, or the Great Depression.

LAYBOURNE: Well, I never had any, I never had any worry about, I mean I just enjoyed everyday and it didn't matter. I don't, I never looked back and say, 'I wish I were there or I wanted to do that over again.' I don't look at it that way. I just, I keep my happy memories and if something isn't so good I just don't bother about thinking about it. We don't need to carry everything.

COOPER: We talked about your family now but your family back in Farmville during those days, what was your family back in Farmville like?

LAYBOURNE: Well, they left Farmville after my first year at Meredith and moved to Greenville. As far as I know they did okay.

COOPER: Do you have other brothers and sisters?

LAYBOURNE: Well, they're all, then they...most of Wilmington. And all of them finished school. Some of them didn't go to, I mean they finished business school or went to college and a lot of things so, I think that we're pretty lucky as a family.

COOPER: Right.

LAYBOURNE: I was very fortunate that Joe decided to study feathers cause that relieved me from the responsibility of doing the FBI work. And I had, you know then, I'm thinking about right now leaving law enforcement cause Beth Ann Sabo, she's Gilroy now. She's studied feathers with me and she did her masters research under my supervision. And so she's been hired, she was hired as my assistant about two years ago and so they're moving the lab, they built a lab in Oregon and she's moving there. So right now I'd prefer to concentrate on my research and just do my bird strike work and not do the law enforcement stuff. But the people don't want me to, the agents don't want me to give up but anyway I'll see how much they want me to stay.

COOPER: Well, I tell you what, I'm beginning to worry about all the things you're trying to do so I'm glad to know that you do have some help, at least some help there. Because when I read here in the National Wildlife, your office title is that you're an employee of the Division of Law Enforcement of the Fish and Wildlife Service. And that you're a research associate in the Division of Birds at the Smithsonian Institutions' Museum of Natural History here in Washington. And to hear you talk about all of these things that I'm sure are the extra mile in those two official titles, that I know that you do need assistance.

I would like to read here on this tape what Douglas Diedrick, who is the person that you mentioned taking your class and is now an FBI agent who is taking over part of your work. He says, "I still defer to her knowledge. As the teacher she's rough because she expects you to have a dedication similar to hers. She'll apply herself to the nth degree. Doing work for no monetary reward because, as she once told me, 'the more you love your work the less you get paid.'

And another person who was quoted in this article is Steven Clark who is an aeronautical engineer with the Rolls Royce's US Aircraft Engine Division. He says, "She's amazing. I've sent her bits of feather I've taken off engine planes with scotch tape because they were so tiny and fragile. And she always comes up with the pieces."

So you can see when you hear a quote from a person like that that they would not want you to relinquish the work but I know that the field has grown so during these years that you have worked here that it's necessary to have help. But I understand that you still like to keep that official title of an ornithologist and going to keep being a feather detective in doing research on these feathers. So as you, as we sit here in this magnificent building and think about where we are in the heart of our Washington, D.C., the center of our country it seems to me that I'm always awed. Even though I've been to Washington since I was junior in high school, I guess many times. I don't lose my awe for this place and, but I have to say that I had a special opportunity today in being here with you. And the friendly guard who took such pride apparently from his job in being able to identify me when I came in because you had told him I was coming. And he was very friendly and talked with me. And then to come up here with you, with your zest for living and your intense interest in your work, that this has been an inspiration to me. Now, with the little time that we have left on this tape I would like for you to just sort of reminisce anything else that you might want to say about Meredith or what you might want to say to, as how you see the future. Whatever thoughts you have as we end here.

LAYBOURNE: Well, in my four years at Meredith I had a good time. And I had good teachers and I enjoyed them all. And there was Dr. Harris, Dr. Johnson, Miss Anna Liza Brewer, Doris Tillery, Mr. Kennedy, Miss Wallace, all of them. We really had a good time and sometimes I guess they weren't too happy with me. Mr. Blumeier and Dr. Mercer for Religion, I'm afraid that back when I was at Meredith we used to have convicts doing yard work around there. And in those days they wore stripes. Some would have, if they were one class of prisoner, they had stripes going around. If they were another class they went up and down. And if they were trustees they wore the brown suits. But

one day it was raining and I think I was, my dorm room was up on third floor and in those days we didn't, we had stairs and they went outside on a little concrete platform to get out the door to go in from the building. And I ran out on the wet concrete and fell down and skinned both knees on my way to the religion class for Dr. Mercer. And here were all these convicts out there working. So I went to class and told them I fell for fifteen convicts. He excused me from religion class because, not because I fell for the convicts but because I had sore knees. But anyway, I think that anytime in, the field I'm in is a completely new field and I'm hoping that some other students will get interested. I'd like to have, I hope, I have one person that I hope is going, that's working with me on the transmission electron microscope. And I think she's going to get interested in feathers. And with finding out what working with that and what knowledge we have now I'm hoping to find, get a little better understanding of microscopic structures of feathers and find out, and answer some questions. And maybe some day I'll have built up enough background knowledge so that future students won't have to dig as hard as I did. It's like I told Doug Diedrick, he learned as much in one year, that's what I told Doug, as what I learned in twenty. Simply because I can say to Doug, "You see that? You can believe that and take it as a fact and go on from there." Whereas with me I had to establish one fact so that was a slow and time consuming process. So we have, do have a few things nailed down and I think that in future that there'll be a lot more work done on the microscopic structure of feathers and trying to figure out some of the whys. But right now all I can answer, I'm not trying to answer any questions, all I'm trying to do is say what I see. And how I'm using it as a tool, as a tool to help me identify bits of feathers removed from aircraft engines or parts of planes mainly. And also, in FBI work it's a tool to help establish evidence in cases and the same thing too in the Division of Law Enforcement work. If we have to go to the microscope, sometimes we only have just a little bit of down, is all the evidence that's available in a case. And it has to be identified otherwise you can't charge the suspect. Or if it, in some cases you'll vindicate a suspect. Because I remember one time we had this suspect held on suspicion of murder simply because he was wearing a necklace made of a great horned owl foot. And they had found a feather on the floor of the hotel room. It turned out the feather was a chicken feather and had nothing to do with the owl foot feathers on it, on the feathers he had around his neck. So therefore on that, they couldn't hold him on that charge anyway.

COOPER: Yes, well I know that made you feel good that you could help him out in that way too.

Roxie, I hope someday soon to go to the library and find a book, that even though I might not be able to understand it, will be about the research of Roxie Laybourne. And in closing let me ask you Roxie, do you sleep on a

down pillow?

LAYBOURNE: I have down pillows but I don't sleep on any pillow.

COOPER: When I sleep on a down pillow next I'll think of you and your birds.

LAYBOURNE: Well, I hope you sleep well then cause goose down is, of course the outer down is a thistle down but it's hard to come down now. And the goose down is the next best.

COOPER: Good. Thank you so much.



NORMA VIRGINIA ROSE
Class of 1936

This is Tuesday, March 15, 1988. And I am at 119 Montgomery Street in Raleigh, N.C., in the home of Norma Rose, an alumna of Meredith and a professor emeritus. We're going to share through her narration and Jean Cooper is the interviewer.

COOPER: Dr. Rose ,share with us your wonderful experiences and memories and constant involvement with Meredith College.

ROSE: Well, I've been in one way or another a part of Meredith College for most of my life. I came as a student at 16 and then I taught for 46 years. So I have had 48 years of direct experience and my last two years in the continuing education program I've taught two classes each semester since the time I did the continuation education. So I'm better than a 50 year Meredith person. I suppose one of my greatest memories would be of the presidents of Meredith. I have known them all except Blasingame who was the first president and served only one year. I did not attend school or teach under Dr. Vann but he was still living and very much a part of Meredith when I was a student there. And so I knew Dr. Vann personally. And then I have studied under Dr. Brewer and then taught before Dr. Brewer retired. So I was hired by Dr. Brewer and worked with Campbell and Hielman and Weems. So I can identify in some way with almost the whole history of the college.

When I came as a freshman I didn't realize how early I was in the history of the college. The college had moved from downtown to the new campus only six years before I came. But it seemed so well established that I never thought of it as the new place at all. It was nothing but the Administration building and the Dining Room and the four dormitories, were permanent buildings. And then we had what turned out to be almost permanent temporary buildings, the wooden structures that were set up for classrooms and used for so so long.

COOPER: Still there when I went in 1950.

ROSE: Still there, yeah. Well, I think it was in the 50's that the first of the new classroom buildings were built. But I always thought the way the old classroom, the old Arts building died, was so appropriate. There'd been a great deal of talk about 'We will demolish it when this Joyner hall is finished. We will demolish that old building.' And one day it just died. It just sighed and fell over after we had moved to the new building. And there was really a deep sigh when the wind in it knocked it over. But it was a funny way for a building to go down. We all were amused by the fact that it didn't want to

be demolished. It just wanted to die. And it had served it's day.

But when we moved to the new building, I remember the first new building in years on our campus. And I can remember Dr. Maxine Donner who was teaching in the Religion Department at the time, put a poster up in Johnson Hall saying, "Better Good Teaching in Wooden Buildings than Poor Teaching in Marble Halls." And I thought of it so often. I went to Mr., whoever was the business manager, Mr. Martin I guess at the time, and I said to him, 'I think it would be a good idea every year for us to let the freshmen begin their classes down in the old building, and go six weeks down there and then they will appreciate these new buildings.' They wouldn't let us take one piece of old anything from that old building to the new building. Everything had to be brand new. But the girls took care of it beautifully for about two years and then they began to write their histories on the arms, they way they always treat classroom buildings. But I thought at the time you know, if they knew how to appreciate it they would really look after this building. We hadn't had a new building on the campus I guess in, from the 20's to the 50's you see, so that was a long time to wait for a building.

COOPER: Well, Jones Auditorium I think was built just at the time I came there. And that was the beginning.

ROSE: Just before. Well, then we moved into the Joyner, Joyner Hall was the next building after the Auditorium. And they had such, well I don't know who could explain this in terms that are really intelligible, but when they started the construction of Jones, the Auditorium, they drove great pilings in as a foundation work and they hit what I remember being told was maple in the lower reaches of that foundation of that building. And they drive those piles like telephones in, stomp 'em in with great machinery and then they just whoosh and come out of the ground you know, like missiles almost. And there is a, you may remember this from the dormitories, there is a stratum of rock along where we are building on our campus that trains going down on nearby Method will shake sometimes. Did you ever experience that? I remember having a corner cabinet in my room when I was a teacher and lived in the dormitory and the dishes would shake and would rattle sometimes at night would wake me up. And they say it's that sub stratum of rock. And that's what they had hit an area of when they were building Johnson Hall. And I think they had to change the whole construction process. They couldn't get anything to stay down. It would go in the ground, and must've been a spongy substance because they could drive it in and then it would just poof right out.

COOPER: Now this was in Johnson Hall?

ROSE: In Jones, the Auditorium.

COOPER: Yeah, in talking about Johnson Hall though it seems to me that even though there've been lots of changes and additions that still the heart of the campus seems to still just be right there in Johnson Hall.

ROSE: You knew it as after it had been redone. When I was there there were big steps up to the second floor and the ground floor was just like, well it was low ceilinged and the rotunda didn't go all the way up. The rotunda began on the second floor and went up through the dorm. But there was a ceiling at the, all across what is the rotunda now. And the big steps to the college went up into the library so anybody coming to visit the college always turned up in circulation area of the library instead of in a lobby or a receiving room. And there was a very funny structure on the ground floor where the rotunda is now. We used to call it the Fishbowl. It was, the floor was lower than the floor of the halls, with about four steps down. And then, I don't know it was done I suppose for structural purposes. To go deeper right there under that dome, where that dome was going to be. But that was for a while called the senior parlor. But there were glass doors all around that sunken area. And it was like being in a fishbowl if you dated down there. Seniors could date down there but the underclassmen couldn't. And walkways went around it, inside walkways went back and front in there.

COOPER: Okay. That, when you said dating there, that reminds me of, you want to tell us anything about the kind of atmosphere that was there as far as dating and maybe any romances that you, personal romances that you want to talk about.

ROSE: Well, I don't know that there's any story worthwhile from my personal romances but we had two big parlors where the offices of the Dean of Students on the other side of the at hall. They were the Blue Parlor and the Rose Parlor and the Senior Parlor. And there was a faculty administrator in the Chaperone's Parlor down there at all times when students could date. But you could go to the Blue Parlor or the Rose Parlor or seniors could go to the Senior Parlor.

COOPER: Or the Rose Parlor, the Fishbowl.

ROSE: The Fishbowl right. And no music, nothing of that sort, no kind of entertainment except conversation. That was the way we dated in my dating time. We just talked. And you could not leave the campus except in pairs. And freshmen couldn't even do that in pairs without what we used to call official chaperones. There would be about a dozen seniors that were appointed at the beginning of the year as official chaperones. And if a freshman or a sophomore was going out on dates she had to have one of those

girls with her.

COOPER: Now those years that you're talking about right now are?

ROSE: They were the early 30's, early 30's. And then on third floor the East and West wing of Johnson hall were big society halls. And the Astros had one end and the Phi's had the other end and that was where they had the society meetings and social functions. Where we had receptions or anything of that sort, or teas. They were always in the society halls.

COOPER: And which society hall were you a part of?

ROSE: I was an Astro. I was an Astro. We always had initiation, the Phi's had installation. And they were formal and the Astros were very informal. The initiation was always sort of like a Halloween Haunted House down in the tunnel. And you were lead blindfolded through and you ate fish eyes, which were grapes that had been peeled. And did all kinds of things like that. Now the Phi's had a much more formal, they did a candlelight service to install their new members at society day. But societies played a real part in the entertainment in those days. We didn't have cars. Nobody had a car on the campus until the last six weeks of their senior year. You could bring a car from home. Of course, I was a Depression age student and even if the college had allowed gas cars nobody had the money to send a girl off to college and give her a car too. I've never gotten over the amazement of driving onto the campus and seeing the number of cars. I said to somebody just before Christmas, an alumna that was back and she was saying, "I wish you'd look at the cars out here." I said, "I know some of these girls have two cars." There are not as many girls in school as there are cars on the campus these days. But we have of course now so many continuing education people and special students from out in town. Not a large contingent of day students now but, maybe not as many as we had in my day. But so many of these people who come in for one course drive in and drive out. That's part of it but I still can't react to seeing the campus grow to pavement or parking lots. Hate to see it happening, so much of it now had been turned into parking.

COOPER: Well, you have been a part, as an English Professor, of probably the most legendary Department at Meredith. I know you worked with Dr. Johnson for such a long time and Dr. Harris?

ROSE: Dr. Harris.

COOPER: She probably taught you too.

ROSE: Yes. She was my major professor when I was, Dr. Harris was. And I took

work of course with Miss Johnson and then I taught when Miss Johnson was head of the department. Miss Johnson preceded me as head of the department.

COOPER: You must have, you had to stay here a long time to get to be the head of the department, didn't you? How many years did you teach before you did become the head of the department?

ROSE: Oh I'd have to figure it out and I'm no good on dates.

COOPER: Well, that's okay. Do you remember when Dr. Johnson did retire? That's when you...

ROSE: That's when I became Head. I think I was head of the department maybe for about thirteen years. But I couldn't tell you offhand how long I taught before I was head of the department. But I went up the scale from instructor to ...

COOPER: From student to instructor to ...

ROSE: ...to instructor. And the first year I came back to teach I had just been away one year. And so there were students, my little sister class were seniors when I came back to teach.

COOPER: Okay. In that year where were you?

ROSE: I was at Chapel Hill. I did a master's degree over there and then I had done student teaching and had a high school certificate. But I knew I wanted college work. I had a hard time deciding vocationally between kindergarten and college. And I knew I wanted to teach, but my mother was a very gifted kindergarten teacher and taught in the home. So I had been exposed to that four and five year age group all my life. And loved it, just loved it. And I had a hard time and then I said the Lord took care of me. I had the best of two worlds in I taught four and five year-olds in Sunday School for over forty years and I had my college girls also. So I got some of both and they fitted together beautifully for me. I used to tell the girls at the college that I went to Sunday School and got my ego built up enough because anything Miss Norma said was wonderful, anything. They're so open to suggestion and so open in their feelings and everything. And nothing you could do for the college girls satisfied them. They're always griping about whatever you did. So I'd go down there on Sunday and get my ego built up and then go back and teach out there five to six days and then go back on Sunday and get another...

COOPER: Well, that's, oh those kindergartners are really great aren't they?

ROSE: Oh they really are. And I understood four and five year minds. I really could know what they were thinking and why they asked the kind of questions that they asked. I once tried, when my home church had trouble getting somebody for vacation bible school, I took a nine and ten year-old group and I could not do it. And it showed me that there are such differences in the kind of thinking that goes on in a nine and ten year-old and a four and five year-old. Because I got along beautifully with the little ones.

COOPER: And your home church, where is it?

ROSE: Wadesboro, over near Rockingham and Charlotte, between Rockingham and Charlotte.

COOPER: And your church here was?

ROSE: First Baptist.

COOPER: Okay.

ROSE: I went as a student to Pullen Memorial when McNeal Poteat was the pastor there. And I was a great devotee of McNeal Poteat's. He, I guess he did as much for much spiritual growth the years I was at Meredith as anybody has ever done. And on Sunday nights he used to have a poetry reading session where he would take a poem like Tennyson's Enid Arden and he would read it and he had a perfectly beautiful reading voice. To listen to McNeal Poteat read poetry was just my idea of heaven on earth. And then he would, he would sermonize a bit about the poem after he had read the poem to the group. And that was his Sunday night service. And I just ate it up. I just thought it was wonderful. And plus I had all kinds of experiences with him on the campus. He used to come very often when we had daily chapel and I was a student then when we had chapel. Five days a week, not on Saturday. We had classes on Saturday but not chapel. And he did lots of chapel talks and several times did the religious emphasis week series and they were just marvelous. He was a teacher and a poet and a musician. He was a renaissance man kind of person and was very much interested in Meredith, of course. His Aunt Miss Ida Poteat was still teaching there of course, when I was there. I taught with Miss Ida. I mean, she was teaching when I came back to teach.

COOPER: Oh yes. Everywhere I go I hear Miss Ida Poteat among the old ones.

ROSE: She was one of the greats in the Meredith tradition really. She was there from the time it opened until her death. She was still teaching you know, when she

died. I can remember, I lived in the dormitory and used to go for tea down in Miss Ida's room real often. And I can remember once when she took me to the closet in her little sitting room, she had a suite until in the late 40's I would say. There were no students in Vann. They were all faculty and Dr. Brewer and his family lived on the second floor and they had about four suites, one made into a kitchen. And the Home Ec house was down on the first floor and there was a kitchen in one of the suites down there. And then faculty had rooms or suites in the dormitory. And I remember Miss Ida taking me to the closet one day and she had a little loom in there and she had a small _____ and she had a whole baskets of yarn and this that and the other and she says, "All of these are the things I'm going to do when I get old." And she was in her eighties and still teaching. That was the spirit of Miss Ida you know, "When I get old."

COOPER: What sort of, did she have any one particular thing that she was especially good at or as a teacher was she just so good at teaching?

ROSE: Well, she was just a marvelous person. That's what makes a good teacher. You've got to have a good person teaching. And of course art was her area. She was head of the Art Department.

COOPER: But painting, sculpting...

ROSE: She taught painting and she did the general course in art appreciation That was one of the most marvelous courses I had when I was in college because it opened my eyes to oh so many things that I had never seen in this world at all. And she had the Poteat sense of humor you know. She was just witty. And I remember once we had two members of the faculty with the same name. I won't call the name. But one of them was greatly overweight and the other was a little tiny dried up sort of person. And one day Miss Ida, in a faculty meeting, somebody made a remark about Dr. so and so and somebody turned to Miss Ida and says, "Does he mean Mary or Harry? The man or the woman?" She said, "He's talking about the cornstalk not the pumpkin." Well, that was her way you know. And she got by with anything she wanted to do. Miss Ida did it it was all right.

I remember being in Dean Boomhour's office once in March when she came in and slapped down her grades for fall semester. Fall semester ended the last of January. This was March and these were grades. Dean Boomauer had been after her to get her grades in, get her grades in. She walked in the office that day and slapped the papers on the counter and said, "Dean Boomhour here are last semester's grades and this semester's grades and I don't want to hear another word from you about grades this year." And she had brought the

Spring semester in March.

COOPER: She was interested in teaching not grades.

ROSE: Yes she was interested in teaching. And I guess art would be harder to grade than lots of other things. As bad as grading is on any subject I can see that a production that you did, like an oil painting, would be harder to grade even than a theme would be.

COOPER: I'm sure. Back to your mother for a minute, if we might go back a little. I have heard from others about your kindergarten involvement and your love of children and you just said that came from your mother. Would you like to tell me anymore about your mother and the influence that perhaps she played in your life.

ROSE: Well, I had, I had a blessed set of parents. They complemented each other in a remarkable way. My mother was the artistic type. She painted and she played the piano and she was really an artist in dealing with children. I don't think she ever met a child that she couldn't win over with ease. And it was never, her kindergarten was a disciplined kindergarten, a structured kind of kindergarten, but no feeling of repression whatsoever about it. And I can remember her saying more than once, "I want the children to do what I say do because they want to do it, not because they are afraid not to do it." And she had that kind of philosophy about it. And they loved her. She had, she taught I guess kindergarten over fifty years, and had grandchildren of children she started out in kindergarten. And my sister came home to teach with mother in her last years. Mother taught kindergarten the day she died. She taught that day and died that night.

COOPER: And how old was she?

ROSE: She was in her 70's, about 76 at the time of her death. But she was so, she's still known. I was at home this weekend and visiting with two friends whose daughter was back from down in southern, one of the southern states. And she didn't want to do one thing the whole time but reminisce about all the happy times she had in my mother's kindergarten. And this happens again and again. Now last summer the doorbell rang and I went to the door and there was two men, I guess maybe in their forties. And I didn't have any idea who they were and they said, "We just want to come in." And I thought, 'Why that's a funny thing to say.' I didn't recognize them at all. And they said, "We were two kindergartners in your mother's day and we want to see the room where we went to kindergarten. So they came in and looked around and said it didn't look like that in those days.

My father in his way was just as influential. He was scientifically oriented. He was an electrician but didn't work at electrical work. He did inspections for electrical work and that kind of thing for a time. But he was a businessman. But was very much interested in language, in words and that kind of thing. And he saw to it that all four of his children had four years of Latin in high school you know. We were that kind of... And always made things interesting. He would have made a wonderful teacher. He never taught, except he tutored a little bit. But I can remember asking my father once if driving a car was hard to keep the car on the road. And this was a typical, this was a typical way of answering our questions. He said, "Is it hard for you to keep your tricycle on the sidewalk when you ride your tricycle?" I said, "No." he said, "Well, it's not any harder to keep the car on the road and drive the car." He had that turn where he could make you answer your own question. Which is a marvelous teaching technique, it really is.

COOPER: I'm sure he was proud of you.

ROSE: Well, he was interested, yeah, he was interested in encouraging us all the way through when we wanted to go onto graduate school. My sister went to art school, Pennsylvania Academy of Art after she finished at Meredith. And he was always behind us and, "We'll get the money one way or another. We'll borrow it and pay back." And that's what we did. That's what we had to do. My father had three in college at one time, in Depression days. And we couldn't have swung it without loans, which we paid back after we finished. But I think it was good for us because I think we appreciated what got more than some of these people who have it ladled out on a silver spoon.

COOPER: Definitely.

ROSE: We wanted it and there was never any question about whether we went to college. It was understood.

COOPER: Well, now four children, were they...

ROSE: Four children in my family.

COOPER: And...

ROSE: Two brothers and one sister. There were two girls and two boys. [End of side one]

ROSE: The Ides of March.

- COOPER: Would you like, that just reminds me, do you have some poem that you'd like to start out this side with?
- ROSE: Oh I don't know. I don't know whether I'll get through with anything along that line or not. I've got a lot stored up in my mind but...
- COOPER: Well, maybe just a line or two or anything that comes to mind.
- ROSE: Well, I was quoting today in my words class, I was saying that I never really realized how important conjunctions are in sentences. I had a teacher at Meredith that told me, "No sentence is stronger than the conjunctions that you use." And I didn't think she knew what she was talking about, ands and buts and all those just didn't seem like it _____ to me. But there's a passage in Shakespeare's Henry IV Part I where Prince Hal who is sowing his wild oats and having his good times before he takes on full responsibility as a king, where he says, "And when this loose behavior I throw off. And paid the debt I never promised." This was his intention of being a good king when the responsibilities fell upon him. He didn't negotiate and ask to be the king but he was born to it and he was going to live up to, "When this loose behavior I throw off. And paid the debt I never promised." I said what a difference that speech would have had if he had said "If" this loose behavior, instead of "When" this loose behavior. This is the key, it seems to me, to the understanding of the playboy Prince Hal. He knows he's going to bear the king's crown, that "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown". He knew he had to do that. And he was having his good times before that heavy responsibility came. And he had never had any intention of not being a good king. Everybody thought England would go to the dogs when he became king because he was such a wild young man. But deep down inside him he had that kind of feeling and it, Shakespeare puts it in the first act to that play. He's going to show us Prince Hal robbing on the highway of England with a crowd of soundrels. But he wanted us to know that in his interpretation of this historical character here was a young man that knew what he was going to do when he had to. And the choice of that "when" instead of an "if" gives the whole thing away. That one little two letter word could have changed the whole meaning of that famous soliloquy.
- COOPER: So you're teaching two classes in continuing education?
- ROSE: Well, I teach two but I teach different courses in spring and fall. I'm not doing the Shakespeare this spring, I'm doing a course called Literary Laughter which is satire in 18th century literature. We did, last spring I did a course on Samuel Johnson and these older people just loved it. And they got a good taste of 18th century England in just that. So I'm doing one this time, we're doing a number of different authors but looking at verse satire and prose satire

and drama, satirical drama, and essays that are satirical with that, making fun of the foibles and follies of man sort of theme. We're going to begin Gulliver's Travels tomorrow, look at the satire particularly in that piece. Not primarily as a fantastic travel tale but as a satirical picture of England in the 18th century. Almost everything that Swift wanted to make fun of, handle allegorically in Gulliver's travels.

COOPER: Oh, isn't satire a wonderful way to say what you want to say?

ROSE: Well, yeah he says, you know he was a preacher and he said he thought he more often achieved his end through making people laugh at themselves than he did raving against them from the pulpit. A stronger way.

COOPER: I'm sure you've taught all of this material before but you're putting it in a new context.

ROSE: I'm putting it in a new context. I've never tried it in this sort of series before. And of course I have, the satire is just twelve sessions of two hours at a time. So I have to pick and choose and that's been my hardest thing. I want them to do everything that I have enjoyed myself you know. I hate for them to miss anything but you can't do it in twelve sessions.

The little course I'm doing on words, mainly etymology, where words come from and what happens to their meaning and so forth. And we're doing that in 14 one hour sessions. You can't do with that kind of material, you can't stay with it much more than an hour. It's talking about individual words and you fill up pretty full with an hour of investigating that kind of thing. It works better on a shorter session than the others. But both of the sessions, they're never ready to go at the end you know. They always want to ask one more question. These older people, I never had great success with the undergraduates teaching Boswell's Life of Johnson and it was one of my favorite books and I never could really understand why. I've had two or three in a class that would love it and the rest of them bored. And I developed on my own the theory that you had to have lived longer to appreciate Samuel Johnson. And so the first chance I got with this continuing education I taught a course on, just on Samuel Johnson. And they ate it up. Which wore out my theory that the reason young people weren't, they hadn't lived enough, they hadn't experienced enough to take in the kind of wisdom that Samuel Johnson was so full of. I really enjoyed this group last spring because they just, they loved it. They couldn't wait till the next week you know.

COOPER: Now this is a mixed group?

ROSE: It's a mixed group but most of them are college graduates. And some of them

are as old as I am that are just back because they like stimulation. They like somebody to discuss things with. And I have had, this is my fourth session and three out of the four I had one man and he's Robert Lewis who is on our Board of Trustees now. But his mother was an alumnae and his sister was an alumna, Katherine Lewis, is a graduate of Meredith. And Robert is retired. And he came for the Samuel Johnson and both of the Shakespeare courses. This time he's taking a regular three day a week course auditing a religious philosophy, I believe it's a philosophy course, instead of the continuing education.

COOPER: As an advisor, I believe, to the *Alumnae Magazine*, were you...?

ROSE: Editor of the *Alumnae*. I was the one who was the first editor and started that magazine and worked on it, under May Grimmer who was...

COOPER: That's when it was strictly the *Alumnae Magazine* too, right?

ROSE: Right. Nobody else had anything to say about it when I was editor but the alumnae. And I have regretted that it so often turns into just another publication from the college rather than strictly alumnae. I've talked to alumna directors and Carolyn you know, about... I had a classmate that called me from New York City when this one on Dr. Weems came out. You may have to cut that out of the tape. But she wanted to know what had happened to the *Alumnae Magazine*.

COOPER: Well, you know it didn't come out for a while and then the alumnae did start asking for it because they were missing keeping up on it. So I think you can feel that you were a part of a very valuable communication system with the alumnae because...

ROSE: Well, I enjoyed that work. I was a very close friend with Mae Grimmer. She and I lived together when we moved out of the college. You know we both lived out there for a long time. And then I was in an apartment with May until she retired. And we worked together well and I enjoyed that work. As a student I worked on the *Twig* and the *Oak Leaves*. And then I didn't have that kind of experience with my first teaching years and I really was glad to get back into it. It pushed me hard sometimes but I was younger and I could sit up all night two nights in a row and still go the next day. I couldn't do that now, but I could back in those days.

COOPER: Well, I know I for one appreciate it. Because even the years that I was not very active as far as Meredith was concerned it was what kept me in touch you know, when this came and I sort of ...

ROSE: And it's a lovely magazine. I think Carolyn does a good job with it. I just wish she could have a little bit more alumnae focus and not so much institutional advancement. I mean alumnae will advance the college out of their love of it. It's kind of, I got so tired one time with the talk about, "We have to improve our image. We have to improve our image." It was public relations. It was professional public relations. But I remember getting up in a faculty meeting once and saying, "If we put the effort that we're putting on improving our image on improving the college the image takes care of itself. If we've got a first class college we'll have a first class image." But I was just so concerned that we were more concerned with what people out yonder thought about us than we were with what we were really here to do. We were losing our kind of focus.

COOPER: Since you had such a continuing relationship with all of the presidents, essentially, I think there's more been kept of course about the later ones, more been preserved probably. But Dr. Vann seems to be an especially interesting personality and one that of course you have preserved so much for us in the speeches, the talks for alumnae day and so forth that you've done. I'd like for us to put just a little bit on this tape maybe about Dr. Vann, since you have sort of specialized him.

ROSE: Well, my, my great experience with Dr. Vann was the afternoon I spent with him in that interview. Then I saw him repeatedly. My mother came from the part of the state where Dr. Vann was a great Baptist leader. And she and her mother knew Dr. Vann, you know from her childhood she remembered Dr. Vann. And she was always interested in anything, any news I brought of Dr. Vann. But I saw him when I was in school. Primarily on special occasions he would come to the Founder's Day every year and to special occasions, commencement, that kind of thing. And we had a student day Palio in the fall. And in the first Palio Miss Ida Poteat made great big heads, there's some film out there at the college that have these pictures movies, early movies, that have these pictures. And in the great parade that we made from the Hillsborough Street up the main drive, people that had been significant in the history of the college. they were really students dressed in men's clothes and they'd put these great big papier mache heads on. And she was an artist with that kind of thing. You knew who they were. But I remember there was one of Dr. Vann, one of Dr. Brewer, one of Dr. McNeal Poteat. And then these were put away and the next year they were brought out again. They got to be as much as part of the Palio parade you know you know, as the parade itself was. But I can remember taking a picture of Dr. Vann standing alongside the girl who was wearing the Dr. Vann head. They weren't masks, they were great big three dimensional heads. They just dropped over their own heads you know, and paraded. And he thought it was so funny you know. He just laughed at that. They weren't really caricatures they were

portraits done in that medium really. You knew exactly what they were. Look at my little _____, it was a purple finch right there. I sit there and eat my breakfast and they come and eat their breakfast with me right there.

COOPER: Yes. Oh that's marvelous. Isn't it nice to be able to take time for breakfast?

ROSE: Yes, it really is. I read the paper before I go to the college. I still go to the college I guess four out of five days a week. I teach two days a week and then I work in the Library. They've given me a little study out there so I've got a place I can leave my books and things. I find it, particularly with this Words where I want to look in the big dictionaries of the old _____ and so forth. It's convenient just to do my work out there.

COOPER: Well, and I'm sure that makes you discipline your schedule.

ROSE: It does, it really does. I guess I average four days a week, part of the time not all day the way I used to.

COOPER: Well, I know so much of your life has been dedicated to Meredith and then to the church as you say with teaching. Are there any other aspects of your life outside that you'd like to mention?

ROSE: Well, my best friends are my Meredith friends. We were a very close class. I guess because we had to stay on the campus together. We just couldn't go. And I suppose anybody who has lived in a dormitory and made friends that way would agree it's a different quality of friendships than any other friendships. Now I have some friends in Wadesboro that I've know longer, went all the way through grade school and high school with me and I've kept up with them through the years. But it's a different kind of friendship from my college friendships. And my outside life when I was teaching full time, I neglected my family. And I gave usually my summers to making up for that neglect. But my family and my college friends have been my greatest source, besides my Sunday School children and my college girls, the greatest source.

COOPER: Okay, you have here some of your children?

ROSE: My grandchildren.

COOPER: They're all children of students that I taught and sometimes you can see them growing up. Now this, no let's see the first one I had of those children, there was just one of them.

COOPER: I know Suzanne.

ROSE: Suzanne. That was her first child. And now you can see them growing up. There's a third one in that family now and I got a notice at Christmas that she had a third one. Some of them you can follow. Now that was the first one and then this was a much more recent one. But I have one family out in Michigan, he was, the father of that family was a State College basketball player and he came here to play basketball after he was married but went to school, it was a veteran. And his wife who had had three years of college just was one year at Meredith but she finished at Meredith and had a Meredith degree. But, they were Catholics, they are Catholics. And that family grew from one to nine children and almost every Christmas I get a Christmas card with a picture of the children. And every year there'd be one more and one more and one more.

COOPER: Oh my goodness.

ROSE: And finally there were nine children. And about three or four years ago I was here in the summertime about something and happened to be out at the college and they came through. And they had a station wagon and they had eight of the nine children in that station wagon, from Michigan. And when they started filing out it was one of the funniest things you ever saw in your life. It was just like something in a TV comic, situation comedy. Here they came and another one and another one and another one. But I was so glad I happened to be here you know.

COOPER: My, this is really a great, you had filled up one book and had to start on another one.

ROSE: I've got enough to finish that one out. I just haven't put them in the last times. I've enjoyed those through the years. I had them in my office out at the college on my, one of the big cabinets, steel cabinets. And it covered two sides of that cabinet. And one of the maids came in one day and she said, "Are all these really your grandchildren?" And I said, "No I'll have to admit they're all not really my grandchildren."

COOPER: Well, I know this is marvelous. And the marvelous thing about it is these girls when they go away and have these children, knowing that you're going to enjoy their pictures when they send them to you.

ROSE: Right. Well, I certainly have. I certainly have enjoyed them through the years. A lot of those children I know too, you know. They bring them back. There's a little one from over here at Louisburg that comes about twice a year. And she knows all about that I was her Mama's teacher. She's just

kindergarten age now.

COOPER: Well, I can see where this ties in with your interest in the kindergarten children.

ROSE: And the college, and the college girls.

COOPER: Yes. Well, all, Suzanne with her Raggedy Ann and her Raggedy Andy and her own Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy.

ROSE: Pam Brewer. Did you, you didn't know Pam? She was Pamela Faison.

COOPER: Pamela Faison Brewer?

ROSE: Just known her as an alumna?

COOPER: Yes that's all.

ROSE: Well, I had a note yesterday about her third child.

COOPER: She was at the college recently with the third child in a little...

ROSE: Oh, uh huh. I haven't seen them but I will I guess.

COOPER: Oh, and I see here Virginia Highfill with a little Japanese girl.

ROSE: Japanese girl, yeah. That was down at Sunday School. The little Japanese girl was in my Sunday School class and Virginia visited us there. I had an interesting experience with a Japanese woman that took freshman English out at college. She wasn't working toward a degree but she thought she was ready for a composition course. And she took my freshman English with me and she brought her little boy who was three at the time. And my classroom was right across from my office and she would leave that little three year-old on the floor in my classroom while she went to class across the hall. And there was never any problem at all He would bring his crayons or I had a few toys out there that he would play with. One day we came in after class was over and Petaro had gone to sleep on the hard floor, just worn himself out playing.

But what I was going to tell you about was he had gotten to be very fond of me, opened up and was glad to see me and so forth. And she knew that I was teaching at First Baptist, the children. And she asked me if Petaro could come to my Sunday School. So he started coming and before they left here she had joined the church. Her husband had joined the church. And all three of the

children were coming to it. And it all started through that little three year-old.

COOPER: Isn't that nice.

ROSE: And their contact at the college. And when they went back, Virginia Highfill knew them, about 'em you know and knew 'em after they joined the church. And when they went back they were in contact with Virginia and the church in Tokyo. So she knew them. This was another family that she had brought, had known over there. They were Christians before they came here. But this family were not Christians when they came. And they kept it up after they got back to Japan. I had had letters from the people in the church that they joined over there.

COOPER: Well, that's marvelous and that's one of the things about Meredith alumnae, which I'm sure is not unique but, how we do keep up with each other and stories go back and forth. Because Virginia Highfill is the Deacon in my church. And so she and I do things. She gets the Japanese speaking people in the city before I do, of course, through the language contact. But then since my husband is in medicine, many of them are at the hospital, and so I will help her in doing something for the Japanese. And she really does a lot.

ROSE: Well, it's amazing. You know you never know where that influence is going to be felt. But the last year I taught, two years ago, when I came back in the fall of my last year a strange man appeared at my office door late one afternoon and he said, "Is this Dr. Norma Rose?" And I said, "Yes I am." I had no idea who he was. Well, I was in Japan this summer and I can't even remember the name of the woman, but this was a young girl that I taught at Meredith 25 years ago and I never heard from her. Never had any contact with her after she went back to Japan. And he had a beautiful hand painted picture that when, he was in contact with them in some business deal that summer, and when she found out that he was from Raleigh and was coming back to Raleigh [he asked her] to bring me that picture, and tell me how much what I had done had meant to her through the years. And it had been at least 25 years since she was here.

COOPER: This wasn't Noviko _____?

ROSE: No, it wasn't Noviko, I knew Noviko way off. I could drag up the name but right off hand it doesn't come to me.

COOPER: Well, that's marvelous.

ROSE: But it's amazing and I, through the years I have been convinced that if you do the best you can with them, they may resent it at the time, but in due time,

give 'em time to get a perspective on it, and they're very appreciative of what Meredith did for them. They fight it tooth and nail while it's going on. I was so amused. I have a young nephew. His last year of college he was at the University of Connecticut. He spent spring holidays down here with me for a week so he could inhabit the Meredith campus. And he had the time of his life you know, and the dining room where the girls and everyone, but he came in giggling one night and said, "Well, guess what I heard tonight." And I said, "No telling." But he'd go around the campus and ask, "Have you ever had Dr. Norma Rose for a teacher? Well, what did you think about her?" Then he'd come back and report to me. He said, "There was this girl in the library tonight I was talking to. And I asked if she'd ever been in one of your classes. She said, 'Yes, I'm very glad to have had Dr. Rose.' And I said, "Well, at least I taught her how to use the past perfect tense alright, didn't I?" To have had Dr. Rose. But I thought well that summed it up you know. Most of them resent it when it's happening but appreciate it after they get perspective.

COOPER: We're coming close to the end of this tape and I think that's a nice thing that you were telling me. Can you think of any other instances like that that you want to tell about before we finish our tape?

ROSE: Well, as I told my word study class today, just pull it out of the blue. My mind goes blank. Somebody called me last week and wanted to know if I knew an alumna that would do so and so and I couldn't think of an alumna. And I know alumna who could do that but I couldn't name an alumna. But it, my mind just doesn't work that way. I have to come up on it and go through the steps to arrive at it.

COOPER: Yes, you're still right in that you need that little piece of paper to remember.

ROSE: Right, right. Asking for a poem and I couldn't give it to you on the spur of the moment. And I quote poetry all the time. It doesn't come when you want it to some of the time.

COOPER: That's the consolation to some of us I think that the others feel that same way so.

ROSE: Right, right. Well, I hope I didn't spoil your tape.

COOPER: Oh no, no.

ROSE: Pulling it out over there and knocking it off the table.

COOPER: Well, in the last two years as I have gone around to the different chapters I constantly hear very complimentary remarks from the English Department,

and your being one of the chief of those. So I've come to a new appreciation of what you have meant to Meredith. And I appreciate your letting me come and take these memories for the archives.

ROSE: Well, I've enjoyed it. I always enjoy talking about Meredith. I'm going twice in April, once to Columbia, S.C., for the Columbia Chapter. And we'll do an all day on Shakespeare. They're going to read some plays before I get there. We're going to have two sessions with a luncheon in between. And then I'm going up to Richmond the following week or the week before for a Richmond chapter of alumnae.



FANNIE MEMORY FARMER MITCHELL
Class of 1944

Today is October 27, 1988. I am here with Dr. Fannie Memory Farmer Mitchell, class of 1944, to do this tape as part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. We are at 2431 Midway Drive, on this beautiful autumn day.

COOPER: Memory, thank you for letting me come here for you to share some of your memories for the Meredith College Library Archives. I know that you have many, many connections both with Meredith College and Wake Forest University, so maybe you'd like to begin by sharing some of those memories with us this morning.

MITCHELL: I grew up hearing about Meredith College. As a matter of fact I can never remember not hearing about Meredith because from the time I was a child Meredith College was a topic of conversation at many meals in our home. My grandfather, Livingston Johnson, had been a long time trustee and later my mother, Foy Johnson Farmer, was on the Board of Trustees. She served for many years. Grandfather was editor of the Biblical Recorder and so he kept in touch with all the denominational schools and what was going on in them. His wife was Mary Francis Memory and I was named for her, named Fannie Memory, for her. Grandfather was one of my favorite people when I was a child. He would take us to a little store around the corner when you could get a sucker with a ball of candy at each end, for a penny. And he would, we lived not far from the railroad that goes past, or through, the North Carolina State University campus today. And we could go up to the bridge and watch when Grandfather would go out of town, he would come out to the back of the train and wave to us while we were on the bridge. He would also read the Sunday funnies to us and Grandmother would come and try to get him to stop so he could take his nap. She was sort of a stern individual and my memories of her are not nearly so gratifying as those of Grandfather. But anyway, to get back to the family, Grandmother and Grandfather had four children. One was Dr. Wingate M. Johnson who was affiliated with the Bowman Gray School of Medicine and was head of the Private Diagnostic Clinic for many, many years. He was named for the Wingate who had been president of Wake Forest University and one of our twin sons has Wingate as a middle name. He was named for my uncle Wingate. Then they had a daughter who was my mother, Forrie Johnson, who was married first to Carter Willingham and lived in Japan and he was a missionary there. And after his death she later married my father. Then they had a daughter Frances who married Egbert Johnson who was a Baptist minister, and their youngest child was Mary Lynch Johnson who was on the faculty of Meredith for over 50 years. A cousin of theirs, a first cousin, was Jasper Memory who was

Alumnae Secretary and taught in the Department of Education at Wake Forest for years and years. And another cousin was Norris Johnson who was the first Dean of Women at Wake Forest. So I have had many ties with Meredith and Wake Forest through the years.

COOPER: You surely have. I know that your memory goes back to beyond what you can remember because of all of this family influence. And we'll sort of jump ahead maybe, I guess I can't ask you why you decided to come to Meredith because that was probably already decided for you, wasn't it?

MITCHELL: Yeah, I never had any choice. My father always said that if I, if he paid the bills I was going to Meredith. If I paid the bills I could go anywhere I chose, so I had no alternative. He died when I was fourteen but mother continued that same philosophy so I had no selection so far as I was concerned.

COOPER: But you don't regret that's the way it is today.

MITCHELL: No, I'm glad I did go to Meredith.

COOPER: Well, you mentioned that your father died at age fourteen. I believe though, a very influential person as far as Meredith was concerned, was either in your house at that time or came to your house at that time, Dr. Mary Lynch?

MITCHELL: Well, she had a room at our house after her parents died, though she lived on the campus. Back in my day at Meredith many of the faculty lived in the dormitory, they would have a suite of rooms and this was before the student population exploded and so she had a suite of rooms at Meredith and ate in the dining hall just as many of the other faculty members did. But she always had a room in our house so that Christmas and vacations and so on, she had a home and her home was in our home.

COOPER: And that was right here in Raleigh?

MITCHELL: Yes, we, well for a while we lived at Millbrook which is now in the city limits but at that time was out in the country. Course my father who was editor of the Biblical Recorder preached on the side out at Millbrook and we lived out there for several years and the moved back into Raleigh. Though I was born in Raleigh, but she had a room in our house wherever we were.

COOPER: Okay, and then did that mean when you went to Meredith you could feel free to use her suite as far as she, or was she very particular not to let you exercise that privilege?

MITCHELL: Well, I never took advantage of that. When I was in high school mother and

I used to drive in sometimes and go see her in her suite. And, of course I was there many times but while I was a student I was terrified of her. She just scared the life out of me because I knew that if I did anything wrong I would be an example for the class even if everybody else did the same thing wrong. And if I happened to do something right it was no more than I should have done. She wanted to be sure no one thought she was showing any favoritism. And she really did just scare me to death and so I steered clear of her as much as I could.

COOPER: Well, she scared me too when I studied sophomore English with her. Oh goodness. Well, just thinking in general about your Meredith experience once you were there and part of the student body then, what are some of your fond memories of Meredith?

MITCHELL: Well, I think the teacher who really influenced me most was Dr. Alice Keith and I majored in history because of her. And, of course as my career developed and I spent most of my working life in the field of history, I always felt that I owed her a great debt of gratitude. She was the person who always encouraged her students to achieve to do the best they could and she made us feel we could do anything we wanted to do. And she always was so meticulous in reading all those long term papers and test papers and she would write detailed comments on the side and we didn't have little true and false and fill-in-the-blanks questions. They were long discussion answers and she, I felt that those courses I had under her were great preparation for law school because there you don't have little fill-in-the-blank questions either. And she had, I really was devoted to her and greatly influenced by her. I think there were other teachers to that I felt indebted to. Dr. Helen Price was a person I had known all my life. I had known Dr. Julia Harris. I never had her as a teacher because she was another one I was scared to have. She, I had known her all my life, and Miss Ellen Brewer, I didn't have her, but there were people I had known always because of the peculiar situation in which I grew up, which our families were friends with all these people.

COOPER: Okay, we'll probably come back to Meredith but right now you mentioned law school and so let's proceed here for a minute as to what happened to you after your Meredith days.

MITCHELL: Straight from Meredith, and I was twenty when I graduated cause back then we had eleven years of high school and I had skipped part of the second grade cause this stemmed from a peculiarity in the Raleigh system which permitted you to begin in the fall or the spring depending on when your birthday came. Anyway when we moved to Millbrook I had half the sixth grade so I either had to repeat it or skip it because the county system didn't have that system. So I went on and skipped it and I was twenty when I graduated and I went

straight into law school and went summers and winters and finished when I was twenty-two which was ridiculous as I look back on it. I would have done better to have been a little more mature. But anyway, I was saying all this because I went straight from Meredith to Cornell University Law School and I think the fact that I survived there spoke very well for the educational background I had and the training I had at Meredith. I was at Cornell one full year, one calendar year, and then I transferred to Chapel Hill and finished at Carolina.

COOPER: And I believe that you sort of felt that maybe it would be a good thing to be back in North Carolina to finish your law school because that's where you intended to be.

MITCHELL: Well, to take the bar exam, yes.

COOPER: I think that you certainly were mature, probably, in seeing it from that perspective and doing that. So after Law School, then what happened?

MITCHELL: My first job was at the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill. A Mr. Albert Coats had been one of my professors at Chapel Hill and he offered me a job and I went to work there to do legal research but I ended up running the research staff and doing all kinds of thing, clipping newspapers. I did legal research too but the staff was very small and I had done a lot of things. And he wanted me either to study library science and be the law librarian or take a secretarial course and be some sort of administrative secretary, something I didn't want to do either one of them. So I didn't stay very long. I was very unhappy there. And I worked for, I started working then on my Masters in History, in Chapel Hill. And before I finished I went to work for, in a Raleigh law office, and worked there for a short time. The idea there again was I was going to start out doing secretarial work and then some legal work and then it was going to grow, and he would get another secretary and I would do all the legal work, but I could see it wasn't working out that way and so I went back and finished my Masters. And then I taught at Meredith a year. Sarah Lemmon was on leave to finish her doctorate and Dr. Wallace asked me to come and teach in her place that year and I did. And I learned then that I was not a very good teacher and didn't want to teach. And then the next job I had was, lasted four years and I went to work for the State Board of Public Welfare. Dr. Ellen Winston had taught at Meredith too and taught sociology there. She called me and asked me to be her administrative assistant. I did this and I learned a lot in that job and during that time I was the hearing officer and held public assistance hearings. I traveled all over the state, this was about a fourth of the time, and I would go to welfare departments and listen to appeals where public assistance had been cut or people had applied and been denied welfare benefits or had other problems that entitled them to

appeal. I was the hearing officer and my legal background served me well in doing that.

COOPER: You sort of felt you were really where the action was when you were doing that.

MITCHELL: That's right. And then from there I went to Cabarrus County and set up a Domestic Relations Court. This was a new court for the county. This was before the days of the uniform system of courts and each county had it's own local court. And I had jurisdiction over juvenile cases, assaults within the family, non support cases, some custody cases, school attendance matters, and so on. And I got the court established and it was successful and it was pretty interesting at first but after a while it got very monotonous, when you'd hear people come in and tell you about their problems and before they said a word you would anticipate what they were going to say. And from there I came back to Raleigh and went to work for what was then the Department of Archives of History, a Division of the Department of Cultural Resources. I stayed there 26 1/2 years.

COOPER: Goodness. When we talk about archives for Meredith, compared to your archives that you worked in, I'm sure this is not even comparable. But you can appreciate what we are looking toward trying to put this oral history in the archives. So, do you want to tell us a little bit about what your work in the Archives was. I know that once when I was down at the beach I picked up this book because I always liked to browse through books when I'm around and I saw your name on the list in one particular book about your work. Do you want to tell us more about what you did there?

MITCHELL: I began there in the state records program as I had responsibilities for the State Records Center and had a staff of people who did records management studies in agencies of state government, in microfilm, with people who did that kind of work. After five and a half years when D.L. Corbett, who had been head of the publications section, retired, I was promoted to this position and I thought that was pretty good to be a woman who got a man's job. And that was the job I held until the time I retired. Of course the title changed and so on, but in that work I had a staff of editorial people and clerical people and I, myself, edited the papers of visual messages and papers of the governments of North Carolina. Each administration was represented by a volume, a big fat volume, and these were published and I edited the papers of Governor Sanford through the first term of Governor Hunt. And this was interesting because I got to know these people and knew a lot about what was going on in state government. I was also editor of the North Carolina Historical Review though I had an editorial assistant who did the bulk of the work on that. And then I would be responsible for the publication of documentary

volumes of prominent North Carolinians of the past and pamphlets for school children and miscellaneous publications such as historical maps, and so on.

COOPER: That sounds very exciting. You mentioned that you did take over a position that had been formally held by a male. So that was probably one of the first in the Department of Archives there. You also were one of the first, among the early ones, who went to law school from Meredith. Right?

MITCHELL: So far as I know. I don't know whether, I think there was an attorney in Durham who was ahead of me, but for the moment I can't think of her name. Then of course later, people like Susanne Reynolds who are now teachers at Wake Forest, that come to mind.

COOPER: But there are very few attorneys so far as you know?

MITCHELL: So far as I know I was the first judge of a domestic relations court, first woman judge of a domestic relations court. Now, there had been judges of juvenile courts, but the domestic relations court had wider jurisdiction than just juvenile cases.

COOPER: Can you look back on your Meredith days, is there any activity that, or course that you took that you think maybe helped you lean toward, other than the history major, but anything that helped you when it came to the courts. Anything in leadership that you did at Meredith?

MITCHELL: Well, I don't know whether anything, I was active in a number of things at Meredith. I was in several of the clubs and then I was president of Silver Shield and I was Editor of the Twig and so I did extra-curricular things there, which, you know are good background for whatever you do, but I think the chief thing was that I just felt inspired to move ahead. And it never occurred to me that I couldn't do all these things because I was a woman. And I think that was one of the things about Meredith. Back in those days nobody fretted about all this business about asserting yourself and proving yourself and finding yourself and all that. I mean I don't think I've ever found myself yet. I just went ahead and went to work and never dwelled on those things. But it was not only Meredith, but growing up in a family that lead me to think I could do whatever I wanted to do and I think this was a great advantage, being in a literate family and a family that just expected you to do the best you could. It didn't matter what sex you were.

COOPER: That's great. And I believe there is another graduate from your class who also became a first among women leaders in particular professions. And that was Betty Miller.

MITCHELL: She was an ordained minister, ordained Baptist minister.

COOPER: And I believe. . .

MITCHELL: And we had a doctor in our class too, [Adis Branch]. She has died now. She had cancer several years ago.

COOPER: Okay, so produced a minister, a lawyer and a doctor from your class of, how many? Do you remember?

MITCHELL: I think there was about 89, 90, something like that.

COOPER: Do you recall any other unusual professions from the graduates of your class?

MITCHELL: Well, [Teddy Carndo] worked with the state Laboratory of Hygiene and she was a section head there, as I don't know what, or maybe that was a section of the Department of the Board of Health. I don't know, but she had a responsible job there. I just, right off hand, I can't think of any others who did things, there might have been several who went into teaching and one worked with the Girl Scouts for a while. But you know, I don't think of anything, some did social work and went onto graduate school. Virginia Maynard I remember went to graduate school in social work.

COOPER: Well, you mentioned the Silver Shield. That certainly was, speaks highly of what you did academically at Meredith, that's for sure. You have continued your interested in Meredith and have served Meredith in lots of ways since your campus days there. And, perhaps your Silver Shield involvement might in some ways correlate in distinction with your distinguished alumna award. I know that's perhaps the highest alumna award that can be made and you do have this distinction.

MITCHELL: I appreciated that very much. It was quite a surprise.

COOPER: Well, I know that that's due to what you have done outside of Meredith and what you, I'm sure through the years contributed to Meredith. But, that did not stop you in thinking that you had fulfilled your relationship with Meredith because you're still busy with Meredith in the 1980's. Tell us a couple of things that you have done with Meredith directly in the '80's.

MITCHELL: Well, I was president of the Alumnae Association from 1982 to 1984 and now I'm on the New Visions Committee, and I am Chairman of the Awards Committee, and I'm Class Agent, Virginia McMillan and I, Virginia Maynard McMillan now, are both Class Agents. And I have just agreed to be on

something Dr. Williams is setting up about the hundredth anniversary and Jean Jackson is Chairman, but I can't remember what it's going to be.

COOPER: Is it Centennial Commission?

MITCHELL: Steering Committee for it or something. Anyway, I have agreed to do that. And I made candy for the phone-a-thon this year.

COOPER: Well, I believe that since you "retired" from the Department of Archives they made you almost a full time employee volunteer.

MITCHELL: I think I'm going to resign from something's, so Virginia and I, we're going to resign from being Class Agents we've done it so long.

COOPER: I know that when I had the responsibility of the Alumnae Association, I was most grateful for your work on the New Visions Committee and the committee which preceded the New Visions Committee as we evaluated how we, the Alumnae, felt as far as the graduate school including men. And I know that that was a very, very time-consuming committee that you were on, but a most strategic place.

MITCHELL: My husband even went out and helped stuff those questionnaires those we sent out. It took a whole day to do that.

COOPER: Oh my. And that all had to be done so quickly, and you were especially appreciative of his help then I'm sure. Tell us a little bit about your two years as Alumnae Association president. I know that you probably want to tell us something about your escapades with Cleo.

MITCHELL: I tell you Cleo is one of the hardest workers I have ever known in my life and she works everybody else too. We traveled a lot and we'd go and stop and visit alumnae along the way, those who were housebound or older people who couldn't get back to the College. And then we would go to a meeting and then we'd get back to the motel, or either drive back till all hours of the night getting back to Raleigh so she could start in early the next morning. And Cleo would still be working on those contact reports that she did after we'd get to bed. I'd fall asleep and Cleo'd still be working. But it was a very rewarding experience and it was interesting to travel around and meet alumnae from different parts of the state and I enjoyed it very much. But I'm glad it's over now.

COOPER: Yes, that's the way I feel too. And, because I didn't travel as much as you did because I was not that convenient to Cleo's office, but I did do enough. And neither one of our husbands divorced us during that two years.

MITCHELL: Well, my husband is very supportive of Meredith. He's been active in the Friends of the Library organization. He held offices in that and he's all sold on Meredith.

COOPER: Well, that's great. Since we're talking about your husband let's just continue that. Tell us a little bit about how, about what his career was and how you got together.

MITCHELL: Well, he was born in Ohio, lived most of his life in California. Went to Beverly Hills High School which I think is sort of funny. Then he went to Stanford for his undergraduate and Masters degrees in History. Then to Columbia where he got his Ph.D. in History. He worked most of his life in records management. Started with the National Archives, and he came to North Carolina after having lived in California for a long period of his work there. He finally ended up in North Carolina with North Carolina Division of Archives and History. And we had met in 1959 at the Society of American Archivists meeting in Philadelphia, but he has no recollection of that meeting. And it was actually in 1961 when he came back to North Carolina that we really got acquainted. But it was not until the fall of '63 that we were married. So we have had a great many of the same interests because of our backgrounds and working in the field of history.

COOPER: Did you ride to work together for that . . .

MITCHELL: Oh we did a lot of the times and toward the last few years I began riding a bicycle to work. We had staggered, began having flex time, so we could stagger our hours. I worked from 7:30 am to 4:30 PM. And he worked from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. And this, I'd ride my bicycle and have time to get supper started before he'd come home. But, we did ride together for many years and we'd come home together at lunch, particularly when our boys were small, we'd come home together every day at lunch and we had a woman who stayed here with them and so this enabled us to see them at lunchtime.

COOPER: Gosh, I didn't realize you were that close that you could do that. Were you living here then?

MITCHELL: Oh yes, it takes about ten minutes to get downtown. About ten or twelve minutes, just Downtown Boulevard, it's not very far.

COOPER: Well, you mentioned the boys. Tell us about the boys.

MITCHELL: Well, when I was 41 years-old and Mitch was a week short of being 49, we had twin sons. And they are now 23 years-old, they'll be 24 in March. One

went to Wake Forest, David went to Wake Forest. [end of side one.]

COOPER: This is side two of a tape being narrated by Dr. Fannie Memory Farmer Mitchell, class of 1944, as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. When our tape ended on the other side, Fannie Memory, we were talking about those two young men who came into your life at a sort of unusually late date. I can remember when they were a little bit younger, you talking about the hassle it was to have two young men in the house. But, I know that now you tell me they're bringing you a lot of joy as they have grown older and are young men now. And you mentioned that they were living in an apartment together, but they're not doing the same kind of work, are they?

MITCHELL: No, one majored in landscape design, or design horticulture at State and he is working as a landscape designer. And the other one is uhm, majored in speech and communications at Wake Forest and now he is with an employment agency, but he is a temp, he finds industrial jobs for temporary workers. And, he is also working at this, James works at Logan's which is a garden center, and Dave is working out there now on Saturday, so as to make car payments for his car died and he didn't have enough money unless he worked extra.

COOPER: Okay. But, did you ever get them to come home and mow the lawn again after?

MITCHELL: David mows the lawn for us, yes, and James re-seeded it not too long ago, and they clean the gutters and, you know, it's helpful when we need them.

COOPER: It's really nice to have them on their own but when you need them they can come back.

MITCHELL: Right, we've turned David's room into a study for me and that was nice.

COOPER: Oh how wonderful. Well, since you're spending more time at home now I know you enjoy having a place to keep all of your things because you're involved in so many things.

MITCHELL: I still do some editing on the side, just freelance editing. I don't do as much as I was doing because I decided I just wanted to work part-time because I wanted to do what I wanted to do.

COOPER: Well, you said time to do, I know with all the things you're doing for Meredith, you are doing some other things together than Meredith too I'm sure so maybe you'd like to share a little bit of that from some other aspects

of your life.

MITCHELL: Well, I'm involved with Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. I have been very active there for years and years and years and right now I'm chairman of the area Ministry Committee which, our church has members from all over Raleigh and as far as Smithfield and Clayton and surrounding communities and so we have the church divided into zip codes, area zip codes. And there is a person in charge of each who is available to respond to need in case of sickness or death, what have you, and I'm the overall chairman of that now. Then, I'm the Mission Study Chairman for the _____ now. They're the biggest thing I'm doing right at the moment.

COOPER: Well, you certainly make contributions in lots of areas and you can make a valuable contribution because you continue to keep yourself updated or renewed or whatever term you want to use, enriched. Tell us about one of your recent enrichment programs.

MITCHELL: Well, my husband and I are just back from Newfoundland where we went to an elder hostel course on the Viking settlement at Lansing Meadows at the northern tip of Newfoundland. And on Sir Wilfrid Grenville who was a British medical missionary who worked with fisherman in Labrador and Newfoundland earlier in this century. This course was fascinating with half Canadians and half Americans, forty-seven people attended. We drove a total of 4,857 miles going up through New England and over to Nova Scotia and then took a ferry over to Newfoundland. Then we came back by Quebec. That was a very interesting experience. Last spring we went to Scandinavia and that's how we got so interesting in Vikings because we had seen the York Viking Center in York, England and then we went to the Viking museum in Oslo so when we read about the Elder Hostel course on Vikings, we thought well, that would be something we'd enjoy. Both of us liked to travel.

COOPER: And both of you are historians, so. . .

MITCHELL: And now that our animals have all finally died we feel so much freer to go.

COOPER: Okay, so then you've been to the British Isles and Newfoundland, just recently. There's evidence in this room that you've also done some other traveling through the years.

MITCHELL: Well, yes I've been to Europe, I don't know, seven or eight times I guess. I first went in 1949 and had the grand tour, about six weeks. I went by ship that time. Then I went in 1952 and that trip included the Scandinavian countries. Not Finland, but Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Then I was there in 1960 and went to Russia that time and Poland, Czechoslovakia, some of

the, East Berlin, places that people don't go as much as they do England and Scotland. Then I had to skip a long time while the boys were little but in 1978 Mitch and I went to the British Isles for just a week. Then we went back in 1982, we took the boys. And they went to Coventry with a group from our church. We're tied in with Coventry Cathedral and our young people participated in this world wide reconciliation program there for three years. And the boys went on that and did some traveling in the British Isles and we met them in London at the conclusion of the Coventry trip and took them on a "here today gone tomorrow" tours of Europe. Then Mitch and I went back to the British Isles in 1985 and in 1987 and then this year we went, as I said we went to Scandinavia in the spring. I've enjoyed the traveling very much.

COOPER: Yeah, it really is, opens your eyes to see how other people live and how they do things and yet how similar we all are. Well, uhm, in getting back to Meredith just a little bit again, maybe. I know that when you're so involved in Meredith today, as you are, that you have to think mostly about today. But, in thinking and planning for the centennial which we're doing, we are looking both back and forward. Do you have some things you might like to say to those people who are on the campus at Meredith today as students? Some dreams you might have for Meredith in the future? Some words of wisdom?

MITCHELL: I don't have any words of wisdom. I do hope that Meredith will maintain it's status as a college for women. I think there's a great advantage in that for women, in being able to accept positions of leadership which are not open to them in co-educational schools. It is very seldom that a woman is president of the student government in co-ed schools, though I know it has been done but it's not ordinary. And I think that the possibilities for leadership are enhanced in a woman's school. I do feel some concern that maybe the tail wags the dog sometimes today when I hear reports from the administration and there are so many extra-curricular things going on and so many causes that the students engage in and I don't see how they have time to study. And I think that maintaining high academic standards is crucial and if Meredith does not maintain it's high academic standing, I think there's no point in having the school. I think it's easy to become second rate. I think it's very important that Meredith continue in the tradition of high academic standards.

COOPER: Fannie Memory, what was your impression of the world in which you lived when you were at Meredith. How do you date yourself as a historian? How do you see yourself as a college student? Where were you in the world?

MITCHELL: When I was a sophomore World War II erupted. Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941 and I was a sophomore at that time, and so we were

affected from that angle, you know, the whole world was upset then. There was food rationing I remember and we had brains and eggs a lot at breakfast and no one would eat them, they would just pass the plate around. Back then you know we had family style tables you sat down at, you had a hostess and every six weeks or so the whole dining room seating arrangement was shuffled so you sat with different people, except on Wednesday nights and weekends when you could sit with friends. But you got to know a lot of people that way, but anyway, the war was a major factor in our lives and we were urged to buy war stamps and we didn't have enough money to buy war bonds but, there was a lot of emphasis on doing things. We had blackouts I remember and we'd have to drag little tables, I don't think they were desks then, little tables, do you remember those, in the dormitory rooms? And we had to drag them out in the hall and get under those when we'd have a black out. So, I remember that, and Dr. Keith who I mentioned earlier, was so insistent that we subscribe to the newspaper and that we read the newspaper and she'd grade on current events and keeping up with what was going on. She instilled in us the necessity to vote and to participate in political activities and so on. But, we really were very much aware of the world situation while I was at Meredith.

COOPER: I'm sure that was a time of gas rationing and all that too, but somehow or other they kept those buses running to Meredith.

MITCHELL: That's right. The buses would take us to the civic music concerts down in Memorial Auditorium, and take us to church, and the buses, everybody rode the bus back then. Nobody had cars. When you went downtown or you went off for the weekend, you rode the bus.

COOPER: Tell us a family incident that you mentioned to me that happened at the civic music.

MITCHELL: My brother was two and a half years younger than me and at one concert my suite mates and roommate and I met mother and James at the concert and James had a little telescope. I think he had ordered it from some catalog. And right in the middle of the concert, he whipped out his telescope and focused it on the artist and we all began giggling. You know how it is in a place like church, or concerts or something, you're not supposed to laugh. The silliest thing can strike you funny and we all thought that was so funny that aiming a telescope at the artist was like as if he had binoculars or something.

COOPER: You mentioned the buses that took you to church, and, but I believe, you didn't always go on the bus to church because you were involved in a local .

..

MITCHELL: Well, I had, we were members of Millbrook Baptist Church back then when our father had been pastor before his death. And this was, Millbrook is now within the city limits of Raleigh, but back then it was not. And, it was like, just in the country then. But I had special dispensation to go out to Millbrook cause I was the pianist in the church, and this is not saying much because I never was so great as a pianist, but anyway, I could play the hymns and so I went out there a lot of the time.

COOPER: How did you get out there?

MITCHELL: Mother would come and pick me up.

COOPER: And also I believe you said you spent your senior year as a day student.

MITCHELL: I did. We had moved back into Raleigh. My brother had to go in the service, and various circumstances. We couldn't get oil and we couldn't get gasoline, and it was just very difficult to live out in the country and we moved back into town and so I lived at home my senior year.

COOPER: You mentioned that you had had piano lessons and you also had a shot at another musical instrument.

MITCHELL: Well, for two years I was in a little class, violin. This has given me a great appreciation for people who played the violin. Edgar Alden was on the faculty of Meredith. He formed this little class and four of us met and sawed away together. When the war came he had to go into service and so his wife, Dorothy, who taught at Peace and St. Mary's, also took on the Meredith work and she continued our little class. And, both of those people had the patience of Job because none of us could play. But we finally did get to the point where we could play second violin in a little orchestra that was made up of Peace and St. Mary's and Meredith students. And we performed several times. It was a lot of fun.

COOPER: Sounds like it, and a way that the three girl's schools in Raleigh could participate together in something. And you know, still today to have three girls, female institutions in one town.

MITCHELL: It's unusual isn't it?

COOPER: It really is. Let me ask about the Aldens. It seems to me, did they play in the North Carolina Symphony?

MITCHELL: No, they went to Chapel Hill after the war and he taught there and I don't know whether she taught there or just, I don't know, but they were in a

chamber.

COOPER: Oh, was it chamber? I knew there was something, okay it was a chamber music.

MITCHELL: Yes, then they had a daughter whose name was Meredith, after they taught at Meredith. I presume she was named for the College.

COOPER: Oh yeah, probably. Well, even after you finished at Meredith, somewhere in there though, you came back to do some non-credit course.

MITCHELL: Well, I went out to Meredith one summer to take art, painting. I had taken some art lessons when I was in high school from a woman who made you do little peach blossoms and things like that. Douglas Whitton Reynolds was head of the art department at Meredith and he was giving the painting class one summer so I took it. And that was really a lot of fun because he had you paint things from imagination. Just lift a line or portrait from context and paint something that came to mind. He was very helpful. After I had finished the course I was painting on my own. Then I'd take some paintings out and he would criticize them for me and make suggestions and I even had a little show out there one time. That was fun to do.

COOPER: Is that an indication that. . .

MITCHELL: But I think the Meredith people have always been helpful. If you showed an interest they were willing to go the second mile and I think that's an indication, that he was willing to help me after I had, I mean, he knew me very casually just from that one summer's course but yet he continued to help me.

COOPER: I think that's an indication of way back compared to what we think today of the Meredith campus and town involvement there because he was just taking people from the town.

MITCHELL: That's right.

COOPER: We're known for having a great deal of civic involvement on the campus.

MITCHELL: And of course now the continuing education program has a tremendous number of people from town who take courses.

COOPER: Yes, and some of our retired teachers like Dr. Rose are back teaching the continuing education so there's a constant flow there back and forth through the campus which I think is very important.

MITCHELL: Of course now the campus is used for so many things too. The amphitheater, and in the summers there's just all kinds of activities going on out there that are non college functions.

COOPER: We have a lot of space there which I hope they'll let us keep. But at the same time we share it when it's appropriate, but I hope] they don't . . .

MITCHELL: Oh I don't want them to start dividing it up with other folks.

COOPER: I believe that there were times at Meredith that you all got closed in. That never happened to me but tell me about quarantine.

MITCHELL: Well, one student came down with what was diagnosed with meningitis, spinal meningitis, and so we were all quarantined for two weeks and we were not permitted to leave the campus. And the powers that be tried to plan entertainment for us. They had, I don't remember what, but it seems to me we had special social events on the campus during that period of time.

COOPER: What about people coming in to work there? What did they do about those?

MITCHELL: I can't remember about that. I don't believe they were prohibited from coming. I know we still had the meals and dining hall and all that so, but we couldn't go anywhere.

COOPER: And perhaps you had an unusual relationship with the physician, the campus physician.

MITCHELL: Yes, Dr. Bessie Lane had gone into practice with Dr. Delia Dixon Carroll for whom the infirmary was named. You know she was just from an earlier generation. She was an institution at Meredith. Mother had studied under her when she taught anatomy or something at Meredith, and physiology or something. Anyway, mother had her and so she was mother's physician, but Dr. Lane came into practice with Dr. Dixon Carroll. And, when I was born Dr. Dixon Carroll was away so Dr. Lane was the doctor who attended mother when I was born. So I had always grown up knowing her. She was our doctor when I was a child and she was the doctor, Livingston Johnson's doctor. She was our family physician. And it was not usual back then for a man to have a woman doctor. But, she was his doctor too. And after, but so when I went to Meredith and we had to go through the process of having the little physical that they gave us, it was Dr. Lane. So, I had always known her.

COOPER: I expect it got pretty routine giving physicals for what, four or five hundred girls?

MITCHELL: I know, it was, they were pretty superficial I think. But anyway, she was there.

COOPER: You had lots of friends and relationships due to your family's involvement there, faculty, and here you've mentioned in the medical field. I know these carry very strong memories with you. But then, perhaps, classmates carry just as strong a memory.

MITCHELL: Oh, well some of my best friends today are the people whom I met at Meredith. Virginia Maynard McMillan I've mentioned before who is a class agent with me now. We're joint agents and I introduced her to her husband who is a distant cousin and we have just remained bests of friends. In fact we roomed together for a while at Chapel Hill while I was in law school and she was studying social work there. And, then Grace Alexander Swan was in our class. She is now in the same circle I'm in church and in same Sunday School class and she's on the WMU Board just as I am so we get together with Betty Rose [Thorne(?), Knowles(?)] and I, we were suite mates. She lives in Raleigh now so we remain good friends. And Ione Knight was not in my class but was year ahead of me, but she's taught at Meredith for lo these many years and we've been good friends for all the time since we graduated. So I have, just some of my best friend are my Meredith friends.

COOPER: Well, and having served as the association president, you renewed a lot of friendships during that time.

MITCHELL: Yes, that was one of the great advantages. I remember going to Lexington once and one of my suite mates now lives in Lexington and she just hasn't kept up with anybody. And I was so glad to see her and she seemed glad to see me and though, you know, she just sort of dropped out so far as the rest of us were concerned cause we'd say, "well do you ever heard from Gloria" and nobody had, but, Gloria Anderson Cranford, and she did an unusual thing because she got married while we were seniors at Meredith. Of course this was during the war and this was very unusual back then. And for a Meredith student to live, or for anybody to be married to start with, and then to live in the dormitory. But Miss [Vaper] who was the Dean of Women had let her come back and live in the dormitory though she had gotten married, cause her husband was in service and he had to leave. And, I know she, when she got married she was going to be, I don't know, she said at the time that, I told her I couldn't go at that time because I had to miss a class. And I wouldn't miss a class so she moved the wedding to some other hour so I would go. Because I just didn't believe in cutting classes. But anyway, Gloria was president of student government when she got married, before we finished. And that was a very unusual thing to happen but I think it was because of the war. And

another thing happened. There was a girl who was pregnant and she was secretly married, I think. Anyway, we were in gym class and the teacher would say, “hold in that stomach, hold in that stomach” and it turned out that she was pregnant. Well, that was a big topic of conversation for a long time. She dropped out and left school. But back then, you know, that was really something that didn’t happen very often.

COOPER: That really was. Well, you mentioned Ione Knight and perhaps we would like to end this tape with telling about what you’re going to do when you finish this tape. Because she has been mentioned before but I think not by anyone who had a personal relationship with her like you do, so maybe you’d like to . . .

MITCHELL: Well, my sister-in-law and I are going to take her to lunch today because, well, we’ve been wanting to a long time. Her mother is 95 years-old now and lives with her and she is in terrible condition physically. Her mind is still, she carries on a good conversation and she reads and, I guess she can still read. She was barely reading, unless her eyes have given out. But, she’s very deaf and has Parkinson’s Disease and, Kempsey’s, we always called her at Meredith, is just so burdened by the responsibilities of looking after her mother. So we finally worked out a time where we could take her to lunch so we’re going today. I’m looking forward to seeing her.

COOPER: Well, I think that’s a wonderful way, perhaps, to end this tape in thinking that here, you talked about the many friends but here you being a very special friend to a Meredith person even at this particular day. And your being a friend to Meredith in letting us come and do this tape and letting you share memories so that future generations who come to the Meredith Library and are interested in what happened in the twentieth century can take this tape and see some of what life was like for those of us who attended Meredith in the twentieth century.

MITCHELL: Well, Jean, I appreciate your coming and I feel honored to be chosen as one of the alumnae to participate in this.

COOPER: Well, again I thank you for the ways that you are participating right now in the Meredith activities and I know when Meredith is being assisted by people who have Meredith at heart the way you do and who have the long heritage that you have in relationship to Meredith, that things are going to go well for Meredith as we plan for the centennial, and for the next century.

MITCHELL: I want to say one more thing. That I think all of us of my generation owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. Campbell, hadn’t mentioned him. But, he really had such high academic standards and worked so hard on his chapel talks and

he really, he knew everybody. And I think he was an inspiration to many people.

COOPER: And I understand that maybe someday we might get a book of chapel talks.

MITCHELL: Well, I had understood that Norma Rose had a sabbatical to work on editing those chapel talks several years ago and I don't know what the status of that is. But it would be good, that they would be saved.

COOPER: So many people have mentioned Dr. Campbell's chapel talks and what it meant to them but I think that would be a very good thing to have. Thank you very much.

MITCHELL: Thank you.

COOPER: Tell us about this place we're here today, Fannie Memory.

MITCHELL: This is sort of an aftermath after we finished the tape. I told Jean that we moved here in January of 1964, just a few months after we were married. And when the boys were born we needed more space so we added onto the house rather than move because we liked the location and so we added on a family room and a playroom for them downstairs and a little workroom for Mitch's tools and things. Now he has his computer down there and that sort of thing. But, we've lived the same place and I've had the same telephone number since 1956 that I've had it. Two places on Blount Street, a place on Hillsborough Street, and now here, and the same telephone number and I just hope they never change my telephone number.

COOPER: But you move, if you never move again, you'll probably have to change your telephone number.

MITCHELL: My mother used to say, "I don't want to move again till I move to Heaven" and that's the way I feel.

COOPER: That's wonderful, and this is the end.



ELIZABETH MILLER
Class of 1944

Today is November 27, 1988. This is Betty Miller, officially Elizabeth Miller, class of '44, narrating a tape which will be used as part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. I am taping this in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania in the offices of the American Baptist Churches. I am glad to have an opportunity to do this tape.

Meredith was a good experience for me. It gave me a good education, developed me socially, brought out leadership abilities, and strengthened my spiritual foundations. It provided good basis for future education. When I went to Yale, I had no difficulties with my work there, although people from other schools seemed to have it. But for me, the work was no harder than it was at Meredith. In addition, it gave me open doors to people in the years since Meredith. While I have had little contact with people of my own class, I have had rich contacts with people from Meredith and people who knew of Meredith, and it has been a valuable piece for me to have in my background.

As I look back at Meredith, my mind goes first to professors who meant a great deal to me. Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson was one of my favorites. Somehow or other I think I must have done poorly in my English test when I first arrived at Meredith, and was put in a special class of Dr. Johnson's. I'm not sure why that happened because I was always good in English but, for that matter, a number of other people in the class also were good in English. So, either we had an off day or there was something wrong with those tests. At any rate, we went into Dr. Johnson's English class and counted ourselves extremely lucky. If I did a poor job on a test that got me into that class, I am very grateful for it. Dr. Johnson was one of the most stimulating professors I ever had. She loved English and she brought us that love of English. Wordsworth and Browning came alive to us in her class. But she not only taught English, she gave of herself. And, I think that's one thing that I appreciated about Meredith. It was not a place where professors were "publish or perish". It was a place where professors taught and loved to teach. And Dr. Johnson gave herself and she was free to say what she wanted to say. She shared her faith with us, and I know that I wrote home to my parents that at Meredith I went to Sunday School four times a week; three times in English and once Sunday morning at church. It was a time of stimulation and a time of thinking together.

While I was at Meredith World War II started and we had black-outs and we would have to sit out in the hall. My roommate, Dorothy Turner, and I would find our way down to Dr. Johnson's room and we would go into her room and talk with her in the darkness. We talked about faith and what it meant and it stimulated our thinking and our growth as nothing else could have done. It always seemed to me that Dr. Johnson stood on tiptoe to teach, she loved it so. I don't know that Dr. Johnson ever really forgave me when I switched my major from English to Sociology and took a minor in English. I don't know that I ever forgave myself for missing her class in Old English, and Dr. Harris's class in

Shakespeare.

Another professor who meant a great deal to me was Dr. Helen Price. I even took Greek to have her and language is not my best field. But Charlotte Green, later Charlotte Green Shepherd, whose parents were Missionaries to Nigeria and she herself later a Missionary to Spain, took Greek and as far as I was concerned I think I primarily took Dr. Price. She was a person who was unique and interesting, that made the ancient languages come alive, and was a very alive person herself. She wanted to live to the fullest, traveled around the world, and fully expected that, like her father, she would die early. While we were at Meredith she expressed a little bit of concern that she hadn't died when she expected because she hadn't saved some of the money she probably should have. But she lived! She was hard of hearing, deaf, but again though so much of us that when we came to Christmas Carol she stayed up all night because she was afraid that she wouldn't hear us to get up. While we were at Meredith, Meredith had some hard time and they had to cut back on some of the teaching and since Ancient Languages were not a particularly popular subject Dr. Price's work was some that was cut back. And so she could not go on teaching Greek and that just about killed her. Charlotte and I decided that we wanted to get some more and so we talked to her and she agreed to volunteer to read Greek drama with us. And so once a week we went and read Greek drama in translations. And that was where I learned the most about Greek drama, as we read plays and she would describe the opportunities she had to see them and what they meant. And I have never gotten over enjoying Greek drama whenever I have a chance to see it.

I suppose, a course that was valuable to me was the course in Race given by Dr. Ellen Winston. I probably used that in some ways professionally more than I may have used others. It was pre-civil rights days when I was at Meredith, and I came from the North to the South with all the naiveté that a young girl could have who thought that there were no problems in the North and that all the racial problems were in the South. I took the course in Race with Dr. Winston and learned a tremendous amount from it. But I also learned a lot from the conversations I had with friends, my roommates and others, as we talked through some of the racial situations in the South, and as I experienced the segregation there. I came from the North convinced that in the North everything was okay. And, it was only as I went through Yale Divinity School and began to have friends who were Black that I began to face up to the problems in the North and it was as I got into the field of racial and cultural relations myself in the North, and began to understand what was here, and began to see the problems that existed, that I had new insights into the situation. The course in Race served me very well. For as I began to talk about racial discrimination in the North and people would question me, I could tell them that I had learned the effects of Race in the South, at Meredith College. And they would not dispute some of the things that I had learned because they felt that I had learned them in a situation that was really dealing with reality. I felt the school struggled with some of the racial situations and never came to a satisfactory conclusion at that point in time. There was concern and there was some very real honesty, but it was a struggle. I am pleased that when I look at the magazines of Meredith College and see the diversity in the student body I am glad it's there.

And glad the school is open and it makes me feel good to see the change that has come and to see the opportunities that are there for young women to know people across racial lines and to appreciate each other as persons and for the ability that each brings.

I appreciated college life. It was fun for me, it was right for me at that time. I participated fully in all of the things that were going on; Stunt Night, Sports, Publications, Twig and the Acorn. I was active in all of them and active in student government. It was fun and it gave me opportunities to grow. I didn't do dating at Meredith so I didn't run into the problems that some of the people had in dealing with dating. But, the support and the friendships that came were things that were very real and very important.

As I said, World War II started while I was at Meredith. I can remember the day of Pearl Harbor. It was December and we were thinking in terms of going home for Christmas. It was Sunday and some of the people were off at a concert and when it started our whole world was different. The school was affected in some ways and yet unaffected in others. It was affected by black-outs. It was affected by conversations. I can remember my discussion with Dr. Johnson who was a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and a pacifist. It was the first time I had ever really discussed the pacifist position and had to begin to think through what it meant to hold that position. I remember what it was when I came to school during those years. My folks had planned to drive down to pick me up every year and that we would tour on our way back to see much of the country between North Carolina and through the South and back up to New Jersey. But the war came along and travel was done by train and I can remember those overnight trips. The crowded trains, the soldiers going back to camps, or coming home. The times we stopped at Quantico and the Marines got off, and all of the crowds and smells and anticipation and excitement that those crowded trains brought. Friends had their parents going into service. Virginia Ayres whose father had been a Missionary in China became, I think, a Doctor in the service. Page Rankins' father was Interned in China and only got out just about the time we graduated. Charlotte's folks didn't get home until the time we graduated. There was a time that we became aware of the world in a new way and yet I think also in many ways we were not aware of it. Because in many ways we were, at Meredith, separated off even though we were studying it, thinking about it and working with it.

I think that being part of an all female institution was good for me at that time in my life. The opportunities for leadership that women had in that type of institution that would have been much more difficulty in a coed school. For me, that was important. I was active in the woman's movement and carried some major roles in opening up opportunities for women in the American Baptist Churches. And I think that what I did at Meredith and what I learned at Meredith gave me role models that enabled me to move with security, that opportunities for leadership must be open to women, and that the world is the loser if they do not have those opportunities. I think we did have some good male role models there. Dr. Campbell was an excellent president, and one who always knew your name. We had professors who were good even though I must admit that the Biology professor had the sad experience of blushing whenever he would discuss anything as mild as the division of a one-

celled paramecium. For the most part though, the experience of a female school was good. I think we had good male models and I don't think I lost anything by being part of it, but gained instead.

I owe Meredith a lot in terms of later life as well. In a sense it was Meredith that sent me to Yale. Cleo Mitchell was Professor of Religion at Meredith and when I decided my senior year that I wanted to do something and finally came to the conclusion that I did want to get more training in what I called religious social work without knowing exactly what that was. Charlotte Green said to me, "well, if you're going to go to get some more training that way why don't you go where Cleo Mitchell went?" So I went and knocked on Cleo's door and said, "Cleo, where did you go to school?" And she said, "Yale Divinity School." So, I said, "Well, that's good. I'll go put an application to Yale." My path since then has crossed with Cleo many times. Cleo married Ed Esbey who was a graduate of Union and who became the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches. Cleo served on the Board of International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches and I worked both with the National Council of Churches and with the American Baptist Churches. Ed Esbey for years insisted that I must have come from North Carolina because I was a protégée of Cleo's and Cleo still insists that I took her courses, which I didn't. But she sent me to Yale and for that I'm very grateful. And I have been very grateful for both Cleo and Ed and through the years my work with them has been enhanced because of Meredith.

Meredith has had other influences on me, on my life and the people I've worked with. One has been Elizabeth Hazelton who graduated from Meredith a few years before me. Elizabeth was a very active American Baptist although she came from the South. She and her husband, Kyle, were in Charleston where he was pastor of Baptist Temple and then in Rochester and before he went to the Christian Century. Elizabeth served on the Board of the Division of Christian Social Concerns, which I was the Executive Director of, and would have been Chair of that Division if Kyle had not become sick in his last illness. After Kyle died Elizabeth continued to be active in American Baptist Churches and eventually was vice-president of American Baptist Churches. She and I roomed together many times and always our discussions would turn to Meredith and what was happening there, and the value of the experience for us. We shared our remembrances of Dr. Johnson, Dr. Harris, Dr. Price, and others. And it was enriching in my life and continues to be, for occasionally I still see Elizabeth. She eventually became part of the staff of the Church Women United and did an excellent job with them in developing an understanding of urban issues and of taking groups on what was called "urban causeways" to move through city areas throughout the country and to talk with people and gain an understanding of the issues that were facing people in those communities. She has retired now, but is still a good friend. I found Meredith opening many paths to me in many other areas. I have served for many years on a Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and have served as the first woman to chair that committee. And that has given me an opportunity to know Southern Baptist leadership and I have had a deep appreciation for Porter Ruth and Harold Bennett as I worked with them through the years. I had many conversations with Foy Valentine of the Christian Life Commission for we held similar responsibilities. And a great appreciation for Jim Dunn,

and for his staff. And I am deeply concerned about what is happening to them at the moment. My prayers are with the Southern Baptist Convention and with the Baptist Joint Committee. As I have worked through the years with Southern Baptists on that committee, the fact that I graduated from Meredith had opened many doors to me. It has given me a sense of rapport with people. I have been able to talk with them and we have had an opportunity to work together that has been enhanced by that experience. I have also appreciated Phyllis Tribble and particularly had contact with her during the early years of the women's movement when she was doing some leading work in the theological foundation for the women's movement. It was a thrill to me the first time I was at Green Lake, our American Baptist Assembly grounds, and sat in lectures with Phyllis as she ranged over the old Testament and began to bring through so many things to us that we had not known before. And I realized that was the first time that I had been in a place where a woman had lead in the theological thinking. It was a tremendous experience for me and I was proud that she was a Meredith graduate.

After I graduated from Meredith, as I said, I went to Yale Divinity School, and took their B.D.A. which has been transferred into an M.Div. I majored in Social Ethics minored in Christian Education. It was probably Yale's heyday as leading professors were Liston Pope and Richard Neaver, Halford Luckock, Roland Maten and a star studded group of theological leaders. It was a growing time for me and an exciting time. World War II ended while I was at Yale and we not only had young men who were Chaplain candidates, during the war we had young men returning from the war and entering the Seminary. It was a stimulating time when we had people who had been conscientious objectors and people who had been fighter pilots. And together we talked through some of the issues which faced our country. I had never thought of being ordained before I went to Yale and I really didn't think about it there. For the first time, however, I met women who were planning to be pastors. And I met faculty who thought it was a good idea. One faculty member had been a District Superintendent who had had women working with him and he reported on the excellent work that they had done. I still didn't really feel that that was a direction for me, although I wasn't sure what direction I wanted to go. By that time I was pretty sure I did not want to do Christian education in a local church, but what I wanted to do I did not know. As I graduated from Yale I thought it would be a good idea to go do refugee resettlement work, abroad of course. I don't know that I was thinking so much about refugees as I was about travel. And I had absolutely no qualifications for the job. I had no language skills. No experience that would be useful and, for some reason, no opportunity came. My senior year it was suggested that I might want to go to Vermont to work with the Vermont Council of Churches in their summer program in which they opened churches which had been neglected. That sounded like a good idea to me and while I was waiting for my great opportunity to come abroad I decided to go to Vermont and work there for the summer. It was there, for the first time, that people began to challenge me with the Ministry, and with being a pastor in Vermont. There were churches that were neglected there. There were small rural churches. And there were young people who needed help, and children who needed teaching. Churches had been closed which needed to be opened. There was work to be done. I had never even preached a sermon. But, that

summer as part of the work I was doing with vacation schools I brought together a sermon and began to preach. They talked to me, for some of our leaders were leaders who were pastors, and told me about a little church down in the Southern part of the state that had been having a difficult time of it and they had sent a couple of workers in there. They suggested that I go down and candidate for that church.

The closer I got to Reedsboro, the more afraid I became. I determined that I would get in and preach and get out and never see that place again. So I took my one and only sermon, got on the mail bus which was the only transportation into town and which was a station wagon which carried the mail, and went. But when I reached the town and stopped in front of the town hall which was on one side, and the church on the other, I almost stayed on that van and moved out of town. Because there in front of the church, on the bulletin board, were the words boldly printed, "Elizabeth Miller - Candidate Minister". That threw me into such a panic that I would have left had it not been that the deacon of the church, who was also the town clerk, was walking down from the town hall which was a former Methodist church, to greet me. There was nothing to do but to get out and to go through with it. I preached. And it was a small group. The church had about 22 members in it's Sunday School and about 27 members in church, and the people in the community began to talk to me about what was needed. It was the only Protestant church in town. There was a Catholic church and this one and the nearest Protestant church beyond that was either in Jacksonville, about ten miles away or North Adams, about eighteen. There was real need with the young people there. There was a neglected area. And the church was sort of sad looking. The young people who had been sent in by the Council of Churches that summer had done what they could and what they could do they thought was to wash the walls in the church, which they did as far as they could reach. That just made the whole thing look worse. Upper part dark and dirty, lower part washed. I didn't want to go but a conviction kept coming to me, that that was where I should be. And finally when I realized that no overseas work was come, I had a sense of God's call to that church in Reedsboro. And to go there meant to be ordained, and so my father who was a pastor started me in the process of ordination. I felt that when I went to ordination that I was going to the guillotine. When I talked with people in the State Convention of New Jersey, they told me that if I were ordained I would never be able to do anything but to have a small rural church somewhere. And I believed them. I wasn't sure that I wanted to be a pastor all my life, but I did have a sense that God was calling me at that moment to that church. And so I went to ordination feeling like I was cutting off all future. But somehow in the middle of the ordination ceremony it was all right. I had a sense it was okay.

Reedsboro was a great experience. The people were kind to a young pastor, who came in without background but with a willingness to do things. And we worked together on a lot of things. We painted and remodeled the church, and remodeled the parsonage. And the parsonage needed it. The bathroom in the parsonage was only heated by a hole in the floor above the kitchen, and the kitchen was about twenty degrees cooler than the rest of the house since it had no cellar under it. And when it got 24 degrees below zero in Vermont the pipes froze. I never figured out how previous pastors took a bath from November to

May. But we remodeled the parsonage, put the bathroom downstairs. I worked with young people and wound up directing four choirs with the musical knowledge of the upper part of chopsticks. We had a ball and a good time although I think probably the quality of the music improved when I left. We wound up with a Sunday School that was somewhere between 90 and 100 and a church membership that ran about 84. And I baptized about 56 people while I was there. It was a great time. We had a fascinating time and the people were wonderful to be with. It was a good experience, but after five years there I felt it was time for me to go. And it was time to look in another direction.

I still was intrigued with the areas of racial and cultural relations and I applied to the Home Mission Society to see what they might have. They came and talked with me about what they call the Christian Friendliness Missionary, which was a person who worked with racial and cultural relations on a one-on-one basis. It was started under the Women's Home Mission Society and they worked with developing understanding across racial groups, across ethnic groups, with a number of programs. Included in it were things which sent children out for vacations in the country, refugee resettlement, for that was in the aftermath of World War II and that program was just getting started. And in Massachusetts, where it was being called the Christian Friendliness Missionary, I also worked with the Social Action Committee. I took that job and that led to a fascinating seven years in Massachusetts. We worked in areas of fair housing to try to overcome discrimination in housing. I sent about a hundred kids a year from urban areas out into rural or suburban areas for vacations. Usually across racial lines. We developed legislative seminars, holding them in the State House in Boston. And seminars on issues like mental illness and corrections and held those either in mental hospitals or correctional institutions. I began to work nationally with the Council on Christian Social Progress, later the Division of Christian Social Concern, as well as with some of the organizations such as American Baptist Women. It was those years that the sit-ins started and what began the first elements of the civil rights movement. But they were good experiences and I enjoyed those years.

At the end of about seven-and-a-half years in Massachusetts I was invited to come to the staff of the Division of Christian Social Concern of the American Baptist Churches as Educational Secretary. I worked with John Thomas who was head of that, developing a newsletter on social issues. And then I became Executive Director of the Division of Christian Social Concern after John left. One thing that happened of interest to Meredith during those years is that as I was sitting in my office, Addie Davis, who had been student government president while I was at Meredith, came by and said she was interested in becoming a pastor, that she had felt a real call to ministry. But she could not find a church in the Southern Baptist Convention. I knew Addie had real ability. You did not become Student Government president without ability, and I suggested to her that she try Vermont since that was an area that was open to women. And I wrote the Executive Minister in Vermont about her. Addie went to Vermont and became pastor of the church I had had in Reedsboro. That may be the only church which has had two Meredith graduates as their pastors. Addie served there for several years before she went from there to Rhode Island. I was fortunate to be Executive Director of the DCSC during the 1960's. The DCSC was

a social action arm of the American Baptist Churches. This meant that I was deeply involved in the struggles related to civil rights. To the environmental movement, to the women's movement, to Vietnam, and to all of the great issues that the country was facing during those years. I sometimes wonder how anyone could be as fortunate as I, to be in that position during those years. It did mean that there were times when I was thinking through what American Baptist response should be to some of the civil rights situations. And I talked with some of our people and there were times American Baptists were involved in various things in Mississippi and in various places in the South. I myself was down in St. Augustine and had an interesting run-in with the Klan down there. It was a difficult time and as the cities began to explode in the North, the situation came closer and closer to home. And once again we began to realize that you did not deal with the issues of racial segregation only in the South. One had to deal with them all over the country for this was something of which we were all a part. I will not forget where I was at the time of the assassination of Kennedy. At that time I was back in North Carolina, in Williamston, where there was a demonstration going on. And it was a time when they were looking for help and I was there. I remember the fear that was felt there the day that Kennedy was assassinated. And no one knew exactly what it meant. We worried that there were trucks going up and down the front of the house and worried that it might mean a general attack on people who were concerned about civil rights. Nothing happened, but that night as I lay in the front room of the house next to the church where the demonstrations were held, I found myself wondering if a bomb might come through the window. And when there was a knock on the door, I was worried and afraid, only to discover that the only thing that was wanted was somebody ready to go fishing. I worked through those years in many different ways.

One of the things that I carried some major role in was opening the American Baptist churches to more opportunities for women. That was a difficult time. Because, I found that although people could understand things in social action, they could not necessarily understand the movement of women for opportunity for themselves. In some ways this was tougher than civil rights. Because you couldn't even be sure that your friends understood what you were talking about. Even the Division of Christian Social Concern had to be persuaded. That was not easy and as a couple of us tried to interpret to this board, which was the social action board of the American Baptist Churches, there was reluctance until finally a black member of the staff of the Home Mission Society said, "I understand what they are saying". And he interpreted to the rest of the board from the black experience, what we as women were saying. It was a turning point and at that point then the Division of Christian Social Concern voted that discrimination against women was an issue with which we needed to deal, as long as we did not neglect other issues of importance. That gave me the authorization to go ahead and begin to do things in the American Baptist Churches. I was able to give staff time to an informal organization, the Executive Staff Women, which formed a kind of spearhead in American Baptist Churches. We had some strength at that time because of a couple of fortunate situations. We had two women who were in staff positions that had a fair amount of independence. One was me, and one was the Executive Director of American Baptist Women. Together, the Division of Christian

Social Concern and American Baptist Women and Executive Staff Women formed a triumvirate, which brought women together to work for opportunity within the denomination. We could plan strategy. We could develop things and we could begin to move and use whichever basis for organization was most appropriate at a particular time. We were so uncertain about the response that Executive Staff Women elected officers for only three months at a time, feeling that if we kept the change of officers going the target would be so moving that nobody could focus on one particular person. Through that work finally a number of changes began to come in the American Baptist Churches. Policies were developed that at least twenty-five percent of all staff positions should be held by women and that these should be at all levels. It has not always been that that budget was there, and progress has come. We were able to hold a rotation of presidency among clergy, laymen, and laywomen. And we had been able to push for inclusiveness in the officers of the boards of the denomination. It was exciting years with the Division of Christian Social Concern, holding seminars with youth, in Washington and at the United Nations, and working with a whole variety of issues.

In 1972 the denomination we organized and Division of Christian Social Concern was assigned to the American Baptist Home Mission Society, which had become National Ministries. My work moved over then to National Ministries and for three years I was head of the Division of Social Ministries which brought together the Division of Social Action of the Home Mission Society and the Division of Christian Social Concern. The Home Mission Society had been working in things such as juvenile delinquency and alternate lifestyles and aging, and these were all part of their Social Action Division. We developed work in Washington, put on a full time person for feminism, and changed the aging program into alternatives for the aging and began to look as to what that might mean if we did creative work with aging and enabled them to do creative work. Following that I was asked to be Director of Issue Development for National Ministries which put me into developing the policy of National Ministries and basically the American Baptist Churches, on a variety of public issues. Policy development is done through the development of policy statements and resolutions which come through our Boards to the general Board, and provide the basis for a program in action in the American Baptist Churches. I carried that responsibility and we have developed policy basis on human rights, racial justice, immigration, and a variety of issues. It is a process that I carried major responsibility for developing which has included the use of task forces of our board members to work on policy statement and study by the board and when possible by the constituency so that these policies are understood and accepted. A policy done by National Ministries takes about 2 1/2 years to develop from beginning to adoption, so it is not a short process. I also worked with the development of resolutions on issues which are done much faster and speak to critical issues which we are currently dealing with on policy statements. I also carried the responsibility for dealing with statements of concern and the bi-annual meeting. Actually, this was something I worked with for many years because the Division of Christian Social Concern was responsible for the resolutions which used to go through the old annual meetings and which now have been changed to statements of concern which go through the bi-annual meeting. This involves work with the committee and carries major time and are

conventions as these issues are discussed and voted on. They also involve studies in churches prior to the bi-annual so that delegates coming to the bi-annual will know issues with which they will be dealing. This has been a fascinating process and one which has sent me in many different directions because study of these issues has involved on-site visits related to many of these things, working with committees and boards as we think our way through them. And the fascinating thing of watching people develop and think together on some of the critical issues of our day.

Four years ago I was asked to take the position of Unit Manager of the Individual and Corporate Unit of National Ministries. This unit is an exciting one and, as I said when I was asked to do it, I would consider that one of the best jobs in National Ministries. There are a number of programs within it that are fascinating and exciting to me. They include the remnants of the old Christian Friendliness Program of which I had been part, back in Massachusetts. I started there in refugee resettlement and refugee resettlement is still continuing. American Baptists have resettled over 60,000 refugees through that program. I was in it at the beginning and I am in it now for I have a staff member working with that program. It carries responsibility for volunteer work, for the endorsement of our chaplains and pastoral counselors. It carries responsibility for our social and ethical responsibility in investment in which we look at the endowments we have, the stocks we hold, and what are the principles being held by the corporations in which we have stock. In light of that, and in light of the principles we have, what are resolutions we wish to put in as stockholders, what are the conversations we wish to have with corporations, and how will we go about being responsible part-owners of those corporations. We have been very active in issues related to apartheid in South Africa, and environmental issues and affirmative action, and in providing opportunities and support for minority banks. Another program in the Unit is Ministry of the Lay People in the Workplace. This is a new, or refocused program, in which we recognize the issues people deal with at work are often not understood in the churches and yet many of the things they are dealing with are things that call upon their equitable decision making and call upon their relationships with other human beings and their faith should have an impact on those decisions and on those relationships. Another program is the Neighborhood Action Program which are Christian Centers across the country. Another is Urban Strategy Development, is how we're going to work with urban churches. And another is Public Mission Issue Development, which includes the work I was doing, related to policy development as well as the development of social action teams in regions across the country. It is an exciting unit and an exciting staff and I am delighted to have a chance to work with them.

I have had a chance to travel around the world and have used that as opportunities for study as much as possible. I found that if you focused on particular issues you could get much more out of travel. And so I have at times focused on human rights as I traveled through Asia and have had an opportunity to talk with people related to human rights problems in India, in Korea, in Taiwan, in Micronesia, and other areas of the world. I focused on people in transition in the Middle East and in Europe, and I found each time that they opened doors to me, to people I never could have thought I could meet otherwise. I am grateful for

those opportunities and they have meant a tremendous amount to me. I went back some years ago for another degree at the University of Pennsylvania, a degree in Social Policy Planning, and received a Masters of City Planning. That was a good experience and a good updating one.

Meredith has been a strength to me through the years. I have greatly appreciated the experience I had there and the education was excellent. But it was not only what I learned in books, it was what I learned in life at Meredith, and the people I met there, that meant so much. I don't know that I can remember all of the facts that I learned but I did learn how to study. I don't know that I can remember every piece of information that I had, but I understood some things about people and I learned something about myself and what I could be. And I learned that I had a responsibility that was more than a responsibility to me alone and that was a responsibility to God, a responsibility to society, and a responsibility to make my life count. And I am grateful to Meredith for giving me that.



CLEO GLOVER PERRY

Class of 1945

Today is March 16, 1988, and we are here in Zebulon, North Carolina, and I am with Cleo Glover Perry, Mrs. Elwood Perry, who is a Meredith alumna of the class of 1945. Cleo, in 1987 was a Distinguished Alumnae Award recipient. This means that she has made numerous contributions, not only to Meredith, but to her community and to her church, in years since Meredith. We're here today to talk with Cleo and to share her memories of Meredith, her work with Meredith, and her life in general. This is Jean Cooper, interviewer.

COOPER: Good morning Cleo.

PERRY: Good morning Jean. You wonder where in the world do you start when you get as old and gray as I am, in trying to tell somebody what your life has been like up to this point. But, as you have observed when you came into Zebulon, it is a small town and that I must have grown up knowing everybody in the area, which I did. But, even so, the little town has grown. I can recall roller skating on the street that you came in on, which now of course would have been a very dangerous kind of activity if you did that. Just down below my house I lived on that street, where the chief grocerman of the town had a pasture in which he put cows to keep them some few weeks prior to butchering them to sell to his customers in the town and the area. So, looking back I guess that's sort of typical of some of the things that have happened in my life. As we progressed from that nice simple life to getting to be a retired person. And, I've said a dozen and ninety times that I'd never say this, but I'm going to, reminds me of Miss Mae Grimmer you know a former alumnae director of ours. She would come in, stand in front of me at my desk and she'd plop her little pocketbook down and she'd say, "I know how busy you are because I did that once, but I can't stay long anyway" because I'm so busy now that I am retired and I guess that's the way that we can look at retirement and be so busy. We had a small, a relatively small high school. It was a good school overall, the total school way. A few of us really went to college in 1941 when I graduated from High School. However, I guess our class sort of set a record. More of us went than normally went from a class and my first impulse was to do what my peers were doing. We all had decided we were going to Woman's College in Greensboro. But as time moved on, one evening and I remember it was a cold winter evening, Mrs. Ma Davis Bunn who is a Meredith Alumnae, and also at that particular time was on the Board of Trustees at the College. Dr. Carlyle Campbell was president of Meredith at that time and during my stay, of course, at Meredith. And Mrs. Bunn came to visit us. Somehow she had gotten my name and she came to visit us and talked to my family about my going to Meredith. And of course this was the place that my parents really wanted me to go and, not having a broad choice

really, the one thing that I knew was that I wanted to go to a good college and there were very few colleges in the state at that time that were accredited by the Southern Association. And Meredith was among those few. So we decided that that's where I could go. Come fall we took, we loaded the car, no fancy luggage mind you. We just spread my few clothes out on the back seat and took off. My mother, father and I, to Meredith College. And of course I know you can think about when you first went on that campus and that's an awfully long drive from Johnson Hall down to Hillsborough Street. And when you sort of see your parents going down that drive, and more or less being a small town girl and the first time you've been away from home or know that you're gone be for that long a period of time, you sort of wonder if you've made the right choice. But I hasten to say that it has always been the right choice. I found that to be so true.

COOPER: Let's stop right here just a minute here because you said your mother had sort of wanted you to go to Meredith before. Now, tell me just a little bit about your mother and perhaps why she might have wanted that.

PERRY: Well, my mother and my father were both very active Baptists and Meredith was, is a Baptist institution. And that I guess, and the fact that I was a girl, they felt confident that I would not only get a good education but I guess that I would be protected, as a young woman going out into the world when I went to Meredith.

COOPER: Other than being very active in the Baptist Church, can you tell me a little bit about your mother?

PERRY: My mother was a twin, the youngest member of, really the youngest member and the smallest member of her family. And she had lost her mother when she was a young, I think maybe not even a teenager, when her mother had died and had literally been raised by her father. Her father had still maintained the household with the small family group that was left. She had several brothers and sisters but being the youngest of the family the others had married and I think there were maybe three girls who were at home for a while then it was just she and her twin sister. My mother died very young. She died at the age of 49, not too long after I got out of Meredith College.

COOPER: Right. And then your father was a very strong role model also in your life?

PERRY: I guess in my life my father was my strongest role model. He was the oldest, next to the oldest in his family. His father had died when he was very young, in fact I think he was 14, and much of the family responsibility had fallen on his shoulder. So he developed a very strong personality you know, and was therefore one who felt like he could do everything and set about to do

everything that he wanted to do. It mattered not what he wanted to tackle. Somehow he seemed to feel that he could do it and usually he could. Even the last five years he lived, he was blind. And for a portion of that time he had been a superintendent of his Sunday School, and he continued to go do his opening. My stepmother would read to him and he would prepare his opening in this fashion. And I have always said that if I could have in my life just half the stamina and strength and determination that my father had, that I would be satisfied. If I could cope with any of life's situations as he coped, because the blindness was a sudden thing. He lost his sight as he was leaving church on a Sunday morning, and had to be driven home. He had driven to church. However, he did not let that slow him down. He kept meeting whatever situation arose.

COOPER: You say you had two strong models of encouragement for you to go on.

PERRY: Exactly. So when I arrived at Meredith some of that had been instilled in me. So, even though I was from a small town, I felt that, and had been trained, that you just never said you can't do anything. In fact my mother frequently said that to me. If I said, "I can't do that", she'd say, "Don't ever let me say you can't do anything". So, I set about to try it there to do the best job that I could. Of course I knew that if I didn't I'd probably be spoken with I got home, if I didn't at least do an acceptable job.

And Meredith has, of course, since the day I went been a very vital part of my life as you know. It offered me an excellent education, as I traveled as Alumnae Director and had an opportunity to speak to student groups about prospective teaching options we had in our chapters. I always had two things I wanted them to know about Meredith. One was that when I left Meredith College and walked into my classroom as a teacher I never felt inadequate. It was not because I was that good. It was because Meredith College had prepared me. I had a strong material background, but I had also been taught in all facets of my life to have to cope with situations that I might encounter in a classroom, including recording keeping. And some of our work that Elwood and I have been doing in retirement, one thing we've been doing is he is clerk of the Raleigh Baptist Association now and I have been helping him some with preparing some of the annual records and so on. And I realized that they don't prepare ministers as well as Meredith prepared teachers for recordkeeping for example. But this is significant in my education that I got a detailed education, if you can describe one, in that way.

I think that the second, well I know, that the second thing that I always wanted students to understand was that you make there lifetime friends and that really they are friends that you had not anticipated making because they are faculty members or administration people. Who become some of the

greatest and the best friends you have all of your life. I can name just numbers who became friends of mine, from the president of the College. Dr. Carlyle Campbell never failed after we retired, during my stay there if I can sort of interrupt to say that Elwood was almost a Meredith College student because I dated him for four years that I attended Meredith College. But, after leaving Meredith, Dr. Campbell never failed to recognize Elwood whenever he saw him and he never failed to say, "how is Cleo," you know when they would meet away and I would not be with him. Even as I say the president of the College was one of the strongest friends, teachers like Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson lead you in all walks of thinking and pushed you to the nth degree. I recall one time, Jerry McGee, our vice-president of institutional advancement a few years ago, had gone to New York to meet with foundation people and he came back and he said they described Meredith as being this little southern belle college, one that prepared young women to be social butterflies, or something of that sort. I said, "will you kindly go back and tell them to come down and sit in one of Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson's English classes and I will wager they'll never make that statement again." That this is what Meredith is like. Of course Dr. Mary Yarborough, when my major field was science, was a very key person in my development. And of course from then on was a role model of mine. And a very good friend right up until her death. These kinds of people made Meredith very special. I think you don't find that everywhere.

When we were there you had a very different kind of lifestyle of course. Let me see, how long ago has that been? Over forty years ago. But, it was a different kind of lifestyle because we were definitely taught to be young ladies you know. Or they tried to teach us to be young ladies, some of us may not be very good examples today. But, there were the gloves, there was the hat, and the hose whenever you went beyond the little shopping area a few blocks from the College which is known as Wilmont. But anywhere beyond that you must be dressed to the nth and look the perfect, and act, the perfect lady. And this was true in our behavior on campus. We had family style meals you know. I recall one Sunday at dinner, and by the way my freshman year Pearl Harbor was bombed December 7, 1941, if you remember. So, my stay at Meredith was during World War II. Which naturally changed many things.

And among those were the kind of food that could be secured because we had food stamps and all this kind of thing, the shoe stamps, whatever, gasoline stamps. You couldn't buy tires, you couldn't buy cars. It was so true in all of that period that it had an influence on everything including institutions. But this particular Sunday we had fried chicken. This was not something we had everyday at Meredith during the war. Our Dean of Women was a very staid person, Ms. Annie May Baker. And on Monday night I was working on student council for student government, and we met on Monday night. And so that Monday night following the Sunday chicken dinner Ms. Baker

came to the council meeting and she said to us, "I want you to do something about the manners of these girls. They are atrocious." We couldn't imagine what on earth we had done that was so bad, you know. Cause after all we could only leave campus, we had what we called three day privileges and two evening privileges. She said, "yesterday at dinner when we had chicken, fried chicken, the girls were eating the chicken with their fingers." So we must do something to improve the manners at Meredith. That is just one of the things, even today when I eat chicken I have a tendency not to use my fingers because I can just see Ms. Annie May Baker.

COOPER: She'd have a hard time with Kentucky Fried Chicken bags.

PERRY: You would really be messed up because many chicken places today they don't even bother to give you a knife. You have to tuck in and eat it with your fingers or you don't eat it, period. Another interesting thing about Ms. Baker and my relationship with her and her relationship with Elwood too, she was always very kind to me and very good to me, but Elwood would come to visit and he developed quite a strong relationship with Ms. Baker. And it being during the World War he had some grocery connections so occasionally, he learned that she liked chocolate Hershey bars, so he could occasionally get some of those. They were very difficult just to pick up in the store. And he would bring her a box of candy. So she took great pride in seeing me in the hall and saying, "Cleo come by my office, I might share my candy with you." But, it had it's advantage in that if I came down to meet, we had to meet our dates in the parlor, but when I'd come down I'd go to the parlor and no Elwood. So I'd just go to Dean Baker's office you know, and there'd he sit, reared back, and they'd just be carrying on having a great time. And he's say, "Now Ms. Baker do you mind if Cleo and I do so and so?" And I was supposed to be chaperoned, but it wouldn't matter what he asked that I might do, you now. She'd say, "Well, Elwood, yes, I know you'll do all right. You all just be back at such and such a time." But that was a great little experience. He thoroughly enjoyed her and they had a good time together.

COOPER: So he saved enough gas out of his rationing...

PERRY: To get over to Meredith. Well, on occasion he did ride the train. He could probably tell you some righteous experiences about riding the train to Raleigh. Of course everywhere we went we either had to walk or ride the bus. There was no such thing as a student having a car, you know. And we wouldn't have had one, probably, had we been able to get one or have one. But, you'd just get up and catch the bus. That was the way I rode to town. The buses pulled up in front of the church on Sunday mornings, I mean the school at Johnson Hall, for us to go to church. And we loaded on the buses

and went to the various churches.

COOPER: And the railroad did come sort of, right in front of Meredith too?

PERRY: No. This was, it was not actually, if you came in on a train you then had to get a bus and come out to the College. So it was not that easy, but it was not bad. You know, I'd take the city bus down to the bus terminal and go out, come out to Zebulon on the bus.

I think one of the most interesting little experiences I had at Meredith, other than with my classwork and friends, other friends, was being president of the freshman dorm. And it was a privilege then to be president of the freshman dorm. I think that's changed a little bit. I think they might even pay people now to do this. But you were elected to do this and it was your responsibility each evening to make sure that all of us students were in their rooms with their lights out at ten o'clock. And I recall one freshman that invariably could think of a way to get out from crawling out of her window to run across to the court. I used to have to think up a plan to keep me from chasing her so I wouldn't have any study time left. She would do that but I'd always make sure Bunny was in her room then I felt like everybody else was placed you know, at night when we'd have suite checklists to do. Of course we had hall vice-presidents you know, who assisted in doing that. I didn't have to do every room. But there was a case like this when a student was not where she was supposed to be and I'd have to do a bed check.

COOPER: And this was when you were a student?

PERRY: A student, yes, a senior now. That was when I was a senior at Meredith. The chaperoning, you were as a student government member, you were expected to chaperone then there was a _____ who chaperoned. We really were encouraged to do this. In other words, it was a responsibility we were expected to assume, and not just put up reasons for not doing it but it was not a fun thing to do. I don't think anybody will ever tell you it was a fun thing to do. And, sophomores for example, their chaperones could date. Well, what they frequently did was they'd get, their boyfriend would get a date for the chaperone. So you could imagine what kind of interesting experiences came out of that. When you'd be dating, as I said you'd be encouraged to assume this responsibility. I realized what it meant to them to have somebody go ahead and chaperone them, if they had no alternative but to have one.

Speaking of friends at Meredith, getting back to thinking along that line, we had mentioned the depth of friendships which developed with many of the faculty members and the administration people on the campus, you also as you well know, made some of your strongest personal friends at Meredith. And

the exciting thing I think about a reunion is that you get back together. And I suppose that in some classes it is stronger than others. In mine we've had a nucleus in that class that has been very strong. Our last reunion, or the reunion before our last reunion, we had set up, some of us local alumnae, had set up entertainment. You know, meetings and so forth for the reunion. So we had said, well Friday night we'll have this fancy dance. Saturday night what we will do, the girls will get together and we'll let the husbands do whatever they want to do. We'll give them the option of coming, so they will do what they want to do. And true to form when we did this, because so often we get to thinking, well maybe they don't want to be a part of it. They don't have all the Meredith feelings. We had every husband to come to that Saturday night and as far as I know, you know, no alumnae just insisted, because we had plainly given them their option, except one and he sent word he'd like to be there but they were from California and he was visiting his parents. And he was probably scared they would disown him if he didn't at least spend that evening with his parents. Very, very strong ties develop, even in our group, that have developed between even the husbands who enjoy one another.

COOPER: And I'm sure that after four years of Elwood "attending Meredith" he knew a lot of the people that you went to school with, right?

PERRY: Well, maybe the fact that we were there during the war and we had to, we couldn't go many places. That might have helped many of these men, many of our husbands who have become very close friends, because actually we did a lot of our dating right on campus. Or we'd go out on the bus together and ride downtown to the movies or whatever together, so I guess we had more of an opportunity to developing a total friend relationship. Most of us married the ones we were dating while we were at Meredith.

COOPER: And I'm sure that as your work for the past ten years as Director of Alumnae Affairs, you have a lot of joy in seeing these reunion classes get together, that has probably been one of the highlights.

PERRY: Yes, that was one, it has been one of the highlights. Working with the reunion classes to plan their reunion and then seeing them and hearing them squeal when they actually get together. That was, I guess I better get up here and leave Meredith before, we're gone be through with the tape aren't we? Just so many things that went on at Meredith. I cannot leave that though without saying one thing, one other thing, and that is the kind of atmosphere, the loving caring atmosphere all the way through which basically I think was founded on the fact that it is a Christian institution. And that was very meaningful, having come from a Christian family and leading into that. That however very meaningful is the fact that even though it was a Baptist related

institution they did not force me to read the Bible or listen to their side and their side only. I was encouraged to interpret and develop my own faith, at Meredith. And I think, I could not graduate without saying that so to speak, even though I'd love to tell you about the black-outs and all of that kind of thing.

After leaving Meredith, of course I had been told from the time I was in the second grade, my second grade teacher had said, "Cleo, you should be a teacher", so I prepared myself to be a teacher. I mentioned the fact that when I left the classroom I felt well prepared and I had a very successful thirty years teaching school. I was recognized by the American Chemical Society, recognized by my community that I guess ran out of people to recognize and thought maybe I was a pretty good teacher. But I think one of the highlights of that teaching career was having an opportunity to work with an international science fair winner. We did science fairs in North Carolina under the direction of the Academy of Science. And each year they, my students participated. And of course it was my responsibility to get them working on projects, to see that they did those projects and to assist them in anyway possible. I traveled often from home to home cause they couldn't move their experiments in some of them, in order to see and help them and advise them in what they were doing. But I was blessed in that I had good working students and they were frequently winners in the science fairs and I did have a winner of the State Fair who went to Seattle, Washington in 1962 and was an international science fair winner. So, this of course was an extreme highlight in my teaching career. Since leaving the teaching field and I'd say sort of a word of encouragement to anybody who goes in that direction, you feel like you don't know whether you've accomplished anything at all. But barely a week goes by that I do not encounter a student who expresses appreciation and this is the kind of reward I guess you can look forward to, any teacher can look forward to have. You go to the post office and you get this pretty little lace valentine, for example, that says, "A contribution has been made in your honor by so and so", who is, you realize is a former student, you now. Or to look at like, Pam Faison, who is also a Meredith Alumna, a former student of mine that I sort of watched over. And she became a teacher, the teacher, an Outstanding Teacher of North Carolina.

COOPER: And is now the recipient of the recent graduate recognition.

PERRY: She is a recipient of the recent graduate recognition, right. When you're in a small community, of course, you are involved in everything. You're in the Woman's Club, you're in Eastern Star, you're in your church doing about nine or ten things, you know. So you don't have much free time. I'm sure it's that way in a big town too. But I guess in a small town it's even worse. So, that has been a part of my life as I have moved on. But, among those

things...[end of side one]

COOPER: Cleo Glover Perry is sharing with us her memories and her life experiences and we are here in her home in Zebulon, North Carolina, on March 16, 1988.

PERRY: Well, Jean we were talking about my activities as an alumna of Meredith and I had said that I couldn't, off the top of my head, think of any committees that I, which I had not served on. I just couldn't say no and I'm sure being in Zebulon, so close to Raleigh, I was convenient. I understand that. And, but it has always been a joy to be active in alumnae work and of course as you know as president of the Alumnae Association, that is probably one of the offices you've held that has been most meaningful to you. And I had that privilege from 1966 to 1968, to serve as the president of the Alumnae Association. Dr. Bruce Heilman and I sort of went in office at the same time. And I responded as the alumnae president when he was inaugurated. He, of course, was there out at the College and away from the College ninety percent of the time, working for Meredith. We were in the process of raising five million dollars. Which doesn't sound like much today but it was right much at that time. Five million dollars for the College and I guess I was blessed in that he felt like the Alumnae Association president ought to be out there too, helping too, which encouraged me to travel. I did not stop my teaching. Frequently I was on the road until one and two o'clock in the morning, get up the next morning and drive to school and go to teach. But, we did get to visit and travel over the state, out of the state, for Meredith College. That was a very rewarding experience. I have since, of course as you know being Director of Alumnae, noticed a great change that has taken place as we moved about. I recall going to Asheville during that period of with Dr. Heilman and his family and we were meeting with alumnae there. And my husband had gone, he was outside not attending the meeting, and some gentleman was carrying on a conversation, they were carrying on a conversation, and he said, "why are you here", and they were sharing why they were there. And he said, "I'm here with my wife who's at a Meredith meeting." He said, "Meredith, what is that?" And that of course hurt me deeply. When he came in and said how he had just talked to somehow who didn't know about Meredith. But I am glad to say that that has decidedly changed. But traveling like that has enabled me to see, enables me to see now the kind of growth that the College itself has had. It was a great experience, going and talking about Meredith. I remember during that time I had my first TV appearance. They made a film of Meredith and as the president of the Alumnae Association I was invited to speak a few works and, of course, got to be on TV for the first time. Then during my time also the trustees invited the president of the Alumnae Association to meet with them at their meetings. So that was a beginning of the relationship, or a stronger relationship, that we as the Association have with the Board of Trustees. You get such a warm

and courteous reception when you go to alumnae, and meet with alumnae. It's something you don't lose sight of traveling as president.

Returning from that presidency back to you know, the regular classroom, household activities, local small town activities, went on until 1975. And in 1975 I had a call from the college to come and serve as an associate director of Alumnae Affairs. I was involved in teaching, hadn't signed a contract and felt I could not go at that time although I felt that strong pull to Meredith. However, there were a few conferences in between. I think along about February I said to them, just before a second meeting of the Board of Trustees after they'd asked me that, I would consider coming but I could not come until the end of my school year. So I went in 1975 I believe, the first of July, to become an associate director of Alumnae Affairs, working with Carolyn Robinson who was at that time our Director. A very strong person with whom to work and a time, a year that I thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, I had sort of thought, well this, Cleo, can be a little bit of a retirement work down for you. You will go in and taper off, you know, and retire early. Because I had had so many years in the classroom. But I don't know how it all came about. I was really never asked to be director of Alumnae Affairs. Caroline was given the opportunity to move into a field which she was very interested in of course, which of course she is as we know an excellent writer, and so forth. So she moved into that area and I was just sort of left in the alumnae office and I didn't leave. And they didn't ask me to leave. So, then I spent my next ten years, as you know, directing alumnae. I think one of the comments that has come out of my retiring from Alumnae Director, one of our alumnae wrote a little poem, and in it she mentioned the fact that it had been the era of, what do you call it, acronyms I guess, you know. Because she said, there was the EMA, you now, which was our Early Meredith Alumnae which we were able to organize during my time. There as the ARC which was the Alumnae Re-entry Club that was organized during that time. There were the AAR's which were the Alumnae Admissions Representatives. There were the CRR's who were the chapter representatives, admissions representatives. So, I guess she had a point when she said that it was an era of this letter business, you now. And of course one of the strongest was the EYD, the Every Year Donor group which we were able to organize and I feel like has been a, maybe some help in the annual giving at the College. Many things happened during those ten years. There's no way to even begin to tell you. I think some of the highlights I had been in the classroom. I missed the students I must confess. So I became very ambitious as far as students were concerned. We were able to sort of revitalize the granddaughter's club, add an activity to their list. I got very ambitious one year and decided I would meet with every student on campus and so for several weeks I'd have that two old meetings a night until I met with every hall that was on campus and of course there was some carryover of that through the years and then I would meet with seniors and

with new students. But that was quite an experience and a very enjoyable and pleasant one. I found that Meredith girls really haven't changed, or I don't think they have. They're still those fine people that we associate with the College.

The older alumnae have had a very strong feeling about Meredith and that sort of enticed me to want to do more for them. So we put together something that was really not new. I was aware that a number of institutions had this particular organization, but that's how Early Meredith Alumnae club originated, which is of course the group of those who have celebrated their 50th reunion. And one of the really fun groups to be with. We had our Past presidents Club which was organized during the time of Dr. Bruce Heilman, which, again was right after my ten year tenure as president. So I've been able to be a charter member you might say, of that group. And they still are having fun together which is an indication that once you are involved in Meredith life you don't normally just up and leave it. In thinking about the contacts and the traveling, as you know it involves a great deal of traveling, highlights were visits with alumnae, personal visits with alumnae.

Of course I always felt that a chapter meeting was a bonus. And I was pleased that generally we've had very good attendance. I was looking back and noticed that we usually had an average of over twenty. And this was good because in some counties there weren't even twenty alumnae which we counted, that were organized during that period of time our chapter number grew from down in the twenties till we had almost seventy, about seventy chapters I believe during that ten year span. And like in Pender County there weren't twenty alumnae living there that wanted to get together. Same thing was true in Montgomery County. But they wanted to get together so I felt that wherever two or three alumnae were gathered, that was a pretty good place to go. Because you're going to have fun and nine times out of ten you had good food too! As you well know. So you just didn't want to miss being with those groups. But some of those personal visits were very special.

I think about swinging down through the eastern part of North Carolina, visiting people like Miss Louie [Petit] Martin who was a member of the class of 1909. And when I'd walk in, I remember going one day, and Miss Lou was way back in her breakfast room. I went to the front door. I had been there, she knew I was in Greenville and that I had attended an alumnae meeting, Martin County alumnae meeting the evening before. She was unable to go because she was wheelchair bound. But when I walked in her door, I want you to know though she was sitting in that breakfast room and could not see me, she said, "Come back here Cleo Perry." I've often wondered if some Meredith alumnae aren't plain psychic, you know, the way they have

responded to your coming. But when I would leave there she'd say, "Now, are you going on down east?" And I'd say yes. And I knew what she was asking me about. If I were going to see Miss Emma Hobbs. She and Miss Emma Hobbs were Big Sister-Little Sister. Which says again you know, tradition is so important at Meredith and it's so important to an alumna. It was important to me. One of the important things. But she would want me to give her regards to Miss Emma, who graduated in 1911, and tell Miss Emma that she was still expecting her to come spend the weekend with her. And that was the ritual every time I went to see Miss Louie Petit. I can also think about being up in Asheville and visiting a member of the class of 1905 and we were in the motel and I had one of our Alumnae Association presidents was with me. And I picked up the phone and I said, "Myra, let's go see Mrs. Swain." So I picked up the phone, called, and told her who I am and she said, "I'm sorry. I'm not interested" and put the phone down. So I said to Myra, "We'd better go see Mrs. Swain cause I can't believe she's not interested. And if she isn't I want to know why." So we hopped in the car and we headed toward Mrs. Swain's house and you know how in Asheville everything is up on the hill. And we parked and we had to go up several little flights of stairs to get up to her house. And Myra was sort of tagging along behind cause she'd say, "Cleo, you're not really going after she said all that to you, are you?" I said, "Of course I'm going." So we get to the door and she has a glass storm door and I'm knocking on the door and I see Mrs. Swain. She's a precious little lady. And by the way her father was Oliver Larkin Stringfield. And I see her coming down the hall of her house towards the front door. And she gets to the front door and Myra says, "What are you going to say?" And I said, "I'm going to say, 'Mrs. Swain I'm Cleo Perry. I'm from Meredith College and I know you told me you're not interested but I'm here anyway.'" So when I said that bless her heart she broke out into the biggest smile and you know just hoping, was so happy that I had come. She played the piano for us. Now she was 95 years old at that time. She played the piano for us. She knitted and I have a red outfit that she gave us on that visit which she had knitted. But just untold times like that. Times when, of course as you know my primary, one of my primary functions was to raise money for Meredith College. And you could never be sure of how much good you were doing when you were out there. But I imagine in a case like this, and this happened many times, of visiting a lady in Salisbury and having a lovely time in her home. But knowing, having constant contact, going up for tea. Sort of being very glad that I had seen her, which I was. And then shortly thereafter here came a hundred thousand dollars. You never know, you know because you know there is a deep bond in a Meredith alumna heart, and they look forward to helping Meredith. But they're like everybody else, they want to be sure that their help is wanted. Sitting by a woman, I was quizzed in Washington in a chapter meeting by a member and I thought, well why is she really raking me over the coals, you know, I think Meredith is

doing a super job for women. But I couldn't tell. She was really firing questions at me, one right after another and I was being very truthful and cautious in the manner in which I responded. But I had no idea what she really had in mind until at her death just a couple years later we realized that at that time she was writing her will. And she left her estate to Meredith College. So, the Association is there, as a president of the Association and as a director we're most significant and most meaningful to me. Alumnae supported me to the nth degree and I cannot fail to say that the highlight of my time there, since fundraising was a part of it, was seeing alumnae, 50% or a little over half of the alumnae make contributions to the College. And of those, of that number, about half of them had become EYD, one of those letter jobs, Every Year Donors. And to see us with raises of around \$960,000 plus some additional alumnae related gifts which gave us a \$1,260,000, over \$1,260,000. I have much to be grateful for so far as Meredith alumnae are concerned. I can truthfully say that all through that time they never let me down. And I guess that's why when you say, "Cleo you've got to be chairman of this New Visions Committee," I could not say no, you know. Because I had to do that.

Now, in looking at what life is really like, well Jean there are just so many good, good stories that I could tell you about Meredith alumnae but maybe we'll have to do that at another time.

COOPER: When you get eighty I'll come back.

PERRY: When I'm eighty you come back and we will do some of those, some more of those visits and those exciting precious times that I had with Meredith alumnae. I might include, in thinking about them, I was very fortunate that I was there long enough for two alumnae to return and celebrate their 75th reunion. Of course that had not been done before because time had not passed that, that much time had not passed. But we did have two to return. Mrs. Perry who was a member of the class of 1902, which was the first graduating class at Meredith, came back for her 75th reunion. And needless to say that was a climactic time for all of us who were back for that alumnae weekend. And then Mrs. Emma Hobbs, the little lady I mentioned earlier, down in Edenton, came back for her 75th reunion. So those two were both able to come back. I think we would have had others had they really be able to get back to Meredith. But there's nothing quite like sharing Alumnae Day with a person who was at Meredith 75 years ago.

COOPER: I'm sure that was wonderful.

PERRY: But leaving that post, thinking a little bit about Cleo and what her personal ambitions and so forth, you think if you could live those sixty so years that

you've lived again, what would you do differently? I think that I have really been blessed in that I could have the two careers which I have had. That as a teacher and that as an Alumnae Director. To tell the truth there's a lot of similarity. Because in both cases you're working with people and working with people is essential to my well being, to be perfectly honest. I cannot, I really sympathize with those people, and have compassion for, if we can be so strong, those people who have to sit at typewriters or computers all day long. I can think of nothing that would be worse than if I had to do that. I'm sure that's sort of an exaggerated statement.

My high school principal had a little poem. The author he did not know. I've done it before and it went something like: "Live for something. Have a purpose. And that purpose keep in view. Drifting like some vessel. Laughter and life could never be true." And I think that made an indelible impression. I even went so far as when I gave my little valedictory address at graduation from high school to use that. Because it has had it's impact all my life I guess I should say. And when some doubt, as I said that "I can't" business from my mother, that determined strength from my father, I always said, "Cleo, you've got to live for something and set some kind of goals and then you've got to work to reach those goals." And the important thing be that it be in some way helpful to people. And that it be helpful to people. If I had to put my philosophy of life in a nutshell I suppose that would be about as near as I could.

Needless to say that I could not operate without the undergirding of that Christian force and though I be first to say that I have much growth, yes, spiritually, that that is basic to my life. And of course that means much church involvement and much church activity. And again, teaching is a vital part of my life because I have a class that I've been teaching, well I've taught Sunday School all of my life since intermediate school. And this group that I am teaching now the average age I guess is 65, really keep me going in so far as making me study, making me think, cause they've been very meaningful and significant in my spiritual development.

You might, there might be some area that I ought to cover that you would want to ask me about at this point.

COOPER: You've done a marvelous job and I think we might just make a comment about where we are here this morning. In arriving to do this interview, from stories that I'd heard about Elwood and all of his yard work and what he's doing on the farm and what you are assisting him with now that both of you are retired. I made the comment that the way I found this house was to find the most manicured lawn for this early springtime. And I didn't have to look for the house number because you certainly are having a very pleasant and

very busy life here together as both of you have just recently retired in the same week and almost the same day, wasn't it?

PERRY: Right.

COOPER: And I know that when I come back from that tape on your 80th birthday you will have lots of stories to tell about the growth of the Cleo Perry garden which is to be a part of the art building complex that is so new here now. By that time your garden will probably look, we hope, like the outside of your house does now with all of the little niceties in it. And probably even more significant than that will be hearing stories of those persons who are getting their education as a result of the Elwood and Cleo Perry Scholarship Fund which has been set up recently at your retirement and what is to be an honor scholarship. So those are some of the stories that also we'll hear about next time around.

PERRY: Well, that's good. I do believe in Christian education and whatever level it is on and I believe in education.

COOPER: Well, I know that some women are going to be grateful for the life that you have lived that exemplifies this sort of thing, and then your desire to make opportunities for other young women to receive a Meredith education through this scholarship fund.

PERRY: And gardening of course is a hobby, along with crossword puzzles and a few dozen other things. Right when there's a spare moment I might just mention one activity I never anticipated getting involved in, is helping set up a beauty pageant. But there again, the prime goal, the Miss Teen Pageant, the prime goal is to set up a program which we hope will be totally beneficial to the young ladies who participate, again, in training and educating that person. That is one of our final concerns in doing.

COOPER: Well, I'd like to say for me personally, I am grateful for the relationship I had the opportunity of having with you in serving for those short months as Alumnae Association president while you were the Director of Alumnae Affairs. I think you had faith in me which perhaps I didn't have myself. But, together we worked and you trained me and directed me so that when you retired I was able to go on with the challenge of being Association president and that truly, as you mentioned, for your own self as being Association president for Meredith College, that that is truly a rewarding experience and will too, be one of the highlights of my life.

PERRY: There is no question about it. I think you have held many offices, I have held many offices during my time, and none is quite the same. You know, there

is much benefit gained from any role of leadership you have and again, I think you and I could thank Meredith for training us to be strong leaders. And I believe it was Anne Bryan who would, when you roasted me, use the word “relentless.” And I think there’s a certain amount of training at Meredith that teaches one to be relentless. To keep on plugging. To keep on pushing. I think we both would have to acknowledge that this is one of the great things that Meredith does for a woman. And I am so pleased that it’s doing it for not only young women, but older women who may have an opportunity to go back to that institution and develop. I think it’s marvelous.

COOPER: Yes, that’s one of the things that you really saw come from life in your day as a Director of Alumnae Affairs.

PERRY: And I have often said that if a person, if a girl went to Meredith she already in her way, it might have to be a subtle way, but she had pushed forward and was leading. And this is true. Like you in your own committee to, you know, you sort of rode the church and you’d go into any community and find that Meredith women were running the community in a sense. The churches and the different organizations there. And you won’t be there long but that there won’t be one. That again is what Bruce Heilman said. It didn’t matter wherever he landed. There was always, I think he was in India or somewhere, and he said one of the first things that happened, here was a Meredith alumna on the plane that was there in a strong position. And that was so characteristic of the kind of background that we had.

COOPER: And thankfully that’s not just the past. It’d today too because I was meeting in South Carolina this past Saturday and a 1986 graduate had seen a Meredith sticker on a car in her little town the first day she was there and she went in the bank where the car was parked and said, “Are you the lady with the Meredith sticker on your car?” And she said, “Yes” and she turned out to be one of the oldest alumna in that area. But the bond between the two of them has become so strong just in these few months that it was just fantastic, you know, what they were telling me.

PERRY: I’ve got a Meredith sticker story too Jean. There was an alumna in Florida that had car trouble and she was alone. She pulled off on the side of the road and a car came along and they saw in the back window a Meredith sticker. And the girl said to her husband, “We must go back and help that person because she’s a Meredith alumna.” And this was a Meredith alumna. So they turned around and went back and helped the lady. Shortly thereafter I got a letter from her and she said . . . [end of tape]



VIRGINIA BARNES HIGHFILL
Class of 1947

Today is March 29, 1988. I am in Winston-Salem, North Carolina with Virginia Barnes Highfill of the class of 1947 of Meredith College. She will be our narrator for today and I am the interviewer, Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954.

COOPER: Good morning, Virginia.

HIGHFILL: Good morning, Jean. It's good to have you come today.

COOPER: Thank you for letting us share your memories of Meredith and of your life.

HIGHFILL: Well, I have some very pleasant ones to share.

COOPER: All right. Virginia is now serving on the Awards and Recognition Committee of the Alumnae Association Council. That means she has helped this year to select the Distinguished Alumnae for 1988. Virginia is herself a Distinguished Alumnae recipient and she may tell us a little about that but she'll mostly tell us how things in her life that lead up to this award. Okay Virginia let's hear from you.

HIGHFILL: All right. I kind of followed the outline that you gave and jotted down a few things like the enjoyable class I had at Meredith. I think Bible was perhaps the most interesting one. Mary Ruth, uh Billie Ruth Currin, Mrs. Pran now, and Dr. Eliam Freeman were two of those teachers. Cleo Esbey, now living in Pennsylvania, was there for one year. But those were very enjoyable classes for me. Perhaps the one that was most memorable though, was Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson's English classes. They often met right after lunch and in the springtime about this time of year. We got a little bit drowsy in those classes. But she had a rule that if she saw you yawning or chewing gum she would just stop in the middle of her class and ask you a question. This happened to me one time that I remember I yawned, right after lunch and a very lovely spring day that was nice and warm. But anyway, I remember the content of the class was always very stimulating though the circumstances maybe made us drowsy from time to time. But since I worked as Miss May Grimmer's student assistant for three year, I got to know several of the faculty members personally. She had a little coffee hour which was very enjoyable and Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson and some other faculty members were a part of that little club that had tea together or coffee usually. And so I enjoyed that and got to know the faculty members in a different way from the classroom setting. I felt that Dr. Mary Lynch was such a wonderful Christian and she not only taught Christian principles in the classroom, but by her life, and many times since that

time I have thought of her and experiences that I learned from her in the classroom and on other occasions.

I was active in the BSU during my Meredith career. Also a member of the Astro Society. I don't know whether you were an Astro or. . .

COOPER: I was a Phi.

HIGHFILL: Oh, you were a Phi. I thought those activities were very interesting and enjoyable. I got to know other Astros in a special way during those activities. Of course, I attended chapel services. I loved Dr. Carlyle Campbell's messages and the dignity with which he always provided over those convocations. I feel that as a student at Meredith I was trained to assume leadership roles and that has carried over in my life as a missionary and made it possible, I think, to assume some leadership roles which I might not have undertaken had I not had the experience at Meredith. Coming back from Japan for furlough from time to time I have spoken in churches throughout North Carolina, and other states too, but frequently after speaking in a church someone would come up and say, "I knew you at Meredith" or, "I also am a graduate of Meredith." And this had a special relationship which has helped me to keep up with classmates and friends throughout the years.

COOPER: Virginia, you mentioned BSU. Was the Cary Street Mission sponsored by the BSU or was that different?

HIGHFILL: I'm really not sure about that. I was superintendent of the Sunday School down there before I became BSU president. I assume, as I recall now, that the BSU did try to provide teachers for the Sunday School and support the mission as we could. I remember Mrs. Wade Farmer, Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson's elder sister who was a missionary in Japan for a short time, was the teacher of the adult class. And she was so faithful in coming often she was serving as WMU president of North Carolina and then on Sunday mornings, after having ridden the train all night to get back into Raleigh, she would be present for the class on Sunday afternoon and teach the adults. So this also left a deep impression on me.

The churches in Raleigh were very supportive of us students. I went to Tabernacle, they had a bus that came regularly for us. Also, the Sunday School class taught by Miss Virginia Simms, a Meredith graduate, and she continued to keep up with me and others after we left the class. It was interesting, you mentioned a while ago something about how relationships have been interwoven in your life. I went onto Seminary after Meredith, studied for two years at WMU training school in Louisville. And as I was getting ready to graduate and seeking a position in a church as a Minister of education her son wrote me about serving in his church. I did not go there but the relationship I thought was interesting, that I had known his mother so well and was recommended by her to her son for the job there. Also, another

interesting relationship as I was preparing to serve as president of the BSI. Dr. Carl Townsend, Pastor of Hayes Barton Church in Raleigh was supposed to be our advisor. And in the summer before that he fell out of a cherry tree and was killed. And in just recent years his son Tim has been called to be Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Clarendon in Arlington, Virginia. And that church sponsored me for all my years in Japan, some thirty years. And so this has renewed that relationship. And his mother, Sybil, who is also a dear friend of us Meredith students has been to visit him in that church and so it was sort of like a revival of that relationship that I had during Meredith days in Raleigh there.

As far as the events of the world, of course this was a very critical time in world history, 1943-1947, with World War II being underway. We were fighting Japan. Roosevelt died in office. Harry Truman, whose birthday is the same as mine, and a Baptist, became president. And of course he was in office at the time the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. After I got to Japan in 1950 we had people ask me how a Baptist could possibly have given permission for that. But various events in the world made a deep impression on me during my college years. We were encouraged to keep abreast and also in chapel services there at college we were encouraged to pray for our men who had gone into battle and to remember other nations who were at war with us and who might come to have peace.

As far as feelings about Meredith are concerned I guess the one thing is people, above everything else. Faculty members, students. I had a very favorable four years there. I enjoyed working with Miss Grimmer and got to know the names of a lot of the alumnae of Meredith, and also places. Since retiring I've been to some of these places and thinking, 'Oh I remember that was on that alumnae list' that I had typed up in May's office. Dr. Carlyle Campbell and Dr. John Yarborough, Dr. Eliam Freeman, were ideal male role models on the campus and I appreciated their contribution to my life through chapel services and class periods. I don't know, there may be something that I have mentioned that would . . .

COOPER: The only thing I can think about in your relationships, I know that you have continued a couple very strong relationships with class members. I'm not sure if it was a roommate or there a suite of you that have kept such close contact. Would you like to mention some of those?

HIGHFILL: Yes, Virginia Harris, Virginia Harkle Harris, was my roommate. She was a Music major and I was an English major and we had a different class schedule and all that at Meredith but she was a member of Northwest at the and now lives in the neighborhood here. So I kept up a close relationship with her. And also the suitemates, Jedda Thunderburk Spencer lives in Sanford. Peggy McCaskell who was her roommate, lives in Greensboro. And I guess it was last year maybe that we got together for a luncheon in Greensboro. And Peggy had had some difficulty after an accident and is not as mobile as some

of the rest of us and so we met in Greensboro. And I just recently called and talked to her. Jedda is very active in WMU work in her church and we have met at WMU meetings at Ridgecrest and the annual WMU meetings here in North Carolina. So through the WMU particularly or different church meetings I have had contact with my roommate and my suitemates. And other close friends like Helen Wallace Rusher who was the president of the Student Body, now living in Richmond. Her husband is a doctor and I have kept up with them throughout the years.

COOPER: And probably what makes these relationships so special at this time in your life is that for the past, what thirty four years, you've been so far away that now that you're in close proximity with these other people it's just like college all over again almost.

HIGHFILL: Almost, right. But we have tried to stay in touch one way or the other. My experiences in Japan were also Meredith related from time to time. In 1970 when the Baptist World Alliance met in Tokyo and I was one of the persons who was planning for that meeting, particularly the women's meetings. But, on Sunday morning right during the Alliance Dr. Bruce Heilman brought a group of Meredith alumnae and board members to the church where I was serving there in Tokyo, the Osaka Church. And it was a delight to have him in that group with Meredith who was there in Japan. From time to time I had other Meredith alumnae to come and visit as tourists or in some other capacity. My being in Japan helped me to have other travel opportunities. I served as the Associate Director for WMU for the convention there in Japan for thirteen years. And related to that I went to various Baptist women's meetings in Asia. I had opportunities to go to Hong Kong and Singapore, Bangkok, Korea and the Philippines, in relationship to those WMU meetings. And one year after furlough I went with a friend to England for the Baptist World Alliance in 1955 for this special Jubilee meeting. And enroute to England, of course went to Canada and caught the ship there, but then after that meeting, had an opportunity to go to nine countries in Europe. And then went to Pakistan, Bombay and onto Hong Kong and later got a ship in Hong Kong and went to Kobe Japan, so really sort of made a circle of the world during that furlough and that was a very interesting experience. I don't believe I saw any Meredith graduates on that tour but I did have some interesting experiences in meeting other people. People I had not really expected to meet in England for instance, and during the travels throughout Europe.

Maybe I said something that creates an interest on your part that you want to ask about. I don't know, what were some of the things that you'd like me to mention?

COOPER: You might just sort of capsule a little bit some of your activities while you were in Japan that were directly missionary oriented other than the WMU activities.

HIGHFILL: Well, I served in several different churches as Minister of education. Of course the churches there were very small and do not have a multi-staff that we have here. But as a missionary they accepted me and wanted me to help work in their church with the educational program. And of course I had some religious education at Meredith. And the bible courses and some other opportunities I had there prepared me significantly for the responsibilities in Japan. I had to write literature. Of course I felt grateful for the English courses which I'd had at Meredith. I had to help with young women's organizations, with children's Sunday School, to train teachers in the Sunday School and do this kind of work. I also served as Assistant Treasurer in our mission office in Tokyo for several years.

One thing I hadn't mentioned, I hadn't thought of this before, but at Meredith during the time I was there Miss Brewer had what she calls a "Bride's Course" and it was just one semester but several of us took that. And Miss Brewer always talked about putting a little sprig of parsley here or a little half an orange on this side of the plate or something. But all these little additions to the plate, she said made it interesting. This was one of her favorite sayings, "It makes it interesting if you add this." Well, I thought of that many times. Well, I didn't get to serve as a bride and try out that course but in Japan I was asked to teach cooking classes, America cooking to the women, in Osaka particularly. One hour of bible study and then one hour of cooking. And I tried to remember Miss Brewer's hint about making things interesting. And this is, the Japanese are very good about making things very interesting. They have a lot of dishes that they use to serve the meal and they fix the food in a very attractive way on these lovely dishes. And so I thought well Miss Brewer particularly would have liked to see the cuisine in Japan and attend one of those elaborate meals so that she could see all these "interesting" dishes that they serve.

COOPER: Well, I know that your work in Japan was evidently very rewarding and fulfilling. But I think it just seems to me in having known you particularly for the years since you've been "retired" that your work in Japan was almost like preparing you for your life after retirement, rather than a completion of the job. Would you extend us now to what your continued involvement with the Japanese people is. What you're doing with them now here in America.

HIGHFILL: Well, as I came back from Japan I was asked to serve as part-time consultant in the Language Missions Division of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and this has been a real rewarding experience for me because I have been able to continue a ministry to Japanese who are living in our State. There are six cities in North Carolina that have a rather large population of Japanese. And in three of those cities there are women who were married to servicemen, many of them during the time that I was in Japan. Because we had a large number of American Forces and we do have some now even in Japan. But these Japanese women married American service people while they were in their country and they're living in Fayetteville, Havelock and

Jacksonville. And I continue to work with them. They remember some of the experience I had in Japan. Of course I could relate to time that they were in Japan. Some of them have just recently come to our State but others have lived here for 25 or 30 years and so they know the Japan that I knew when I first went there, and have had good rapport with them because of that experience. And in Charlotte, Raleigh and Wilmington there are business people and families of men who have come here with Japanese companies and I feel that my experience in Japan and working with people who have lived in the States for a while and come back to Japan. I had served for two or three years with our mission as a liaison to Japan, in a liaison capacity to try to relate them to churches when they came back from the States. Some of them had been in Baptist Churches here and Baptist people had written about their return to Japan and so I had an opportunity to work with them in Japan. And then I came to North Carolina after retirement and have been able to follow through on that. It has been a very interesting experience. And of course right now we're getting ready to have 24 more from Japan to come to visit for a short time before going to the Centennial in Richmond, Virginia for the WMU work.

COOPER: And other than these cities that you mentioned that have so many Japanese people, a lot of your just momentary relationships are with people like this who are passing through and you have the opportunity to witness to them and show them the city and you might mention about the hospital here.

HIGHFILL: Yes. In fact I believe right now there are Japanese studying at Baptist Hospital here in Winston-Salem from Sao Poro, the Northern most Island, from Kyushu, the southernmost island, and some have been here in recent years from the main island of Honshu. So I have had a good opportunity to talk with them to help them know something about Winston-Salem. And also to introduce them to churches back in Japan. It has been a very interesting experience for me and a very rewarding experience to be able to do this.

COOPER: Now Virginia, just recently you've had several who have come a worship service in your church here in Winston-Salem.

HIGHFILL: Yes. I always try to invite them for special occasions. Some of them do not know English so well and have a somewhat difficult time to understand sermons. But they certainly love the music. In fact, one Japanese doctor who is back in Nygasa now, came to several services and he said that he loved the music in our church and so he liked to come and sing even though he did not understand fully the sermons that were preached.

COOPER: A Meredith graduate who is in Japan was my classmate, Nobuko Kawano. I understand that you also have a relationship with Nobuko.

HIGHFILL: Yes. This was an interesting relationship. I believe she came to, let's see, do you remember when she came to North Carolina?

COOPER: She graduated in 1954 but I'm not sure when she came.

HIGHFILL: Okay. I believe she left Japan the year that I arrived in Japan. And at least some time during my first years there I met her mother and her mother had, we had good rapport because her daughter was in North Carolina. And there I was missionary from North Carolina. And she wanted to help me get adjusted to Japan. One of the things she taught me was that you're not supposed to put anything on rice. I was putting soy sauce on rice to give it a little flavor you know. And she said, "Oh Miss Highfill we never do that." And I felt real pleased that she felt like, you know, she felt comfortable in helping me to know what to do and I was so grateful that she shared that bit of information with me. And later I was in their home in Fagoka after Nobuko came back to Japan. And from time to time we've been in meetings together. And we've traveled together some. And I've considered her a very fine friend. She has certainly made a real contribution to education of women in Japan. At first she was a teacher of bible in what they call the WMU training school for kindergarten teachers. And then later she went to [Sainon Gaquene]. Of course the training school was a part, was related to Sainon Gaquene. But now she's in the University, the WMU training school has phased out. But she is does co-educational work there at the University. And another interesting experience I had was to meet Phyllis Tribble who was in Nobuko's class, and yours I believe Jean. But, she came to Japan and taught in our seminary there. This was after she had done some graduate work with the State in Seminary and taught there for several weeks and it was an experience to get to meet her, as she came through Tokyo going on down to Fagoka where I think Nobuko helped her to use well that opportunity she had of teaching at the Japanese Seminary.

COOPER: Nobuko has been back to the state several times since she has been back in her career life.

HIGHFILL: Right. Well, she visited here one Sunday I remember. I saw you at the church and then had a visit in our home here for a while. And of course I got to know Lee Ann Lou, I didn't mention one of the travels to Taiwan for a Baptist women's meeting and while I was there I got to meet Lee Ann Lou. She was Director of the Women's Center I Taipei at the time and it was a joy to get to meet her. And of course, I later knew of her coming back to the states here and getting treatment which Bob helped her to get for cancer.

COOPER: And now you and she share a similar honor of both being Distinguished Alumna at Meredith.

HIGHFILL: That is an honor and I am grateful for that.

COOPER: Okay, I think we're just about to the end of our tape. Virginia how did you feel about your Meredith education when you were in Japan.

HIGHFILL: Well, really I felt very proud that I had had a good college education, good foundation on which to build my seminary education. It helped me I think to relate to a group of people who put education as top priority in their lives. They start even with kindergarten trying to choose the best [end of side one].

[Side Two]

COOPER: We are here on Tuesday on March 29, 1988. Jean Cooper narrator. Virginia, you were talking about education or the academic excellence in Japan, so would you like to continue with that now?

HIGHFILL: Well, one of the first things that I did in Japan was have an English bible class for the group of college students and their questions were very stimulating and thought provoking and I felt that I had good preparation to work with people who are so eager to get the best education possible. They have a saying in Japan called, “Kue Ku Mama,” “Education Mother.” And this is because the women there place so much value on education and they strive to have their children in the best institutions. They do what they can to fix snack foods for them while they’re preparing for their examinations, particularly the entrance examinations into universities. And it is always a joy when their child does well and gets into the school of their choice. So I felt very grateful for the opportunity that I had to attend Meredith and to be better prepared for the work in Japan.

COOPER: Were there any “all women” institutions in Japan?

HIGHFILL: Yes there are. In fact we have one now, [Sainon Juvaquene], which is a women’s university and goes through junior college, founded by missionaries. And there are other mission groups that started school for women.

COOPER: So they didn’t think it was totally strange when you told them you went to one?

HIGHFILL: No indeed they didn’t. And particularly since it was a Baptist school, you know. I’m proud to say it’s, you know, one of our Baptist colleges.

COOPER: I know that you had different churches “supporting you” when you were in Japan. But your home church loved you dearly all the time you were in Japan because in the years that I had a relationship with the women of the church as well as the total church which was your home church, there was always monthly news from Virginia Highfill. And how careful you were to be sure that we knew that you were grateful for the contacts between your home church and very careful to let the church know exactly what you had done with the money that they had sent to you, which was such a nominal amount. But the way you responded to it, it was the same as if it was thousands of

dollars. And the way the people responded to it was that they really felt that they were part of your ministry in Japan and they loved you dearly for the way you were representing them in Japan. Now that you're back in your home church you there again have been so very active as now serving as WMU Director. And, let's see, have you finished your term as Deacon?

HIGHFILL: I finished that in September of last year.

COOPER: One of our first female Deacons in this church. So, would you like to share some of your feelings about that?

HIGHFILL: Well, I was pleased to attempt to be a faithful steward of what the Lord has entrusted to me. It was not unusual for me to serve. I didn't feel unusual. It wasn't unique for me to serve as a Deacon because in Japan many of the churches had women to serve as Deacons and they served the Lord's supper, took up the offering they were ushers and served in many capacities like that. In fact, one of the women who is coming here in May is the WMU president and she has served as a Pastor of one of the churches there. She later married a Pastor and they are going into a pioneer area very soon now. But I knew people like this and so I did not feel uncomfortable in coming back to my home church to serve as a Deacon. I think that just getting back into our society I think was maybe not as efficient in doing that as I would have liked to have been. But anyway, it helped me to feel that I had a place here and I was grateful for that. I have also enjoyed teaching Sunday School which is one of me delights to share the bible with people here as well as with Japanese.

COOPER: Let's see, you are teaching the...

HIGHFILL: ... the adult class that used to be called the Madison class, older adult women class.

COOPER: Okay. And now as you're serving as WMU Director you're having an opportunity to really get our women of the church, our Baptist women, involved as you have the 24 Japanese women coming for the big centennial celebration in Richmond. I think that really shows how past and present weave together with so many interesting experiences in your life today here in Winston-Salem.

HIGHFILL: Yes. I feel that too and I'm very grateful for the experiences the Lord has permitted me to have. I am thankful to him for the cooperation and for the support. I think this has meant so much to me to know that I have people supporting me and praying for me, and cooperating with me as we work together at the task the Lord has called us to do.

COOPER: And I think it's interesting that there are other retired missionaries in this area. Not from Japan but from other areas that you can have a rapport with now

too. Mary Phillips who is in Clemmon's Baptist Church for one. And then others that keep passing back and forth like Doris Walters who was in Japan. So, I think that's great. Well, I know your church is truly grateful for your ministry back home.

Virginia, I know some people look at this lovely little ranch house sitting on Petree Road and think, "Oh what a quiet life they must live!" And, but as you live here with your mother who is 93 ½ years old, I remember mentioning to her one day about what a stimulus for living that she has at this moment in her life. A person who looks as if she's not surely not more than 80 instead of 93 ½. And who gets around like she's about 75 I think. That I mentioned to her about the activity and she said, "Oh there's never a dull moment," because you have so many Japanese friends coming through, missionary friends coming through, church friends coming through. There is always activity in this house and the telephones ringing for people wanting you. So, would you like to share something about your mother with us?

HIGHFILL: Well, several people had tried to get mother to come to Japan to visit me over there. And she always had an excuse, "I don't have a suitcase packed. I don't have a ticket. Nobody's offered to buy me a ticket. I don't know the Japanese language. If I get over there Virginia's busy and she couldn't take me around so what would I do?" So, just before I left to come back to the States someone said, "We'll give you door to door service, we'll take you and see that you get to Virginia's place and just love to have you go and visit. And she said, "I don't need to go to Japan because the Japanese are coming here. " And so I think that's proven to be true since I got home. So many Japanese friends I had not even expected to visit have visited for a short time or longer period. Mother is always cooperative. Wanting to do what she can to help out, prepare a meal or refreshments or get the house ready for someone to spend the night. We've had one young women, high school student who came and stayed about a week. She enjoyed being at home she said, here in the States after being with a host family in New Jersey she did not know. And then we've had others come from time to time but mother has been certainly interested in the work and a part of the work all along the way.

COOPER: And I believe that a number of years ago, of course in her younger years, she was a Girl's Auxiliary leader?

HIGHFILL: Yes, yes. She has had an interest in missions and wanting young women to have an interest in missions for many many years.

COOPER: And they call it Girl's Auxiliary then and call it Girls in Action now.

HIGHFILL: Right. It's all a part of our WMU organization in the Baptist Church.

COOPER: Right. Now, do you have some advice for Meredith or some things that you would like to see improved or changed about Meredith?

HIGHFILL: Well, the one thing I'd say in closing is that I'd like for Meredith never to lose sight of the Christian principles on which she was founded. And that provisions be made for qualified Christian young women to get an education at Meredith. I know the costs have gone up so much that perhaps well qualified young women might not, without some help, be able to study at Meredith. But I hope that that will always be a part of the program there that scholarships or work grants as I had, working with Miss Grimmer in the Alumnae office, would be provided for women who really want an education at our Baptist women's college.

COOPER: A little on the lighter side now Virginia. You have recalled to me that after high school you worked for four years before going to Meredith. And so you had a maturity under your belt, you had some practical experience under your belt, and I'm sure you had had some "freedom" from home from having been financially independent and that sort of thing. How did this work when you perhaps were put back with girls that were mostly four years younger than you were?

HIGHFILL: I had some interesting experiences. I thought, I didn't feel that much older except, when as I mentioned earlier about the war, I had a friend who came during my freshman year. He had gotten a leave from service and came to Meredith to visit and I had to go to Miss Annie Baker and ask for special permission to go out without a chaperone. And it took some doing to get that but that was one of the interesting things. And of course a lot of the girls who were younger than I even had problems with that because they had been dating in high school. Maybe not as early as some of them date now. But they too had problems with the chaperone bit and tried to work it out to date with other couples or somehow keep from having one of the professors to go with them. I think one of the other rules that bugged the classmate was that of smoking. I understand now that there's no big deal at Meredith about their having smoking, I don't know if it's smoking in the rooms or not. But anyway, this is one of the problems that we encountered. My friend Helen Wallace who was the president of the Student Government had quite a bit of problems with that and girls being found on the campus smoking.

COOPER: And probably in your day there was more smoking going on even than today. More girls were smoking then than now I imagine.

HIGHFILL: Maybe so, but they were not supposed to be smoking at Meredith.

COOPER: N. That made it all the more tempting, didn't it?

HIGHFILL: But we had, we had good relationships with students at Wake Forest and State and I know that the BSU activities. In fact, Calvin Knight who is at Baptist Hospital now was BSU president at Wake Forest at the time I was BSU president at Meredith and so we had some activities together that were

very interesting for all of us.

COOPER: When I was there I remember that we didn't have dances as they do today. But, the BSU could have a square dance. Do you remember any of those activities or was that not...

HIGHFILL: I don't believe we, I don't remember having any square dances.

COOPER: What did the BSU activities, uh picnics?

HIGHFILL: Had picnics, had parties. You know, big socials and of course the BSU convention. North Carolina was a big time when we went for banquets and convocations and classes, special interest groups.

COOPER: Where did you usually have those conventions?

HIGHFILL: At different churches. I don't know that we met in the auditorium there in Raleigh, but we might have at one time.

COOPER: Did you stay in the home of people? Because there weren't a lot of motels like there are now. How did you...?

HIGHFILL: I don't recall. I stayed in so many different homes for different reasons. Speaking of different churches, I have stayed in many many different homes and had some very fine relationships also there.

COOPER: A postscript to this tape is that Virginia kept her commitment as scheduled with me, in spite of the fact that she had had the flu and was still having difficulty talking on this day. If you noticed little things on the tape that indicates she did have a cold. This does conclude the tape with Virginia Highfill.



MARJORIE JOYNER NORTHUP
Class of 1951

This tape is being recorded on Friday, October 28, 1988 at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem. The narrator for this tape is Marjorie Joyner Northup, class of 1951. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954. This is recorded as part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae.

COOPER: Thank you for letting me come to share with you Marjorie, and may you share with Meredith some of your thoughts and experiences. You can start wherever you wish.

NORTHRUP: I like the outline you gave me. I think I'll just sort of go along with that. The first question you ask on the outline is "What was your most enjoyable class." I think that the class and the person is probably Dr. Julia Hamlett Harris and her American Literature class. I mean, if I had sat in that class and known that I would be here at a Museum of American Art relating American art to American literature I wouldn't have believed it. So I think what I'm saying is that that class so turned me on to American literature that when this kind of job opening came on and I had a lot of American literature in my background, I felt like this was really the place that I should be. So I'm very grateful, you know to her, for getting me really turned on to American literature.

COOPER: And how long have you been here?

NORTHRUP: I've been here at Reynolda House ten years now.

COOPER: And your official title?

NORTHRUP: I am Curator of Education. And that involves working with a splendid collection of American art from 1755 up to the 1980's. The major part of my work here I plan programs, work with teachers, classes, seminars, and the biggest part of it is relating the [Argnar] Collection with American literature and American music. I wish I had you there for the American music because I am not musical, although I look back at Meredith and I'm very happy that we had to go to some concerts, right? And I also took piano there for the first time. I was a miserable failure. But at least I got in there and learned that it wasn't for me.

COOPER: You were in those days that you still had buses taking us to the Civic Music Auditorium downtown for concerts.

NORTHRUP: Right. I thought that was exciting. And then one, another thing you asked, "What courses were significant in the profession." I've just said that the English course and certain the Art. I was one of those that could never decide what my major would be. Never could, so I ended up with a degree in psychology and art, took as much art as I could. I went to summer school and got a teaching certificate in English. Primarily because my father, well there were four girls, and he said everybody had to have a teaching certificate. I never planned to teach but that was, I'm very glad I had Miss Rose's methods class, because I think that her teaching methods class helped me to be able to teach in other fields, not just English. It spilled over into art and some of the other things that I work with. And then you asked about what was the significant value of homemaking. Well, I probably should have taken some of Miss Brewer's courses. I never will forget going into the tea they'd have and I just about fell over, knowing that I would never be able to do that. But I think that Meredith really helped me learn who I was. It really helped me know the kind of person I was and helped me affirm myself. And it gave me a lot of skills to go out in life and do what I wanted to do. I mean, I wanted, as many women, I wanted to have a good marriage and a good family. And I wanted to be able to use my brains. And I knew I was smart. I mean, I didn't always make the honor role but, you know, Meredith let me use my brains and kept pushing and asking me to really stretch my mind. And hopefully I've continued doing that.

And the community activities I think is really interesting. I think you'd never believe that Meredith influenced me this way. Because I've been, I guess one of the highlights of my community activities is civil rights. And working with the black/white community. You say, now here you are in the 50's and I never saw a black person on the campus except in a subservient role, so how in the world did Meredith influence you? And I, would you like to know? Well, I was active in the church there and one of the things I got to do was they asked, they were trying to get a group of students to go to Fisk University in Nashville for a meeting. And so they decided some from Meredith went, some from State went. We went across town to the St. Augustine's Episcopal school and some went. Some black students went. We got in the station wagon and we all headed up to Fisk University. I can't remember what year, probably sophomore or junior year. We got as far as Black Mountain, you know, and people needed to go to the restroom. And there was no place for them to go. We could not go, so we would stop at churches. We also couldn't eat. There was no place for us to eat. This was in the late 1940's, early 50's. Then again we had to call ahead to churches to have the sandwiches ready for us. Well, it just knocked me off my feet. I mean there we were sitting in a Christian community with this kind of impact and that, that impact. Then we ended up at Fisk University. I was housed in the president of Fisk University's home. You know, a very gracious black

gentleman and his wife. And that was just an entirely new experience. That experience plus Meredith's continually having Clarence Jordan of the Koinonia Group from Georgia really put a seed in me that really changed my life. I am one of the few white women that were involved in civil rights in Winston-Salem. And that was interesting. Meredith always talks about "calls". I became an Episcopalian when I got out of Meredith. Primarily because my husband was one. But then I think I was really ready for a change from the very, I guess more rigid...I was raised as a more rigid Baptist than other Baptists are now. The minister in the 60's read a letter from the pulpit saying, if anyone was interested in, from the Christian church to be involved in civil rights, you were to get out and do something. So I came home that day and there was an article in the paper that a core of civil rights groups was meeting that Sunday afternoon so I turned to my husband and said, 'Well, I'm going to that meeting this afternoon.' He said, "You are?" And I says, 'Yes I'm sure. Everybody at St. Paul's church will be there because it read from the pulpit that you're to go out and do something.'" So I really felt the call. Went out there and of course as you could very well suspect I was the only person from St. Paul's. There was somebody else I knew. I got very involved, went out on the line during the civil rights work here as far as getting cafeterias integrated. I did swim-ins. Do you know what a swim-in is? A swim-in is when a black and a white go to the swimming pool together, you know, and they'll let one in and not the other. And so that. . . and another thing that came out of that is I worked for the YWCA. I got a large amount of grant money to set up black and white dialogs all over the city to help integrate the schools. So, you think about that incident at Meredith College. I feel surely if that had not happened. . . that was such an impact on me. And I didn't act on it then. I mean, I didn't come back and say, well, you know, let's get the restrooms so that anybody could go in them. But the seed was planted there in the 50's and when the 60's ended and then the 70's when the schools were integrated here came along, I was ready. I was ready, had the seed planted. Does that..?

COOPER: Yes, that was very significant I think. And since Winston-Salem was one of the sort of initial places that the integration work was carried on. I think that was significant that you were at that time and in that place.

NORTHRUP: It was fascinating. Of course, working in civil rights that summer of 1963 I never will forget my husband. We had just adopted twins and he said I can't believe you're going out there and said, "Well, the one thing is I want you to promise me that you will not go to jail." He said, "You can go out and do anything but don't go to jail and leave me with these twins." He said the _____ come back and snatch 'em away. I said, Okay I won't. So when I said I went out on the line, I couldn't picket but I could go out there and be with them. Get food, get money, get whatever they need, go to the meetings.

I could sing “We shall overcome” backwards and forwards. And what came out of that too is a very significant friendship with blacks here in town. I mean it was wonderful. Some of the... got to know Louise Wilson and the first head of real deep friendships that have carried through the years and in all of the things that I work in even today. It’s been really amazing.

And the other thing there and I thought related back to the time I went with the Meredith group and the same St. Augustine College students, is a part of the civil rights. You had to take training in, you know, how to protect your body in case you’re beaten. And that was very significant to me because I thought about those, you know, the blacks that did go, that did have to learn how to really protect themselves. So, who would have thought that? So I think that’s interesting.

COOPER: It sure is.

NORTHRUP: So I think, you know, I did a lot of praying and singing but of all of my religious influences there that incident of Meredith helping, Meredith pushing me into a wider range. And that’s what, I mean, I got that. Meredith does it sort of reluctantly sometimes. I don’t mean that but they did and I’m grateful but I wish they’d even done it more.

COOPER: Was Dr. Campbell... I remember that I went to an NAACP meeting with, at his suggestion. Was he the one who was directing you?

NORTHRUP: I can’t remember that. I wish I could. I don’t know whether it was just the BSU and you raised your hand and said, “I’ll go,” the Lord sent me, or what.

COOPER: Well, I just know he did...

NORTHRUP: But I certainly, it very well could because he certainly was a religious influence in my life. It helped me widen my horizons as far as what real faith was. I still have his class notes from Christian Ethics. I am very, considered myself when I got out of Meredith, considered myself, I couldn’t believe how well read I was in theology. I mean, I did have a working knowledge of Tillich and Niebuhr. And one summer, in continuing on, I went up to Union Seminary in Richmond, you know, to study with Richard Niebuhr, you know, who was doing some work in art and theology. So, and our other community activities I think that, you know, I was a leader at Meredith. And I always had been. I was a leader before I got there. I was a leader in grammar school, high school. You know, one of the first women presidents of Wiley School. So I mean Meredith helped me keep affirming that. I wouldn’t give them the whole credit but when I came out I probably was a much better

leader because of being president of the student government and that just led me in always. I've served on and still do, quite a few community boards. I've been very active in the YWCA. I serve on the Family Services Board. I served on the Arts Council Board. You know, just a lot of variety there.

And then, another question on the outline was, "The significant value, how does it help your continuing education?" Well, I think I always loved learning. But Reynolda House, I mean, Reynolda House? Isn't that interesting? Because Reynolda House reminds me of Meredith. The open stacks of the library were just wonderful. I would just get out the most, just very unusual books. I'd be reading about the Indian theology and then next week I'd find some French writer and then I'd read the novels that I was assigned. But I'd just sort of wander through. I have this thing that you just wander through the stacks and a book will grab you. And it may change your life. How do you like that?

COOPER: I know why you are so happy here at Reynolda House then because you have, the place has that open feeling.

NORTHRUP: Yeah. I'm so glad you took the course this summer cause you know how I feel about learning, and open learning. And pushing to.... And I must say about continuing education, another person, certainly two more people, I mean there are many of them. Of course Dr. Johnson so, I loved her English classes. I took as many of them as I could. And one of the things I liked so much was she pushed me to write a journal. And I'm still writing a journal. I still keep my journal and I have told her. I told her that before she died and she was very happy to know that people were still writing. The journal has really meant a lot to me in my spiritual life. And just being a person. I love to reflect and see, read what my concerns were twenty years ago. I can't believe it. You know, who would be concerned about what your child is making in phys. ed? You know, it really moves along. And I must say that Harry Dorsett ...I like, when I think about the teachers there, I think the influence is wonderful. I liked having a maverick teacher. There is no other way to describe Harry Dorsett. He was a maverick teacher and he had a wonderful way of teaching, which reminds me again of our Reynolda House where a lot of times instead of giving a whole lot of facts here at Reynolda House we'll ask you to pose a question about what you might want to know about a painting or a piece of music. And that's where I first got acquainted with this question and answer. I mean, you would go into his class and it was an open scene. And he sort of took you where you were and went with it. I felt a real resistance to him by other faculty members when I was there because he read his classes so different. He had John Dewey's picture up there. But he was very influential. Not in my life but for some people who don't even admit it. Because he was so maverick. And because he didn't fall in line with everything religiously. But I'm saying that he meant a great deal to me and I think it's very important, I think the Christian concept at Meredith is very important. But I think

it's very important to have people like Harry Dorsett at Meredith because they think, we need people thinking in all different ways. And I love the way that everybody felt like the faculty was really together. I really excited me even then. And I hope they're doing it now. Do you hear this Faculty? They were going off on a retreat and reading the same book. I remember, seems to me they were reading at that time some thing like C.S. Lewis or Trueblood or something and I got very excited to think that a faculty would care that much to read the same book and get together. It really excited me. And I love that closeness together but I also think it's extremely important in living in the 80's, 60's, 70's, 50's, or whatever, to have some sort of mavericks. Did you get that sense?

COOPER: Yes. I didn't have Dr. Dorsett, or Mr. Dorsett, but I still enjoy seeing him come on Alumnae Day as a professor of Meredith. He's one of the few who comes every time.

NORTHROP: Well, I'll have to, I should write and hope you'll give him this tape. One of the questions was to share your evaluation of your education. I think it was about the best education I could have gotten, you know, when I was there at that time. And one of the things too I think about is all the outside experiences I got. And I think about that with my old children. Other people too, that some of the best learnings are done outside the classroom. When you see in all my art classes we went down to the North Carolina Museum of Art regularly. That's got to have had an influence on me. I went over to North Carolina State University, you know, to hear some top architects and artists speak. I went through my psychology and did some work in sort of art therapy at Dix Hill, went over there. I mean, that was a really broadening experience to me. One of the things I'll never forget is I testified before legislative committee. And that's lead me to keep up with mental health. And also the League of Women Voters. I am real interested in a volunteer and there was an award I got from the Mental Health Association. I received a state award, I think that's a local, but I received the state award for Outstanding Volunteer in North Carolina in Mental Health, one year. That's about '78. And that certainly came from my psychology classes at Meredith and also the fact that I did something. That was funny because the League of Women Voters, if you want to hear this incident, and the some of the psychology classes got together. And they were horrified that they were going to spend so much money on the Dorton Arena. Just millions and millions of dollars and Dix Hill was in such bad condition. Because we'd been over there and we'd been working as volunteers. And so I think we flipped a coin and one person was selected, you know, to go there and testify before this very prestigious committee. And I got it. I remember they decked me out. The wardrobe was chosen. They even put furs on me. And I went down to that committee and stood up, you know, and gave them all these facts and figures that our community had gathered together saying, you know, what Dix Hill needed as opposed to the Dorton Arena. Of course the Dorton Arena, and I love the Dorton Arena, it's probably the most significant architectural building in North Carolina. So I'm glad it went up. But I think that,

I mean, who got to do that? Isn't that exciting?

COOPER: I'm sure you must have told your husband, who is an architect, the story about the Dorton Arena.

NORTHRUP: Yeah. That was fun. And then the next, we're moving on down to socially, one of the questions you asked about rating your social life. I had a terrific social life. I never dated that much in high school. I know we just played. I think in fact our class figured that within a radius of about twenty minutes we had 26 and 6/10ths points of a man for every girl at Meredith College. So, you know you didn't even have to have great looks. So I thought it was just fun and wonderful.

COOPER: That's very interesting. I've always talked about the circles of males over females in that area. But I had not had it down to statistics.

NORTHRUP: Yeah. There you go. It may be different, you better work on that now. I felt like that we were inhibited in that we didn't have any, there was not, there were very few things that we could really invite our dates on campus to have any fun. There just wasn't, I mean they could come by for a concert or something like that but I felt, you know, it was too bad, you know. I was one of those that lead the vogue for dancing. I mean, I tried to get the bad things on campus. I mean, I got smoking in. Can you believe, isn't that terrible? That's one of the worst things I did now. But people were smoking all the time and so I lead the fight and got smoking on campus. That's one of the things I accomplished and I'm sure I'd be the first one to get it off the campus now.

COOPER: But you didn't win on the dancing. That came after you were there, right?

NORTHRUP: I didn't win on the dancing. I never will forget going to a committee of the Board of Trustees, you know, just lay it out by saying, 'Can't we have a square dance? Can't we do this, you know, and try to say the same thing that was a lack of thing. And I never will forget this little old lady, if you pardon me, looking at me and saying, "Can't, don't you think about anything but dancing?" You now, just like that, and I just thought, 'forget it.' Then I decided later it was much more fun to go off campus to go to dances anyway. But I felt like, you know, we really were restricted. And they did have a couple of, tried to do some socials where they wasn't dancing. You just can't hang it right out.

COOPER: That's where BSU came in good though. We could go to BSU things off campus and look forward to that.

NORTHRUP: I know. One of the questions you asked me to talk about was some of the college friends I kept up. My college roommates, I had several of them, Margaret Washburn from High Point. I've seen her occasionally still. I've never been with

anybody I laughed with more in my life. I mean, we laughed so much we laughed through our whole junior year of college. She didn't come back and my last year I roomed with Louise Wade from Dunn and I saw her not too long ago, stopped down there. But the person I guess I really got close to after was Caroline Keeter Harlan. Caroline was a religion major who went off to Union Seminary in New York and she came to Winston-Salem one summer to take some pastoral care training. And she was, you know, when you have your masters degree and you're intellectual and you're interested in music you think, 'who in the world will I get her a date with?' So we knew this young Doctor at Bowman Gray, Luke Keeter Harlan, he was a friend of ours. We said, well we'll have him over for an evening of music and nothing will ever come of it. Well, something really did come of it. They fell madly in love and ended up getting married. Her family about killed us. She was an only child from an eastern North Carolina town. But it all came to live happily ever after. What happened when they went to Japan to live, since her family was very much against it, we felt like we really had to go over there and see them so that we could tell the family here and give them some support. We didn't have much money so we decided to rent or sell whatever we had to go. So I took all, I had been married about five years I think or less, and so I decided the best way to get over there was to sell anything I had which wasn't very much. So I took, did have some very nice silver and so I found a buyer for my silver and I sold all of my silver except one thing. I saved one, this is hilarious, but one calling card plate cause that was just, can you imagine, I mean how many of us live in the kind of house where you'd need a silver calling card plate for ladies coming in the afternoon. So I'm going to have that, never have had the number, but I'm going to have it framed. So we borrowed the money, sold the silver, headed for Japan. We took off, just quit our jobs and went over there. Well, they were getting along fine. We had a wonderful time. My husband did some architectural study over there and it just really changed our life. When you get out of Meredith most people that are college graduates you just, so easy to get into acquiring things, right? I mean, you just sort of, all of a sudden you want....

COOPER: Especially in the 50's.

NORTHRUP: Right, in the 50's. You mean it's not like that now? It's worse. But anyway, we were at the point then that you start, you know, acquiring a bigger house, a bigger car, a fabulous wardrobe, this that and the other. Well, when we went to Japan all that just flipped completely for me, for my husband too. And we realized it really helped us see what the important things are in life. And also it's wonderful, we decided if we'd never want to grow any grass to be mowed because Japan never did have any. And it just really changed our life and we were very close to them. We lived with the Keeter Harlans and also saw, ran into Virginia Highfill over there, a Meredith graduate that entertained us. And it was a very moving experience. It was also a moving experience to me because at that time, or right before then, I had not decided what denomination I wanted to be. And my husband was Episcopalian and

we visited around to a lot of churches. When I, I had been going to Episcopal church so I knew the Holy Communion service pretty well. When we went to Japan one of the things we did every Sunday was to go to Holy Communion a small Japanese church in Kyoto. And the wonderful part about that it was in Japanese. And we knew it. We knew the Holy Communion service. So we could go into there and even though it was in Japanese. And that to me said, you know, this is it. This is the worldwide church. This is a community really coming together wherever you are and I think that sort of helped clinch what I wanted to be. Course I was in, I was raised just like my mother was raised as Methodist and she went to my father who was a Baptist. And that was sort of expected, when you get married you sort of go with... And I think that really helped get me into the Episcopal church with a lot of joy and fervor. I've been very active in the Episcopal church. That goes right on into that. I've been active especially in women's issues.

COOPER: And I know that Caroline and her husband still lived in Japan for a while, but now live in the States?

NORTHRUP: Right. They came back and Luke was head of the Anesthesiology Department at Yale University. It all had a wonderful, thank you for reminding me, it had a wonderful ending because after we went over there and we took wonderful slides. Came back and showed them to the Masseys and they were excited about Japan. It was so beautiful. They heard all, you know, we said all good things which we felt. And then they went over there to visit them and I think the bond was made then. And I think it was just, more people should marry Japanese. I think it worked out so beautifully and I think the thing that brought them together was their faith, it really was. I mean, that's the thing, he was over here. I think the Baptist church over there had helped him come over to do some of his studies. And we've kept up with them. They have three children; a doctor, computer scientist, and a teacher of the Alexandra Technique. I just saw Caroline, just met her last week. We met down at the Research Triangle Center for dinner before she flew back to New York. And we've done a lot of vacationing together. Our families would get together for vacation. So we've been through a lot together, you know, talking about our life, our faith, our children, Meredith.

COOPER: And she's in New York now?

NORTHRUP: She, they live in outside of New Haven, Connecticut. But she teaches and comes into New York. So she's in New York part of the time.

COOPER: Well, and you go to New York occasionally with Reynolda House.

NORTHRUP: I do. I take groups. That's one of my wonderful jobs here. I get to take people on trips. Just trying right now thinking about how sometimes we'd just go up for a day and see two or three museums. Then I try to touch base with her up there too.

I think I've talked a lot about the next category. You were talking about spirituality. And I think that it meant a lot to me to come into a Christian community. I look back on it now and I wonder whether the Christian community was too closed. Do you understand what I mean by that?

COOPER: Yeah.

NORTHRUP: Yeah. I mean you had to sort of think a certain way or you weren't [end side one]

[Side Two]

COOPER: This is side two of a tape being narrated by Marjorie Joyner Northup for an Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae. Marjorie, continue with what you recall from the other side about sort of a closed feeling of our Christian community.

NORTHRUP: I think it was good in a way and it was bad in a way. It would be wonderful to go into a Christian community, I can't emphasize that enough, but sometimes it was almost too closed. I had a lot of friends at Meredith that weren't that interested in the church. And I'm looking back on it now and they meant as much to me and they weren't, they didn't feel as accepted, you know, as others. And I don't know how we can remedy that, what we'd do about it now. I'm sure they don't make them go to church anymore anyway. And that was a hard thing, to make people to go to church when I was there, that really didn't have that background or believe in it. And I think some of our feelings about Christianity spilled over to them I'm sure. And I'm sure that's what Meredith is all about. I wouldn't change it except to be a little more open. One of the main, one of the, you know I went to First Baptist Church and taught Sunday School there and I think that was going right from my home church over there and that, you know, that was okay. It wasn't that significant to me.

One of the most significant experiences I had came through Meredith. I worked for the Sunday School department as an intern in the mountains one summer when I was a sophomore. And I think that is another thing that just changed my life. They would give you a study book and just send you out. Did you ever do that? Just sent you out just in the hinterlands, like Murphy, North Carolina. Way out there. And you'd be sent out to lead a study course for a week. And here I was, a sophomore in college. I was all of 18 I think, or 19. And sent out and here are these 50 people coming every night to hear you talk. And then during the week, you know, you made calls and knocked on doors. And the whole idea was, you know, to find out what people wanted in church. Well, I'm telling you, if you can go through and do that you can do anything. I mean, I could conquer the world after doing that. And that was a wonderful experience and I hope they're doing it, I guess that's sort of

like...

COOPER: Now was that in the summer?

NORTHRUP: That was in the summer. But it was Meredith sponsored. I mean, Meredith got you lined up with the Sunday School department. I think the same ones now are like the Journeymen that go to Africa and other things like that.

COOPER: Yeah. Okay. I went to one church and stayed all summer. But I see what you're talking about. Yeah. The experience I had was to work with the youth in a small little church. But it was, I guess, sort of the same type of thing except yours... yes, moving around every week that was...you really had lots of people, didn't you?

NORTHRUP: And then to, also for people just to think you knew something. Can you imagine? I mean, and some of these people had just been reading the Bible everyday. And then here you were, but they were just so loving. It was a wonderful community. I mean, it really was a wonderful community. And I think that just sort of revitalized my faith too. To realize that, you know, I really believe in, I don't think you can be a Christian without being in a community. I mean that's the way my faith is changing now. And I think Meredith had something to do with that. I think that many people think that you can just, say find Jesus and live alone. But I just don't think it can be done. I think that you act out your faith in community. And ...

COOPER: Christianity is an action rather than just a belief.

NORTHRUP: Right. That's what I believe. So I think that ... One of the things too when I went to Meredith, one of the things in my spirituality, that's the first time I'd ever visited any other churches. And I think that was so important. I mean, did you? I visited Catholic church and Episcopal church, the Methodist church. And that was so, had a big influence on me.

As far as world affairs, I think that's one of the questions that was asked here, I talked about... I can't remember too much about that. I remember the Korean War was going on and one of the guys I knew at State College who was a cheerleader went off to Korea and was killed. I remember the day that Ghandhi died and that was a very very sad day because I loved him anyway. And he's been a spiritual mentor in my life and also having Clarence Jordan come from Koininia. He talked a lot about the Ghandhi influence and that too and kept me up. It's always fun to have the legislature there. I think that's just a really big plus, just being in Raleigh, is the legislature's there. And I went down and as I said I joined the League of Women Voters when I was at Meredith and I'm still a member here. Just went straight in and rejoined and have really kept up my interest in politics and knowing about the world through them.

COOPER: You're the first one whose mentioned the legislature. I think that's really significant.

NORTHRUP: Yeah well I think, I hope that they're making those students go down there and observe because I think it's a wonderful way to, you know, to understand. Of course I was in the student legislature, I hope they still have that. Where college students come from all over North Carolina and run their own legislature. And pass laws and then they're given some, a little bit of publicity. But they're always doing these sort of way out things like legalizing what shouldn't be legalized and so forth. And raising, lowering the drinking. I mean, that's what they, a lot of times they do. One of the questions you asked, "Who were your fondest memories of Meredith." I think I've already probably talked about that. I think it's just a whole community of people that really cared about you. That the teachers really cared about you and the students cared about each other. And I think that's probably it for me. I mean, I really enjoy living on the halls. I still dream about it. I mean, Meredith is still, comes in my dreams just a whole lot. Of being on a certain hall or meeting somebody or ... and I think that's very significant. Are you into dreams now?

COOPER: Yeah. Well, I have dreamed back in those times too.

NORTHRUP: So I think, you were there four years weren't you? You can't have lived that close, in that close of a community for four years and of course that's it. How many people get to live in that close a community for four years? I mean, it's really significant. It's got to be I think, don't you? And you were asking about Meredith as an all female institution. I just think it's great. I've been reading about that most of the great women leaders in our country come from female universities. Have you read that? A large percentage of them and I think you just get to know what you can do. I mean, you've already heard of some of the experiences I have. I mean, it's no excuse for me not being a good leader after all the experience I've had.

Let's see, some of the role models. I think I've already talked to some of the male role models, Dr. Crook, some of the others. Do you want to know more about that?

COOPER: I think that, I think you've covered that.

NORTHRUP: I've covered that? And I don't know that much about Meredith and other women's colleges. I've talked to, I've had several, one of my assistants here, one that went to Wellesley, one went to Salem. But I would think you know, in just hearing their experiences versus mine, of course it might be this day. I don't know whether Meredith really has that sense of community. I think that's the one thing that we have that is different is that we really do have a very caring community. I'm sure they all care but I think we care more.

COOPER: And our Alumnae Association has somehow or other kept us close since then, don't you think that they have really had good people to help us?

NORTHRUP: They really have.

COOPER: Good people to help us to keep that community feeling.

NORTHRUP: Would you make the same choice again? I really didn't have any choice. I didn't have any idea where I was going. My parents just said, "You're going to Meredith." I think they just chose it because it was a Baptist University and we were Baptists and they wanted us to have, my brother was at Wake Forest at the same time I was at Meredith. My sister, I had a sister that came to Meredith. Another one who was more of an artist than I am who went to UNC-G, Women's College at that time. Then I had a younger sister who came to Meredith after me.

And my major accomplishments. I think I've already talked about that. I have, successfully I hope, raised three children. I have a good marriage. I have a husband of 30 years. We really get along. He's interested in art and of course that's another thing. I owe, guess I owe Meredith for marrying him. You want to hear that?

COOPER: Yes.

NORTHRUP: I dated a lot of architecture students down there because I liked art and I was going to all art things. And one of the men that I dated was an architect and I dated him after I was back here working in Winston-Salem. And I was also dating Lamar and I remember when I dated him I went back down to State. I was a sponsor for a fraternity. And I remember when I went to that fraternity party all I could do was just talk about Lamar, my present husband, who is my present and forever husband I hope, who was an architect. And I remember him when he took me home from that dance he said, "I think you ought to marry Lemar." And I said, "What?" And he said, "Well, that's all you talk about." And I just, I didn't even realize, because my husband I had known since I had, since I was in the fifth grade at Raleigh School. And we were just sort of, he was my brother's good friend and I don't think I really realized how much I cared for him. And this guy who I had met while I was at Meredith was the one that did the spark like that. He said, "You talk so much about him, why don't you go home and marry him?" So I did.

COOPER: And well, I know that both of you have been based here basically all of our lives, right? You have a real feeling for the community and have put so much into the community.

NORTHRUP: Of course that's one reason I could get so involved with civil rights. Because my family, everybody knows my family I think. I mean, they've been here for generations, several generations. And his family. So they just couldn't have put me

down as just being crazy. You know, they had to accept me and that really, it didn't make it any easier. People would point and things. I never had any crosses burnt in my years, but... It was interesting. I got lots and lots of people to help from my church and so forth. They wouldn't show their face at any of the meetings but they would give plenty of money and sandwiches had to be made and anything like that. So there was that kind of backing to it.

And the accomplishments, let's see, I think I've talked about my volunteerism. If you want to know, I did get, I guess that's an accomplishment, I did get a national award for my work in desegregation of the schools, peaceful desegregation of the schools. Along with Ellie Grasso of Connecticut. That was in 1978 and that was, I guess you'd say, a highlight. And as a professional? I was awarded in 1986 the Southeastern Museum Educator's Award. So, you know, for my work. Well, you've been here at Reynolda House, in my disciplinary work here.

And my mountaintop experience? I'd say the ones I would talk about are my travel to Japan, certainly changed my life. And working in desegregation. Certainly, you know, raising my family. Everything certainly has been wonderful and I think one of the things I would certainly like to pass on to anybody that's listening to me is I think you learn a whole lot from failure. When I got out of Meredith I thought I wanted to, I did a lot of things. I went to pastoral care school and thought that, you know, counseling might be a good thing for me to do. And I was just a terrible counselor. They just didn't, you know, I just went home and cried. It just got to me. Just couldn't, it wasn't the thing for me. I could do the teaching and so forth but not the counseling. But out of that I got a lot of help. I went through counseling myself so that really helped me iron out a lot of kinks about my life. And even though I come from a loving home and my husband comes from a loving home, I feel like if I had not had counseling early in my life, and I say counseling finding out who I am, finding out about my relationship to my parents, my brothers, my sisters, just helping free me up from a lot of things, I probably would not be the person I am today. Or I might not even be married. Because it really helped because my husband and I both went for counseling before we got married because I was into the counseling. So I would recommend that to anybody. Then when that didn't work I thought, well I've got this teaching certificate in English and never planned to teach, I'll teach English. So I taught. Got a job right away, they really needed somebody. And I was an absolutely total failure as an English teacher. I mean, I did it by the book and I think I was too conscientious. Miss Rose, and Dr. Johnson, they did an absolutely, they'd done too good a job. I mean, I wanted those kids to really know about Bremen, and to really love Beowulf. So, again, it was not for me. I mean it was so bad that I threw up everyday. I hated it. And I couldn't admit it in my family. Not to my mother who was from a long line of teachers, whose saying well, you know, you don't break contracts and you do it. But again, because I had some help in counseling, I went to a counselor who said, well you know, quit, quit, go find something that you're really meant to do. And so I stopped that teaching but did go,

and then I started, got some more work in art. And I ended up being an art teacher for what I'm just suited for. I mean, I was a good art teacher and I was planning to go back into teaching art when this job, after my children were raised, when this job at Reynolda House opened up. So, what I'm saying is that one of the best ways to learn is by failure. And I think it's hard and it takes a lot of tears, but it really comes out okay. The same way with adopting children. I guess that was a _____. I found out that my chances of having children were, say 100 to 1. Something like that. And that was a dismal day. Here I didn't even know it when I got married and so forth. But out of that we raised three, adopted three children. A daughter, and then three years later twins. And that is, was really exciting. I feel like now those children were just made for us and just passed through somebody else. And so it's a wonderful experience and I think that that again, you know, was meant to be.

My travels, you now, we've talked about the travels in Japan. We really had the travel bug, and when we went to Japan, and we don't have anymore silver to sell. But we said, you know, that was so enriching in our lives if we ever had money to spend it would be traveling. Long after that we were still trying to have children early in our marriage and we just, again, just quit our jobs and went to Europe for three months. And that was fun and now since our children are grown we started going back and were in England last year for a month. We really enjoy that. I've always kept close to Meredith and love it. I've been the president of our local chapter, been on the Association Board. I always feel welcome down there and feel like it's still a loving community. I think that's one of the good things about it too. I would, if you want a few suggestions, you know I always have a few suggestions.

COOPER: Yes.

NORTHRUP: I would like to see alumnae, some more alumnae stretching our minds down there. How would you do that? I mean, I've already talked, I think I was talking to somebody this week or last week about offering a seminar maybe in women's studies or something like that. Or a weekend where we could come back and just really stretch our minds. Not just one hour but maybe a whole weekend. I think that, I don't know much obligation Meredith feels like it has to us alumnae, but I think it would be wonderful to do that. My dreams for Meredith are for it to stay all female. I want you to keep hiring some maverick professors. And you know, just keep the strong sense of Christian community that you have. I think that's the main thing that I see. Of course I don't want it to get too big. I often wonder how it is on campus now. And you know, the rumors going around because when you say that you go to Meredith now they all think of it as a very plush school where everybody has the right labels on their clothes when they go there. And when I was there the joy of it, and I certainly didn't have, you know there were, I had to stay in high school an extra year because my family couldn't afford to have four in college at one time. And I worked and had numerous jobs on campus you know, worked at the

switchboard. I worked in the parlor. I worked for the Psychology Department. I did all kinds of things and I just, I hope that Meredith is not just taking people that have lots of money. I know you need money to keep it going and I think it's really important to get people who come from all walks of life. Because I think that enriches you a whole lot more. And I remember that. I never will forget when I went my freshman year, and you know, my roommate came in with her fur coat and, you know, beautiful clothes. But it was okay. She was a wonderful roommate. I think it was just me that felt like everybody had that but me. But, you know, it worked out okay. And, anything else? Does that sort of sum it up?

COOPER: You and I went in sort of a similar position then. Because my roommate was an only child, an only grandchild and she had a lot. And yet, you know, she was very careful to not make me feel that she had more than she did and that was very good. It was nice for me just to live with other girls cause I had grown up more or less with adults. And that was probably my big adjustment, whereas you had lived with lots in your family.

NORTHRUP: Another thing too is I think one of the, I keep thinking of more things, I hope that a lot foreign students are coming because, [Larisa Haloss] who is a very active in the Jordan politics I guess you would say. She is a close friend of mine. I have kept up with her and also my little sister was [Jung Ling Wong] and that was wonderful getting to know a young Chinese woman. So I think that's very important too, to have that because to live with them, I mean, you can meet and probably a lot of us in our work meet a lot of people from other countries, but to really have the opportunity to live with them on a college campus just means a whole lot of difference.

COOPER: Yes, I think we were fortunate at the time you and I were there that we had a number of women from other countries and that has been very significant.

NORTHRUP: And I think it's exciting. We just heard about in our alumnae chapter the other night about all the Meredith Abroad programs. I think that is exciting. I just, because I think that's the time to do it. You know, when you're young. And as I was saying before it was so wonderful to go to Japan for months and also to Europe for months before we started our family. Because it's very difficult to get away like that. What better way to do it than when you're in college and I think that probably, hopefully, it has a real impact on you then. So I don't...

COOPER: I think we sort of have to thank Dr. Crook for getting that started probably and now it's really broadened out to several experiences and that's good because not everybody wanted to do the kind of thing that you did.

NORTHRUP: So I'd say all in all I'm really grateful for everything Meredith did for me. I hope that not only are they getting maverick teachers they need maverick students. That's one

thing that bothers me some is to think that there's so many good people, doesn't that sound terrible? I mean, I was a friend of some rowdies there and they were very, well I'm not going to name their names, but they know who they are. They were getting in trouble all the time. But they were terrific people, they just did not go by the norm. And they were wonderful. We need that type of person at Meredith so I hope they're not getting all the good guys, you now?

COOPER: I think they're getting some that are challenged just like they did when you were there and I think that is necessary for all of us to have that sort of tension there to keep us all on our toes.

NORTHRUP: Well, I spent a lot of time in the art department so there were, the art department hopefully attracts people that are different in some ways, that are creative. It's not that everybody is not creative but a lot of those in art I think are more creative and have different ideas that they're willing to share. And I think, the thing about it that in that kind of community, that kind of community can enclose a lot of mavericks that if they went to another school would just sort of be so far out that, you know, maybe couldn't make it. But Meredith can sort of close them. I don't know, I guess we'll have to go back and live on campus to see. That's what I hear that they might do, is that right?

COOPER: No. They're talking about a centennial, finding a time when we can go back onto campus.

NORTHRUP: I think that might be fun. To see how it is. Hope the beds are a little better and the showers are working, and ..

COOPER: And they got air conditioning.

NORTHRUP: You were asking, one of the things, one of the crazy, if you got a few more minutes, some of the crazy things I can remember. The boys from North Carolina State putting a cow on our dormitory hall. That was the highlight of the year. And I can also remember my roommate riding a motorcycle down the hall one night and that was lots of fun. You know, just anything to get something going. You remember also the era where we had to have study hall every night from what, seven to ten? You were either in your room studying or the library. I mean, no wonder we made good grades. I don't see how the women do it now because I had to have that kind of discipline or I never would have gotten it together. My hat is off to those that can, you know, run around every night and still do their work. How do they do it, do you know?

COOPER: Oh they do manage. It does take more self discipline though.

NORTHRUP: Yes it does. In summary one of the things I've been thinking about is, I've said how

Meredith influenced my Christian community and also got me really interested in art. And in the last few years my work here at Reynolda House I've talked about art and literature and music and also in my church life I've been doing a whole lot with pulling religion and art together. I basically feel that all art is religious and we have to spend some time talking about what that means. But I believe that the deepest part of a person is expressed in art, music, literature. It's a dimension in somebody's life that comes out in a creative form. And the Episcopal church has really affirmed me in that. I worked I guess almost probably ten years at [Canuga] Conference Center in the summer, either teaching teachers how to integrate art into their religious classroom. They also have seminars at the [Canuga] Conference Center. Or, and I've run courses on how art can help you in your spiritual life. We even have had out here at Reynolda House we've had a quiet, Episcopal women have come out here and had a quiet day where they looked at art as a meditative experience. So, I think that's been real exciting to me. I've also written an article for the community which is the Episcopal, North Carolina Episcopal paper. You know, talking about how all this ties together. So that's one of my real interests. I've also gone and given lectures on what modern art is saying to the church. You'll have to come and see. But, again, I think I go back to Meredith and my exposure at the North Carolina Museum, my art courses there and the religion. I think that Meredith is one of the first places I realized that everything relates. Everything relates. I think Dr. McLain helped me, Dr. Crook, all the teachers did. That everything relates and that's what I'm trying to do in my life and my work here at home. I really truly believe that. That every single thing relates. And it makes, I had a bumper sticker made that I give out to friends. And it says, "Art makes sense out of life." And I truly believe that and I hope that Meredith is still carrying on that tradition of trying to make students that come in there and think that art is one category and literature is one category and education and science are one. They all can relate and it sure makes life a lot more interested in living because I think you're looking for those relationships all the time. It makes you feel like a whole person and that's what we're after, I hope.

COOPER: Yes. And you have opened this place I know to other Meredith alumnae in the community by having a couple of programs here that you've been responsible for and having other Meredith people come here. And so I thank you for what you've done on the local front.

NORTHRUP: Well, you're one of the star students. Been to summer school this summer.

COOPER: No. But I really worked hard. It was a real challenge.

NORTHRUP: Well, you brought your music in and that's a dimension that a lot of us are just musically ignorant around here.

COOPER: Well, I'm glad that I was here although it was just four and a half weeks. But, I

certainly stretched a lot during that four and a half weeks.

NORTHRUP: Did you feel like this experience was somewhat like your Meredith experience at all, in trying to pull things together?

COOPER: Yes, I think it's very good in the correlation and it's not easy to pull it all together.

NORTHRUP: Yeah, so much easier to just sit back and act like it, I mean, it makes you really think.

COOPER: Yeah.

NORTHRUP: Thinking is difficult. I love to think, I really do. I really am challenged.

COOPER: And one of the nice parts about that is the wide diversity also of viewpoints that we've had because of the wide range of people we had from, I think that we had them, what was it 18-58 or?

NORTHRUP: Yes. That would be interesting at Meredith, to be in the classroom with some of the continuing education students. I would add that dimension. That would have been great in my classes down there to have people, you know, of other ages. That would have added a lot.

COOPER: Yeah. And I think that's something Meredith does have now. Well, thank you so much for letting me come to this beautiful place again.

NORTHRUP: Well, thank you. It's exciting for you to be doing this and I hope I get to hear some of the other tapes.

COOPER: Good. Well, they'll be in the Wake Forest Library also. Thank you. This is the end of side two.



PHYLLIS TRIBLE

Class of 1954

Today is November 10th, 1988. We are here with Phyllis Tribble, class of 1954, who will narrate this tape as a part of an Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954.

COOPER: Phyllis and I are here this afternoon at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. She has come from Morningside Heights in Manhattan from Union Seminary where she is a professor of old Testament. Before Phyllis came to serve as professor at Union she did her doctorate at Columbia and Union, then went back to North Carolina to Wake Forest where she served in the Department of Religion from 1963 to 1971. From there she came back to the northeast, to Boston where she served over at Newton Theological School and has now been at Union Theological Seminary for the past nine years. Thank you Phyllis for coming to share some thoughts about Meredith with us this afternoon.

TRIBBLE: Thank you Jean. I came to Meredith from a large high school in Richmond, Virginia. It had about 1700 students, so I found Meredith College to be quite small by comparison. I think we had about 500 students at the time. It was not at all intimidating in that respect but it was immensely challenging, for almost immediately I felt my mind being stretched and I was building well on my high school education. My major, and to some extent, my single interest while I was a student at Meredith was to study. Though the college offered much more variety than that I did not really avail myself of much of it. Instead I focused on classes and the library. On learning about field after field after field. Most particularly English, History, and Religion. The college opened up for me the life of the mind. Central to this awakening were faculty members, both female and male. Yet a former group I think, then and now in retrospect, impressed me in special ways. Though feminism at the time was in eclipse across the country, looking back I can see that to some extent feminist message and feminist values were being given to me at Meredith, even if inadvertently. To have women professors, not just a few but the majority, with earned doctorates, some of whom were also published scholars. This made a powerful impact. Showing me that there was more than one way to be fulfilled as a human being. To be fulfilled as a woman. Showing me that there was a subculture within this male world and that culture could pursue intellectual matters full time if one so chose.

The strength of the Meredith faculty in the 1950's was indeed remarkable. It was a faculty committed to the school rather than to individual careers or advancement. These people were not well paid and they had virtually no time

for their own professional development. They were devoted to the liberal education of young women. That kind of sacrifice has just about disappeared now in academia and one cannot find it. Of course in that time educated women would not have found opportunities for teaching in large universities or even coed schools. So, by necessity rather than by choice, they ended up in women's colleges. Now, some would have chosen that anyway, but it the necessity that dictated. That necessity, including the limitations imposed upon them, had some peculiar blessings for us, for the student who studied with them. If I remember correctly, at Meredith in the 50's there were women on the faculty with Ph.D.'s from the top universities in this country. Outside the south I think of Cornell, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania. Within the South surely the University of North Carolina and Duke. And that's an impressive collection of doctorates to have on a faculty. When one considers how difficult it can be to this day for women to get doctorates, for the percentage is still quite low, one can appreciate the strength and the perseverance of these pioneer women. We did not talk about role models in those days but most surely that is what these women were for me. They knew and represented the best in scholarship and combined that with the dedication to teaching. Their standards were high. They demanded a lot. But to this day I'm grateful for all that I learned from them.

Now, one lesson learned at Meredith was never to speak or write in generalities which I have been doing. So, I'll correct that by giving you some examples. I'd like to do this by remembering some of the strong faculty at the school. Let us begin with Helen Price who was professor of Classics. I met her just about my first day at Meredith. Having studied Latin throughout high school, I, along with one other entering student, Dorothy Hampton whom you may remember, were eligible to be placed in an advanced Latin class. And, largely I think through that class and some others, Dorothy and I became close friends and remain so to this day. Latin was not a popular subject at Meredith even in the 50's. And so the advanced classes tended to be quite small. I think ours had maybe five people in it. We came to know Miss Price then in a special way. The second year I asked to take Greek and the powers that be said that the course could not be offered because no one else signed up. At that point Miss Price offered to teach me Greek as an extra additional responsibility for which she received no extra compensation. That was a measure of her love for the language and her love for students. To have had her, a classics professor, as a private tutor for one entire year was a rare privilege. Of all the faculty women I think that she might have been most in tune with feminism in our own time. I remember her telling me about marching as a suffragist as when young women and we did not say suffragette because we both knew that that was a diminutive term so we were suffragists. I also remember her concern for social and political struggles in the world, her global vision that did not rest easy with what she said was a "highly over rated

emphasis on nationality”. And I remember hearing about her marching with placards in support of some social causes in downtown Raleigh even years after her retirement.

Very different in temperament and interests from Professor Price, was Lillian Parker Wallace who chaired the History Department. She helped me to see and think in broad strokes that took a talent of the entire historical picture. I remember her saying once that the study of American, that is U.S. history, was by itself too narrow in scope and too limited in time to give us the worldwide view we needed. We must see our country in the sweep of world history. To this day Dorothy Hampton and I, Dorothy was a history major, we remember a mid-term exam Dr. Wallace gave in a course on European history. We had studied the Renaissance and Reformation and had faithfully thoroughly prepared for the exam by studying our notes and the topics that she had outlined. When Dr. Wallace entered the room on the day of the exam she said not a word, went to the blackboard and wrote one sentence “Trace the rise of the middle class in the 16th century.” Then she left. We panicked. We were shocked, dumbfounded, because we had not explored that topic as such, in class. After some minutes of sitting we then took up our pens and we began to formulate an answer, settling down to the challenge. The challenge was to take what we had learned and use it to answer a question not explicitly discussed in class. That was learning to think, to make connections, to become intellectually responsible. Now I sometimes wonder how Dr. Wallace would respond to the other expanding world in which we now live. For example, the issues of race, class, and sex, were not a conscious part of the curriculum in her day and I would like to see how she grapples with that in our time.

If Dr. Wallace taught me the value and necessity of the broad sweep, Norma Rose taught me the indispensability of particulars. Of knowing content, and of knowing detail. And we all know God dwells in the details. Learning how to outline a paper, to write with clarity and economy, to memorize poetry, to read primary sources. All these matters have been invaluable in my own professional career. Every time, for example, that I hear someone say “more or less” in discussion, I also hear in my inner ear the voice of Dr. Rose saying, “Which is it, more or less?” And overtime I hear the phrase “center around” I remember her teaching me how illogical that is, one centers on or in but not around. These are small examples to be sure but they illustrate a larger truth. The truth of precision, accuracy and clarity.

The fourth professor I want to remember is Ralph McLain who was chair of the Religion Department. In the 50’s he was a most dynamic teacher, skilled in communicating complicated theological material in a comprehensive way. He was able to work with students who knew religion only from a church

experience, and to move them to academic scholarly levels without shattering their faith. He was a consummate teacher introducing us to all the major thinkers of our time. A course he taught on the Prophets meant a great deal to me, particularly the assignment he gave on the Book of John. That study so impressed me that some years later I decided to write my doctoral dissertation on John. So it comes from Meredith and not from graduate school. It was Ralph McLain who himself guided me to graduate school. He knew that no Southern Baptist seminary at that time would allow women into its mainline program and so he suggested that I apply to Union in New York. He knew how to work within a conservative denomination to move his students beyond the narrow confines of that perspective. One of his greatest contributions to the college was founding and directing the Meredith School Christian Studies. For one week every summer over a period of, oh a dozen years or so, he brought outstanding theologians to the Meredith Campus. It would be three at a time and they would give learned lectures. Now, not too many people came to me, in terms of numbers. That is, far more people will turn out for revivals than for this. But it was substantive, it was a substantive contribution to the intellectual and theological life of southern Baptists as well as a North Carolina south. What he did is a testimony to what Meredith College stood for. Liberal education of the highest quality, not indoctrination.

That observation leads me to comment on the way Meredith enlarged my thinking about political and social issues. The first presidential campaign I remember with any clarity, or took a genuine interest in for that matter, was the Stevenson versus Eisenhower election of 1952. While much of the south was turning away from the Democratic party to support Eisenhower North Carolina stayed with Stevenson. That stance was present at Meredith and I believe it introduced me to the political philosophy of liberalism. A philosophy with which I would like to be identified to this day. And that is important to say in light of this week's election.

Another vivid memory comes to mind from my senior year at Meredith. In the spring of 1954 the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Brown vs. The Board of Education, ruling that the separate but equal policy of school segregation was unconstitutional and ordering integration of public schools with all deliberate speed. That evening in Meredith's dining hall, you remember we all had to sit down at the tables in the evening for formal meals. That evening the entire student body spontaneously broke out into a song, "Congratulations to you, congratulations to you, congratulations to the Supreme Court, congratulations to you." That's a marvelous witness to the finest of Meredith.

On an individual level I should like to note some friendships that developed

at Meredith that have enriched my life through the years. I have already mentioned Dorothy Hampton. Her active participation now in Riverside Church puts her close to me at Union. Close not only geographically but also theologically and existentially. Another special friendship was with Noviko Kawano. Noviko came to Meredith from FukiOko, Japan and she was a suite mate there for one year. Later we studied together at Union Seminary and over the years we have visited often. I've lived in Japan for a time and always with Noviko's graciousness. I think she is probably unique in the educational system of Japan, the only woman who teaches at the University level in the Department of Theology. And Meredith can claim some part in her rather unusual story.

I also think that the class of 1954 was special in numerous ways. Now maybe every class wants to claim that but I would make such a case for 1954. It has produced literary and artistic figures such as Charlene Swantee. It has given Meredith faculty members, Dot Knot Preston in math and in continuing education, Ann Dahl. And the current alumnae secretary is Doris Allen Litchfield. So I think the record of Meredith in producing women of quality and of substance is a good one. And that we can claim a goodly heritage.

COOPER: Phyllis, I know that you have a, very much an inside knowledge on Meredith and Wake Forest. Would you give us a little bit of linkage between Meredith and Wake Forest?

TRIBBLE: I remember Wake Forest being down the road when you and I were at Meredith. I didn't have much to do with it then. But years later after finishing my doctorate I received an invitation for an interview at Wake Forest. And so I journeyed to Winston-Salem and saw this beautiful campus by night, which is almost a romantic idyllic place to be. And I eventually decided to teach there as my first year of it, finding a lot of Meredith at Wake Forest. There were many stories from former years in which Wake Forest men had married Meredith women, except they were called Angels. And these couples were on, some of these couples were on the faculty at Wake Forest in the Department of Religion. For instance, George Griffin from Wake Forest had married Lib who was a Meredith graduate. And that was repeated any number of time. I think of Marjorie Yearn's who was married to Buck Yearn's in the Department of History. So, Meredith kept popping up and within a couple of years of my being there, Lou Leake arrived from Meredith where she had been Assistant Dean of Students. And she came to Wake Forest to become Dean of Women, a position that she held until quite recently when she then moved over into development of Wake Forest. So she and I immediately made connection and we would, from time to time, go back to Meredith to see people. Mary Bland Josey was a friend of hers and we would visit with Mary Bland. And we would go back also for some of the sadder

occasions or the memorial service for Miss Price I remember we attended together. And for some happier times, we went to hear Ethel Tilly give a lecture and things of that sort. Lou and I have maintained our friendship through the years and in fact will leave tomorrow to go to Europe together for a couple weeks.

COOPER: I believe its going to be Vienna you're going to?

TRIBBLE: We're going to Vienna and Budapest.

COOPER: She's getting her summer vacation and what are you getting, a fall break?

TRIBBLE: I am on sabbatical this fall to get some writing done. So it's a rare opportunity to get a fall vacation.

COOPER: Well, maybe you'd like to tell us a little bit about your teaching and your publications. I know you've already done a good bit of writing and since you are on sabbatical now, maybe what is coming up next that we can look forward to.

TRIBBLE: My current project is to complete a book on rhetorical criticism which is a method used in the reading of the bible. A literary critical method is really what it is and I'm to write a little book explicating this for students, a guideline to rhetorical criticism. That's the particular project for the semester. I have several others in the wings. My main interest in biblical studies is literary criticism in the reading of text and theology in Hermeneutics. How one bridges the distance between an ancient world and a contemporary culture. How the bible is interpreted in light of current issues. So the two earlier books have dealt with that subject in relation to feminism. It's the bible and feminism a conversation between an ancient text and a contemporary movement And I do it by way of a method that is literary criticism. Literary critical readings of text which sometimes show that what tradition has said they need they don't really need. An analysis of Genesis 2.3 for instance. A literary analysis will show that Adam is not first and Eve second or last. It is, rather, a very different story. And that the rule of the man over the woman is not a part of creation but is a manifestation of disobedience and sin. And it is does not belong to the prescriptions of God. So, out of that came a book called God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality which was in some ways a happy book. It sought to recover a lost tradition of women and a perspective about women in the bible that had been obscured. Second book was not so happy as it's title, The Text of Terror. It raised a question, what do you do with all the horror stories about women in the bible. The rapes, the murders, the slavery, Hedgath for example. How do we retell those stories? Not in order to perpetuate their evils but in order to redeem them. And I tried to do

that as a kind of establishing a memorial for these women and telling the stories from their perspective rather than from a perspective of a dominant male character.

COOPER: Very interesting. I've had your first book out of the library. I have not seen the second one.

TRIBBLE: One point of interest here is that I dedicated the second book to two women. And one is Helen Price. It was a way, my way, of recognizing a contribution Meredith had made to my life and appropriately, to dedicate a book on feminism to a Meredith professor who I think would have been a feminist were she alive today.

COOPER: Now, was she still living at the time?

TRIBBLE: No, no. She died many years ago. So, that will not be known by her except somewhere else maybe in the universe. But, also the book I'm currently working on, the rhetorical criticism, I shall dedicate to Ralph McLain as again, a token of appreciation for him and for what Meredith did. And the model that I'm using to illustrate my method is Jonah. So it's appropriate that it goes back to that course on prophets.

COOPER: Oh marvelous. I would think that Meredith students would be very anxious to go and get this book from the library and see in light of, particularly those of us who knew Dr. Mac and Dr. Price. I think that's marvelous. When you're not working on your publications quite so intensely and are in the classroom, would you like to tell us a little bit about your Old Testament work?

TRIBBLE: Union Seminary is a non denominational graduate school. Students come from all over the world and from many denominations. And they receive a theological education. The basic course is a Master of Divinity, a three year degree. And then many of them go out into parishes or they go out into chaplaincy or social work or a variety of things. Others will stay at Union or transfer to other graduate schools to earn doctorates so we offer a Ph.D. in a number of fields. I am involved in both the M.Div. program and the M.A. program and the Ph.D. program. And I teach a variety of courses, seminars. In addition to that I do a lot of lecturing across the country, here and there. There is a lot of interest in biblical Hermeneutics and conversation between the bible and feminism. And so I go to places to talk about this.

COOPER: I think you were in Greensboro a year ago. Do you want to tell us about Greensboro since that's close to home?

TRIBBLE: Well, better than that I was at Meredith about oh twelve years ago maybe. Just at the beginning of some of this. I did some lectures there. And I remember the mixture of emotions lecturing to my former professors. And watching the expressions on their faces and their body language in receiving some of this, so that was fun. And then more recently, after I left Wake Forest they invited me back as a part of the tour through the state to give a couple of lectures there. And at that time I was working on the second book, Text of Terror, so I used some of that material. Then, yes Greensboro a couple years ago was another instance of travel.

COOPER: And were you lecturing in the particular field of feminism when you were at Greensboro?

TRIBBLE: It's usually feminism and the bible. That's usually the combination people want.

COOPER: How do you see, I know Union is a coed type thing, the woman's situation, the woman's role at Union?

TRIBBLE: The student body at Union is currently about 54% female. And that's not unusual in seminaries. More and more women are coming and they're coming at all ages. There are many stories of women coming back to seminary in their forties, fifties, and sixties. There is one woman who will complete her degree when she is 65 and she is ready to begin her career. The stories are poignant of dreams and hopes that were put aside for a variety of reasons. And now our world or our time has enabled, is enabling, some of these people to come back and to begin to embark on projects that they have long wished to do so. So things are turning upside down. It affects the curriculum. It affects the language of the school. You cannot use a male language and expect to get a reception at Union or any number of schools. You've got to grapple with these things. Not just as quick changes in vocabulary but as deeper theological issues. What does it mean to be created in the image of God, male and female? That's the theological base we're struggling with.

COOPER: I think you mentioned there about the older people coming back. That is where Meredith has served so well in the Raleigh area recently too, with our re-entry students. Because I know Ann Sugg who is our representative of the eighties in this oral history as a re-entry student, has graduated in 1985. As an undergraduate and then the graduate student is also an older person who is in her fifties and has come back to pursue.... [end of side one]

[Side Two]

COOPER: ...This tape is part of an Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae. Phyllis we were just talking when we were cut off on the other side about older persons, particularly older women perhaps who are now having a chance at a career or maybe even just getting a degree or graduate degree more so than in the days when you and I finished college so to speak. And we know that you and I sort of graduated in a time that not as many Meredith graduates were getting degrees beyond their Meredith degree. Then as even in the earlier days when more of them did come to Cornell or Columbia or Chapel Hill or that sort of thing, more of us just sort of, right after the war, got married and had our families and so forth. And so a lot of our age group are now pursuing graduate degrees, enrichment studies, that sort of thing. So I think we are seeing the good times. And as I mentioned, even men who have had what they consider a full career are retiring earlier and now pursuing a second career and lots of times that too....

TRIBBLE: Yes, yes, it's a lot of that at Union in the students who come. One thing that makes it enriching for the school is that when these older people come back they are at first a little intimidated by the thought of reentering school and can they keep up with the young people and so forth. But in a very short time they discover that their basic education is stronger and better than the education of the younger students. I think it's a terrible commentary on what's happened in our country. But I never have to worry about whether an older student will produce legible material or good English or just knowing basic sentence structures. And I am appalled at some of the younger ones who say, "We were never taught that."

COOPER: I'd like for us to just, on the little bit of lighter side now if we might take a break in our thoughts. Just tell us a little bit about life in New York. Since you've been here now for nine years, of course having returned after having been here for graduate school. And I only get two or three days at a time in the city and so I'm sure it has a little bit different fascination for me than it does for you so, tell us a little bit about what it's like to live full time in New York.

TRIBBLE: I love it. But I think one has to do that in order to be able to survive in it. The stereotypes of New York are dirty and noisy and dangerous. And that rarely enters my consciousness. I am careful but that doesn't mean that I think I'm going to be mugged or robbed every time I walk down the street. It just doesn't happen. The architecture of New York fascinates me. It's a marvelous city of the past and the present. And walking in the city is a delight unto itself. It's a walking city. You can go for hours and hours from one little neighborhood to another and the whole world will be passing before your eyes. It has its quiet places. It has its surprises. It's constantly

changing, always in flux. I just enjoy it thoroughly.

COOPER: Great. I always bring walking shoes and wear them all the time and I see you've got your walking shoes.

TRIBBLE: Yes, that's right.

COOPER: Let's go back just a minute. When we were talking about Wake Forest. We failed to mention someone who has come to Wake Forest since you were there that is sort of special to Wake Forest right now and this is Dr. Martin who you knew as being from this area. So when we're talking about New York, we did get one of your people down South to Wake Forest.

TRIBBLE: Yes. That's another case of a Wake Forest-Meredith story. Al Martin, a graduate of Wake Forest, married Anne, I don't know her maiden name, but she was a classmate and maybe a suite mate or roommate, of Norma Rose. And so when I met the Martins here in New York we had these associations that stretched back for some years and a common heritage. Then after, sometime after the death of Anne Martin Al married a good friend of mine, Nell Gifford. And after his retirement he returned to Wake Forest to teach so yes, that's another connection.

COOPER: Okay. I know that, getting back to Meredith now, that you have seen Meredith from a distance and on campus a few times recently. We keep you informed through the Meredith magazine and through those of us who call you and say, "Oh we're gone be in New York", that sort of thing. But sort of go back in a, to tell us a little bit about your 1980 dreams for Meredith.

TRIBBLE: I do sense some distance from Meredith. Not because I wish it to be that way but I don't get back often and my picture of Meredith today is surely an incomplete one. I enjoy reading the magazine but I know it doesn't tell me everything. When I think of Meredith in our world there are some things that come to mind that may be going on but if not I would like to wish that they were for Meredith. One is I hope Meredith continues to claim it's liberal heritage. And by liberal heritage I mean, of course the liberal arts. That it never become a finishing school or a trade school or something of that sort I also mean something about it's political and social stance in the world. And that it not succumb to many of the rigid conservative trends that are so prevalent n our culture. Because Meredith has been different. Sometimes it was able to do remarkable things in the past because southern Baptists as a group didn't pay that much attention to women. Wake Forest would get all the heat from the convention, whereas Meredith would be doing something from the point of view of the convention that would be rather radical and Meredith could get away with it. That's a great, that possibility still exists

and I would like to see Meredith take a stand. And perhaps it does, I don't know. But I remember that as something good and worthy about Meredith that I would like to see endure.

COOPER: I'm hoping that now they don't have Wake Forest to look at that they're not going to turn too much attention to us.

TRIBBLE: The Southern Baptist Convention? Yes, right.

COOPER: Some of us have those concerns.

TRIBBLE: I see. Related to that, Meredith has a perhaps unique opportunity to take a lead in women's education and I think it is doing that with these programs in continuing education as well as the basic programs. But I would like to see a stronger feminist perspective develop at Meredith. Now sometimes, occasionally, in the magazine I detect I think either a lack of interest or a put down of feminism. And I think that's a mistake. It concerns me that throughout it's history, in spite of all these strong women on the faculty that I've talked about, Meredith to my knowledge has had only white males as presidents and Deans. I think we've got to do something about that. Surely in all the education of women that Meredith has engaged there are women among us who could take leadership roles in administration at Meredith. But, it's again, it's an issue that I speak of from afar. I don't really know what's going on day to day in the deliberations of the college. But I would like to make a plea that the prophetic voice be heard more strongly in the land on these matters. And third, I remember Meredith for academic excellence. And we live in a world of eroding standards. It's everywhere. We're all tempted. I should like to think of Meredith as a place apart. A place where rigor and discipline, graced by compassionate intelligence, is still nurtured. It's a vision I would like to see realized. And along with that Meredith might address more directly some of the social and political issues as they impinge upon education. This might mean a more concerted effort to diversify the student body. It is only in the last two or three magazines that I have noticed pictures of black women and that gave me a message. And I had wondered about where Meredith was on this whole issue. So that's encouraging. And then going back to our own time at Meredith, we would have international students, foreign students, one or two, and I wonder where that is now in Meredith of the 1980's. But these are reflections from afar, from a distance.

COOPER: Phyllis is a Distinguished Alumnae Award recipient. This is the end of the tape with Dr. Phyllis Tribble.



JEAN BATTEN COOPER
Class of 1954.

Today is Tuesday, April 12th, 1988. This is an autobiographical tape by Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954, as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. I'm at my home at 3113 Fraternity Church Road, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Why did I choose Meredith after having had three sisters who went to what was then East Carolina Teacher's College, now East Carolina University? Perhaps one factor was that as a GA leader I had helped them to learn the seven Baptist colleges in North Carolina. Of course, one of those was Meredith. Another factor that entered into my decision was perhaps because my brother attended Wake Forest University. And he was a person whom I idolized very much, being eleven years older than me. So I thought, 'If he went to Wake Forest perhaps I'd like to go to the sister college, Meredith,' as it was known so well then as being the sister college to Wake Forest. Perhaps the final factor in my decision to attend Meredith was that I had chosen a church related vocation. And I thought that I would either enter the field of music or religious education. And I felt that Meredith would be a good place to pursue either of these fields. Money had been a factor in the education of my brothers and sisters. But since I was the last child to attend college and my youngest sister was nine years older than me, my mother thought perhaps she could find a way to pay the extra tuition that a private college would entail.

I'm glad that I chose Meredith. I think that I could have survived in a co-ed situation. For I was assertive in high school and had held my place very well in a co-ed situation, and had been valedictorian and had filled leadership roles. But at Meredith in an all-female situation I was of course able to concentrate seriously on my studies. And I feel that there I had good instruction in a free thinking, self examining Christian atmosphere.

It was not easy to have chosen Meredith because I had limited musical background. But I was strongly encouraged to give music a try in the beginning, feeling that if I did choose Meredith as my, choose music as my major, then I should have at least four years of training. If I saw that I could not pursue the music major I would still have time to do religion as an alternative. My background was certainly deficient because in, there just was not the training available in my little country school. While I was in high school I perhaps did take advantage of the best that was available but it was a limited sort of thing. And so once when I was in high school a teacher came to our school to teach English, whose husband was a principal at the Smithfield High School. And she was a super English teacher so that was how I learned and liked diagramming sentences so well. But she knew that I wanted to go on in music perhaps and realized that I could well benefit from better music instruction. And so she asked her husband about the possibility of allowing me to take piano lessons from the teacher who taught at the Smithfield High School. But he would not make any exceptions so I could not pursue this course.

There was no organ in my home church so I had not had any organ background. And even during my years at college when I would have ordinarily gone and practiced on holidays and during the summer, I had to seek out a neighboring town, sister denomination church to practice on. One summer I worked in a small mill village as a student worker and did have access to an electronic organ there to practice. On another summer my professor informed me that if I planned to keep up my music and graduate in organ I would have to go to summer school in order to keep my practice up on a more suitable instrument perhaps. But somehow in the midst of all of this I wanted to keep on trying. And so Dr. Cooper, who was my major professor, and I each realized that I had these limitations and that he had his limitations perhaps as a teacher too. But it worked out well for us and I'm glad that things worked out that way and that I did continue with music as my major.

I was still interested in the religious education part of it and the religion courses and wanted to do as much of this as I could. And so one summer when I was working in the small church I took a correspondence course as one of my required subjects so that I could get a religion course that I wanted at Meredith. This sort of thing enabled me to take 21 hours of religion courses. Of course I took the Old Testament and New Testament that everyone was required to take. And this of course was a very good basic foundation for me. But perhaps the two courses that I liked the most in religion was Christian Ethics, which was taught by Dr. Roger Crook. And it was through the Christian Ethics course that I, of course pursued through the years as a part of my Christian foundation. But he taught me there something that I felt, in looking back, was certainly way ahead of it's time, but he taught me contraceptives. And I will forever be grateful to him for making knowledgeable to me how I could do family planning for my children and I certainly, this has been a very meaningful part of my life. To feel that there was more to sex than procreation and how to pursue that.

With Dr. Ralph McLean I took Religions of Mankind. And I'm sure that this has been most helpful to me through the years as I have come in contact with other religions, both in this country and in other countries which I have had a chance to visit. My religious classes through this education process particularly taught me to probe, to question, to seek, to examine, and to press on. Most of the campus faculty and staff taught me through Christian role models. Miss Donnelly, voice teacher and chorus director, perhaps revealed most vividly to me over the years that I was there of how little I knew. But she too was willing to keep me pressing onward. In English it seems to me that I felt I never mastered anything. But it taught me to keep reaching. Dr. Mary Lynch Johnson was one of those for whom I reached so hard.

Since Meredith I have continued to pursue this further education. I took two years of organ lessons at Salem College since I've lived here. I audited a journalism class at Wake Forest. I did a continuing education class in computers at Salem College. And now I finally decided to get serious and do a more disciplined study. So I am enrolled in graduate for a Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies. Like so many of my age and stage group I have participated in many seminars, workshops, book study groups, and so forth. So Meredith gave me that

foundation for wanting to pursue my education eternally, so to speak.

Being nine years younger than my next living sibling in a family of nine children, whose father had died when I was five years old, I had lived my elementary and high school years in mostly an adult environment. So living with three other girls was a big adjustment for me. My freshman roommate, Nancy Brown now Jenkins, endured me getting up before daylight to study German vocabulary in order to make the dean's list that first semester. By the end of that year she wanted a roommate who was not a music major and a dining hall waitress, but rather one who was around a little more for conversation. So my sophomore year I suited with another organ major, Betty Lou Olive, now Dennis, and a piano major, Betty Joyce Sandlin. And roomed with Louise Stevens Upchurch, who was an education major. Louise needed to be a day student after her sophomore year. So a dining hall friend, Evelyn Kraus Moss knew Frieda Moss, now Sneider, who was to be her future sister-in-law was coming from Gardner Webb. And she, who was an education major, endured that music suite during our junior and senior years. All three roommates and suitemate, Betty Olive Dennis, have kept in touch. And all are active in Baptist churches in North Carolina.

During our junior and senior year we all attended Tabernacle Baptist Church. We had a great student group with Mr. and Mrs. Moore as sort of our college parents. We had the State B.S.U. leader and Sunday School teacher, Bob Lassiter and his wife Harriet, who were very involved with us as a student group. That was a very important part of my Meredith years. Especially important in that group was Bob Cooper who I later married. On the day after we were married we went back to attend Tabernacle Church together as a couple.

That event though came after I had worked in churches in Lynchburg, Virginia and had moved to Richmond, Virginia to begin a new challenge as a minister of music there. But after about four and a half months I married Bob and accompanied him to Germany where our first son, Michael was born. So in these next 32 years as a couple we have served as lay persons in several other Baptist Churches and I have served on the staff of four others, in addition to short term interim work. I was a working mother in the 60's before it was the "in thing" to do because Bob was in medical training for so many years. Our second son Timothy was our junior medical student year addition to the family. And I am glad that I was able to be involved with the family and a career. However, my family held the highest priority.

One of the blessings of my life is that I've never been bored for more than a few hours at a time. With good health and abundant opportunities I'm constantly choosing between projects and challenges. There are always these demands of my time and resources that keep me productive and service oriented. And yet there are ample choices for my personal enrichment as well.

This period in my life is as good of an example as I have. And it includes Meredith College in a significant manner so I will relate the recent past and present situation. Through the years I kept up with Meredith through the magazine, through an occasional seminar, through my 25th year class reunion, local chapter activities, and some financial support. Then four years

ago Cleo Perry who was then the director of alumnae affairs asked me to serve on the association board as the Winston-Salem Regional Director. I thought, 'Okay this is my chance to make a little more significant contribution to Meredith.' I really enjoyed going to the different chapter meetings in my region and having an association on the campus through the executive board. While I was in the midst of this Billie Jo Cockman came and asked me to serve as the Winston-Salem regional Visions Campaign chairperson. And I said, 'Oh well, I'm already involved as the regional director for the Alumnae Association so I might as well finish up my work as Regional Director with a concentrated effort through this Regional Visions Campaign.' And I really was amazed during that time in working so intently on the campaign at the dedication and love that Meredith Alumnae had for their alma mater. And this campaign was such a good experience that when Cleo and Jenner Poe called and asked me to serve the term of May 1986 to May 1988 as president of the Alumnae Association the stage had been set. And I said, 'Somehow or other I will serve my alma mater.'

I was able to combine this volunteer service with managing the farm, which during this time has involved renovating a barn and a house, and supervising the building of a corral. All these things demanded attended. But, between Alumnae chapter meetings and board meetings and committee meetings and some out of town commitments of course. But a considerate husband with a dedication to Meredith himself made this combination possible. These activities are too recent to be called memories. Except to know that this involvement with Meredith has been a very rewarding time in my life. It's been a time to renew friendships, to establish new relationships, to reaffirm my appreciation for my alma mater. And to create a bond which will most likely be sustained on and on now. There will surely be additional enrichment for me as I continue to contact the Meredith alumnae now for this oral history project.

Of course new stages in the life of my family will bring new demands upon my time. I will remember that the first grandchild, a grandson and namesake of his grandfather Miles Robert Cooper, II, was born to Timothy and his wife Kate during my tenure as president of the Meredith Alumnae Association. And news of another grandchild expected to Michael and his wife Linda came during this period. In the meantime I will turn attention back to the college as those in charge prepare for the Centennial. I hope to have a small role in making it's future honor it's past.

Since the college has resisted the trend of every institution going co-ed I hope we can bear the distinction of being an excellent female college. Surely our location is super and our facilities are good. The key to fulfilling the mission will be through a committed properly prepared staff and faculty. And of course alumnae who are representative of the college wherever they are, in their homes, at their work, through their churches and communities. Because we do not have the sports bond on which so many colleges depend for marketing and financial support our chapter network and our class agent structure and job placement network plays a greater role. And perhaps tradition plays a greater role for us.

When I refer to tradition I'm not talking about the rules and regulations that change with the

trends of the society, such as the hats and gloves rule that was eliminated during my days on campus. But rather the never ending effort toward preparing women in the best possible manner for fulfilling their individual roles in their world. This includes those who enrolled as young women and those who are pursuing for a new stage of life. As one of those who has returned to structured institutional study at another institution at age 55, I am pleased that Meredith has been alert to the needs of the older women.

Just as I cannot categorize neatly the stages of my life I cannot separate the influences upon my life. However, Meredith has certainly been a major influence on my life. The person who made Meredith possible was my mother. My mother filled my life with Christian love and witness. Although she was very limited in formal education she had insight and wisdom that was amazing. She was receptive to the opportunities Meredith offered to me in the search for truth. And the college fulfilled this mission for me. Then, I was fortunate to marry a man who was motivated to a life of service and a renewing and expanding of the mind. So our years have been full of adventure. After a year and a few months in Germany we came back to N.C. State for graduate school. During that year Bob felt the urge to go into the medical field so we moved to Winston-Salem for four years of medical school. Then to Charlottesville, Virginia and back to Winston-Salem where we settled. In all of these places I worked part-time in a church as organist or children's choir director or adult choir director or preschool teacher. And then as a volunteer I've served in almost every capacity in the church. The latest one of significance was being the W.M.U. director. And in the community my efforts have included schools and symphony guild and medical organizations. Perhaps climaxing with serving as the president of the Forsyth Stokes Medical Auxiliary. In all of these efforts it was a matter of working with people to help improve facilities, provide opportunities, or to enlighten. And my rewards have been the relationships enjoyed with these persons. And the fringe benefit is always my own enrichment. Always there were more opportunities waiting.

Friendships have always been such an important part of my life and one of the parts of our relationship as a couple has been our international relationships. And to us it's sort of like a tapestry. It's a never ending making of this tapestry. But of course, most of our life is routine meeting and seeing the same people day after day and so, this sort of provides the background of this tapestry. But the relationships that come and go that have particular significance in our life is sort of like the color in the tapestry. And Meredith has played an important role in this part.

One particular person is Lillian Lu, who was at Meredith when I was there and who was my suitemate for the time that I was there for summer school. Lillian has since that time has received the Distinguished Alumnae Award from Meredith. Lillian was a young lady who had come out of China at the time of the beginning of the revolution. She came out with Miss. Ina Belle Coleman who was a missionary there. And Miss Ina Belle Coleman was from Durham so she was very familiar with Meredith. And so Lillian came to Meredith to study. And Lillian went back to Taiwan to work in the University there as an English teacher. And in the church as an organist in the music program. In the meantime she and I lost contact

temporarily. But then while I was in Winston-Salem working in a church as minister of music I became very good friends with the secretary in the church. The secretary was a single woman and later she wanted a new challenge in life and so she became a missionary's associate and went to Taiwan. There she met Lillian Lu and became friends with her.

During the course of her stay there Lillian needed medical attention because she had cancer of the breast and needed a re-evaluation. She was thinking about coming to the States as a re-evaluation and was thinking of where in the States she would come. And so our missionary friend Lou Nelsel said, "Oh I'd like for you to go to Winston-Salem to see my friend who is an oncologist there, a cancer specialist." So they got together and called my husband to see if he would receive her as a patient. And he said, "Why sure, if she can get here I will be happy to see her." And in the course of this telephone conversation I picked up on the name of the person about whom they were speaking and I said, 'Oh goodness.' I said, 'Tell Lillian that when she gets here she will know her physician's wife.' Because I did not think that she would probably recognize my married name. But anyway, what resulted was an extremely fulfilling relationship whereby we had much association with Lillian and her other Chinese friends, both in Taiwan and in the States. She came here three times. On the third visit she did die and there was a memorial service for her at Wake Chapel here on the Wake Forest University campus. And I was fortunate enough to play for her funeral, for her memorial service. And one of her Chinese friends from Southern Seminary came and sang, both in English and in Chinese. And this was certainly a wonderful experience to be able to celebrate with a large number of people the life of this Chinese person who had meant a great deal in her Christian witness and in the inner mixture of her relationships for all of us there.

So Lillian wrote a book about her bout with cancer which she asked my husband to write the introduction to, which shows the closeness of their relationship there and how good she felt about the care that she received while she was here. And even though she died here it was only after a very productive period in her life. A time when my husband encouraged her to get on with her painting and she did. And Meredith had an exhibit for her at one time. Also Salem College here in Winston-Salem did an exhibit of her works.

This is side two of a tape being made by Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954, as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae.

On side one I finished out with talking of Lillian Lu who was a Meredith graduate and a friend of mine at Meredith. Another one of these international friendships was Nobiko Kiwano. Nobiko and I attended the same church in Raleigh, Tabernacle Baptist, as a part of that large college department at that church. I have a picture of her and a group picture of that entire college department, which I treasure. Nobiko went back to Japan to teach and, but has done further study in the United States and made a number of trips back to the United States. She is a good friend of Phyllis Triple, who was our classmate. And also of Lou Leake, who was at one time Dean of Women at Meredith College and then Dean of Women at Wake Forest University and is now vice-president there. On one of her visits to Lou Leake she came to visit me at my church and in turn I brought her to my home and took her shopping and we

had nice visits together. As a follow-up of renewing our relationship Nobiko and I again are exchanging Christmas greetings. And Nobiko is known for sending these beautiful calendars which are adorned with a wood cut print by a Christian in Japan called Sedoa Watanabe. For Christmas 1986 Nobiko sent the calendar with the adorning wood cut print, which was Noah's Ark. In August of 1987 our first grandchild was born. So Christmas of 1987 I gave this framed calendar to the grandchild for him to remember the year in which he was born. This past Christmas, 1987, Nobiko sent me the traditional calendar which had a Watanabe Last Supper adorning it. So I've had it framed and I'm enjoying it this year and will give it to an anticipated September grandchild this Christmas.

might mention here an excitement that I had just yesterday with Dr. Ralph McLean's widow who was attending a reception in the library at Meredith College where I was for that day. And realizing that I was not one of Dr. McLean's top students or perhaps you might say, favorite students, or actually not having been a religion major as my primary field, knew that she probably did not remember me. And in trying to think of something that she might identify me with I mentioned Nobiko Kiwano, knowing that Nobiko and Mrs. McLean had kept a very strong friendship through the years. And in the course of the conversation I mentioned to Mrs. McLean about the calendars that Nobiko sent for I was sure that Mrs. McLean had received these calendars also. And what I had done with mine last year. And what I planned to do with mine this year after I enjoy it hanging in my home for the calendar year for which it was made. And this just proved to be the really exciting part of our time together yesterday. Because then she told me how she had taken two of the calendars that Nobiko had sent her in the past years and had them framed and put in the library at the church that she attends in Raleigh. And how they had taken the colors, which are very brilliant colors, from this wood print to use as their decor scheme, color scheme. And she was so excited about how the interior decoration for the library had turned out, being instigated from these two prints. Mrs. McLean works in the library at her church and she had a special, has a special interest in the library. So we were excited in talking about Nobiko together.

At this point I've mentioned Lou Leake several times. But I did not mention her when I was talking about Lillian Lu I think. And so I need to go back and say that Lou Leake was really the pivotal point in Lillian's visits here. Because it was through Lou Leake that Lillian was able to get to the States. And she stayed in Lou's apartment each time that she came. And it was Lou who helped to work out the memorial service and the art exhibit which was held at Salem College. And so Lou and I have established a friendship through these international friends that we've known, Nobiko and Lillian mainly.

I need to tell you of another international relationship that is right here at home. Virginia Highfill who is a Meredith alumna and who has received the Distinguished Meredith Alumnae award, is a deacon in the church which I now attend. It is Virginia's home church. She was a missionary to Japan for more than 30 years, perhaps 34 years, but she is now retired. But she is one of those persons who didn't retire and come home and sit down. She is very much using her ability to speak and interpret Japanese. She is working part-time with the State missions here. She also is constantly involved with Japanese speaking people who are coming

through Winston-Salem or who are studying or working here in Winston-Salem. And so Virginia and I have a little thing whereby oftentimes I help her to entertain her visitors coming through. One case in point being that in May I'm going to have 24 women from Japan in my home for lunch, as they are passing through Winston-Salem and visiting Virginia and the surrounding area on their way to the Centennial celebration of the Southern Baptist Convention W.M.U. in Richmond.

This is just one of the chances that I have to share hospitality with Japanese speaking people coming through. Also, those who are studying here oftentimes are at the Baptist Hospital or the Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University. And usually Virginia will find them first because of her language talent and then she will introduce them to me. And the spouses oftentimes I can take to a medical related function, have them in my home. And in turn they sometimes come to our church for musical programs. One who was there just recently for a touring choir. We oftentimes cannot invite them to come to a regular worship service very comfortably. But they will come to a music service of some sort. Sometimes we do have Christians coming through and then that's a different situation. But we have to be careful how we seek to initially introduce them to Christianity, to our church, to our people.

Another recollection I have of an international relationship that perhaps ties to Meredith is that when the year we spent in Germany on Christmas eve we attended the local church, where as you might expect we sang with the natives *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht*. It was truly exciting to be there singing with these people, knowing that is, that *Silent Night Holy Night* was originally written in German. And that it was written for a church worship service. And we were in Germany and we were at a Christmas worship service. An exciting part of that service because it brought back memories of Meredith where Miss Donnelly made *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht* a part of our Christmas program when I was singing in the Meredith College chorus there. And subsequently I have used it often with my own choirs and particularly with children's choirs. And I now have a friendship with a woman who always reminds me at Christmas that it was through the junior choir, of which I was the director, that she originally learned to sing *Silent Night* in German. I was a German student at Meredith but not one of the real proficient ones. But it does often remind me that I did study German under Dr. Susanne Freund.

Dr. Freund had come from Germany as a native. And at Christmas she had us in her home where she had real lighted candles on her Christmas tree. And she of course made this a very special occasion for us. So at the Christmas service in Germany there were two huge lighted Christmas trees, lighted with real candles. And of course that sounds a little scary to us here who keep our trees up for so long and they dry out so much in a warm house. But the church was unheated. It was a fresh tree. So there was really not the danger that we would anticipate here. But having experienced this in Dr. Freund's home was exciting to see that it really did happen in Germany on a very ordinary occasion to them, their regular worship service on Christmas Eve.

A recent experience with Meredith that takes me back to my college days is that Dr. Diane

Hicks is attempting to put together a clothing collection. I decided that I would give to Meredith my graduation organ recital dress. This dress is made of gold antique taffeta. It was designed by my sister. The idea for the design came from Dr. Harry Cooper, my organ professor. And it was made by a cousin's wife. It was so designed that the skirt split in the front to go extend around the back of the organ bench, with the short skirt underneath whereby my feet were free to do the pedal work. I had been carrying it around everywhere I had lived for the last 34 years. So I decided that perhaps the Home Economics Department at Meredith could take better care of it than I could.

At this point I think I will reserve the rest of this side of the tape for recollections that I might have at the end of my oral history project.

So here I am getting ready to go into February 1989. I am tying up the final loose ends of the second phase of the oral history project. So, the second phase of the project was to get 14 more tapes after the original ten and write up the results of the tapes. I'm now tying up these ends and I have a host of people to whom I am grateful for their, for sharing with me in the project. Some of these people worked with me on tapes. Others have worked with me on the arrangement of the History. Others have just shared in the enthusiasm. It has certainly been for me a most rewarding endeavor. A very time consuming one but one that I will never forget. I hop to continue making tapes as I have the time and as I find the people who are interested in making the tapes.

I will update a couple of things that I talked about in the first part of the tape. One being that I was expecting a second grandchild. That grandchild is another grandson who was born September 27th of 1988. And so at Christmastime he did receive Nobiko Kiwano's Watanabe print calendar. At Christmas of '88 Nobiko also sent to me another calendar for 1989. And I am expecting the third grandchild in June of this year, to receive this calendar. I do want my family to understand however that I don't mean that there must be a grandchild for every year to give, to whom to give the calendar. Because after all I can just keep a few for myself.

The findings of the history is found in the write-up or an evaluation of the history, so I won't say a lot about it. But I do want to say that the fact that even though continuing education is what we think of as a contemporary term. But continuing education is by no means a new concept for the Meredith graduate. For such a tremendous number of the ones interviewed had pursued a formal education beyond the Meredith experience. And all of the others had shown tremendous resources, things they had participated in since then, of the Meredith experience to enrich their lives and to continue their education. Not only have they continued to study and to learn but they've shared this learning with others through teaching. Either in a formal capacity or in their volunteer roles. So I would pretty much say that all of these have shared their education with others. And I wouldn't dare insult Dr. Johnson with my poetry but was inspired to write this about the teaching of the Meredith woman.

From the classrooms of Meredith
To the Smithsonian in Washington

From the village school at Moyock
To the law school at Wake Forest University
From the sophistication of Union Seminary
To the simplicity of a children's choir
From the art class of an American museum
To the English bible class in Japan
Meredith graduates have shared the rewards of a
liberal arts education.

Many of the wonderful experiences that I had with narrators could not show up, either on the tape or in my evaluation. One of those is that of getting acquainted with Daisy Barnwell Jones. I haven't lived the pioneer adventure of Daisy, who wrote of her first 80 years. Her health did not permit a taped interview. However, the library at Meredith has her book and I have a copy to share with alumnae in the Winston-Salem area. And that's a treasure for me which does not show up in the project directly. It's one of the many fringe benefits that I had in working and finding, toward finding the people to interview.

Neither do I have the resources for producing a beautiful book like Marion Fiske Welch's *Moyock - A Pictorial in Folk History, 1900-1920*. But it is exciting to me just to put together the pages of this oral history. And to see it bound to be put in the library at Wake Forest University and at Meredith.

I would be unrealistic if I did not share with you some of my frustrations in the project. You might have noticed that this part of the tape doesn't sound quite as good as the first part of the tape as far as the recording facilitates. That's because my dear recorder gave out on me. And believe it or not it did it at an interview. Thankfully that was an interview in town, in Winston-Salem. And Anne Suggs was very kind to schedule a new interview and we were able to do the tape of her. I really hated to give up that recorder because this one just isn't doing the job as well for me. But that was one of the frustrating experiences and one that of course I tried so hard not to let happen by continually checking the equipment. But it happened anyway.

One of the other most frustrating experiences I had was with Lela Hicks, class of '17. I was in Greenville and I was told of her being in a nursing home nearby. I went to see Lela. She was very happy to see me, very enthusiastic about talking about Meredith. But I made the mistake of not setting up the recorder immediately but was really just trying to feel out the situation and see how things would go. Well, by the time I did that and got the recorder set up Lela had completely absolutely given out of energy so that she was just not able to talk anymore for me to get the tape. And I was extremely frustrated because she had been sharing so beautifully with me things that would have made a good tape. But it was beyond her ability to do anything about it at her age. Her energy just completely eroded.

I haven't given up on the tape. I have kept the tape with her name on it and hope that someday I might be able to go back and have another opportunity with her. Of course her

age makes time very precious for me. And I'm not able to do it at this time. But at some point Lela's tape may be a part of the oral history.

My acknowledgments of many of the people who helped me with this project is on the video they've placed with the cassette tapes. But I must end this tape with the recognition of the role of my husband Bob in this project. Without his commitment to Meredith this project could not have been pursued. For in addition to agreeing that the project was worthy of the financial backing, he has had a home background of the sound of tapes being reviewed, cover sheets being typed, telephone conversations confirming interviews, and such. Now one the trip together he endured the extra luggage on the plane in order for me to have the recorder for an interview where we were going at that time. And on another trip together it was necessary for me to stay in the hotel another day in order to record two tapes. And so he flew home alone. Sometimes I might get up early in the morning to go to South Carolina where I did a tape, and in the afternoon another tape. I got back home after the time that he would have liked me to have been here, to do dinner. But he certainly has cooperated in all these endeavors and really has enjoyed it, but not the kind of enjoyment without sacrifices and compromises.

Perhaps the thing that I must say is there are many items on this particular tape where I've wanted to go back and say, 'Oh well I could have said that better.' Or, 'Why didn't I say this or why didn't I say that?' But because I had been so emphatic to my narrators that this was a very informal tape, that it was not to be edited, that we were putting it in the library as it was for people to listen to it as we had been able to put it together initially. I had to fight the temptation not to go back and redo things myself. And it certainly helped me to be more understanding of the apprehensions that some of the narrators did have. However, on the whole I have to say that the tape recorder just really didn't bother most narrators that much. They just went on and did their things and sometimes in such a marvelous, spontaneous sort of way. And with such smoothness that we were able to truly get a lot of information onto an hour's tape. Sometimes we didn't put an hour on but the majority of tapes did use the full time.

And so, to those 23 narrators let me say a heart full of thanks to you. And to Mimi Holt and company who did such a beautiful job of the portrait of a Meredith woman at the 1988 annual Alumnae Association meeting. And to Dot Goodman who agreed that a slide show of the Meredith dolls could be an important part of this compilation.

And finally to Doris Allen Litchfield, a classmate and the director of alumnae affairs with whom I've collaborated on this, for her enthusiastic support. And now I dedicate to her phase I and II of this oral history.



EMILY CAMPBELL TUCK
Class of 1960

Today is Friday, September 23rd, 1988. I am here with Emily Campbell Tuck, class of '60, who will represent the 60's in an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper, class of 1954.

COOPER: Emily thank you for coming here to the motel after a busy flight from Louisville, Kentucky. Getting a car, coming to Meredith, being at a board meeting as Regional Director for the Alumnae Association, and now here at 10:20 p.m. to share for our oral history some of your memoirs as far as your days at Meredith, how the Meredith experience has been portrayed through the rest of your life. And so just share at the beginning what are some of your favorite thoughts of the whole experience of Meredith.

TUCK: Well, thank you Jean. It is never an effort for me to talk about Meredith. You can say the word and I will go on forever. And when you live as far from the campus as I do now in Louisville and you find someone else who has graduated from Meredith it is just like you have run into your long lost cousin from back home that you haven't seen for a while. And you can go on and on about the blessings of your life at Meredith and the joys you shared. And it never ends. Even if you meet people who are much older or much younger and were never on the campus when you were there, there is still that bond. In fact we have a very inter-generational group of us in Louisville and this is the thing that we marvel at whenever we get together. We love to talk about the campus and our days there and what Meredith has meant to us. We have a young woman there now that we hope will be an incoming student in the Fall of '89. And when we invited her and her mother to one of our meetings that was one of the first things that we all began to tell her; was the joy that we had found in our lives from having graduated from Meredith. And why we felt it was such a place of distinction. And we each felt that we had captured something from there that we would not have gotten someplace else. So it's a special place.

I entered as a freshman in 1956. And I think when one graduates from high school you never ever feel as superior and as knowledgeable as you do when you you've graduated from high school. And I'm sure I had the same cockiness. Oh, I felt I could take on the world. Well, that was before I went to Meredith. I soon learned that there was a world out there that I yet did not know about. And my professors I think, as gradually and gently, lovingly but firmly made me realize that there was a world of knowledge, a world to be experienced. And my four years taught me that I hadn't learned quite as much in high school as I had but that I did have a good foundation. And yes,

with good hard work and discipline I could get a good and a better education at Meredith. Which I think I did.

I think my most enjoyable class was probably Western Civilization under Dr. Sarah Lemmon. And I guess I ought to say that because after all I majored in history. But I don't mean to minimize my other classes. The other disciplines were very valuable. My two years of English, I just don't know what I would have done if I hadn't had those classes. My religion class just opened my eyes to so many things that I had never thought about in quite that way before. But I think the Western Civilization class really did cause me to view the world differently and to realize that you just had to understand what had happened and where and why, in order to understand anything about the world. And the approach to history was so much more enjoyable than it had ever been to me before. And it was not a narrow provincial study. We had a syllabus but there were sets of books in the library. And we had to do all of our reading from there. And I think the vastness of the knowledge that I was to be exposed to came to me. And then the interesting presentations of the discussions format of the class caused me to realize that I could participate in this too. It wasn't just a matter of taking down someone else's notes. So that's, that just opened the door to me to major in history. Although I came to Meredith with the intention of thinking that I would major in music. And I did study 24 semester hours of music. And I'm not a professional musician but those hours of music I wouldn't take anything for. Because in my life today I've sung in church choirs, I've been an accompanist for choirs, I've directed children's choirs. It's a happy dimension of my life even though I don't consider myself a professional musician. But the study that I got in Meredith in the music department was quite adequate. It was not inadequate in anyway, so far as I can tell.

COOPER: And I think perhaps that has been of a special value to you because of how your family life has developed. Would you like to insert that here maybe now?

TUCK: Exactly. And with my church, everything I've learned helps me in everything I do. I mean there is no way to separate it. I was a public school teacher. I got my certificate in secondary social studies. And I taught school for five years before I had my family. Well, since I've had children I have not taught as a profession. But yet I do many things in the community and in my church where I use the skills and the knowledge and experience that I've gained in teaching. For example, I teach an adult Sunday school class in my church. I do a fair amount of public speaking. Not only in the church but in the community. I give programs for various civic groups and church groups. I'm frequently called on to do book reviews, especially if the topic is history. And last year, 1987 being the history of the Bicentennial of the Constitution,

I reviewed a book on the framing of the Constitution. And I got so many calls to give that review until I just vowed I was going to get me a tape recorder to just send it. But it was a joy to be able to share in that celebration in our nation's history. For a good many years in Louisville I was a volunteer tour guide at an historic home, Locust Grove, which is the last home of General George Rogers Clark. So that has been a fun thing to do but a way to use my major in volunteer work in the community.

COOPER: That's great, and as well as your music right?

TUCK: Right.

COOPER: And that combination has surely has worked beautifully with you and your family. And as your husband now being a minister I'm sure you, you're able to feel that you are an asset to him and the work that he's trying to do.

TUCK: Exactly.

COOPER: Well, it wasn't all work at Meredith though I'm sure.

TUCK: It wasn't.

COOPER: What were some of the other aspects of the campus that were meaningful to you?

TUCK: Well, the social life at Meredith was always fine. There was always plenty here to do. And being in an exciting place like Raleigh and the other campuses that were around there was just always, there were more things to do than I think anyone could do. Which is always nice I think when you're talking about a social life. However, I dated a seminary student so that sort of limits your social life, in a way. But I never did need to be the social butterfly so that wasn't a problem to me. But there were just plenty of football games and plenty of things to go to if that was what you wanted to do.

COOPER: Yeah, and I think that's in looking today at Meredith and its position in the community that that's very significant.

TUCK: I do and I always tell new students that I know of that are planning to come here that really the proximity of this school to other institutions does make for the opportunity for a very healthy type of social life. And intellectual stimulation too. I remember going to things at Duke and things on the campus at N.C. State. So it's very nice to have that tie with other schools. Of course I went to Meredith back in the 50's. And some of the rules back

then would be unthought of today. And I know some of my friends were bothered by some of the things. But I don't know, I never was too bothered by that. I was raised by older parents and they weren't particularly strict but I think I learned early on if you're going to get along in the world you've got to live with a few rules. And it was not, that did not upset or bother me in any way. I sort of learned to swing with it.

When I first came to the campus bobby socks were in and there was a tension between where do we wear bobby socks and where do we have to dress up and wear hose and high heel shoes. And that was finally resolved but it was a big deal. But there again it reflected the changing times I think during the 50's. We still had to dress up and wear hats to church. That was a pre-era of changing that.

One of the things that I remember the most in changes in my generation was that when I came to Meredith Meredith did not have dances, period. But in my junior year we had a dance, but it was not on campus. It was held at the Woman's Club downtown. But it was a dance for Meredith students and it was listed as a Meredith dance. And there again, even in 1958 that was hard to believe that there was a campus that didn't have dancing. But it was a big thing among some of the Baptists in the state of North Carolina. So we did it properly and right and went through all the right channels. And it was not done until we had permission, but I believe we were the first class to have a dance. Even though it was not yet on campus.

COOPER: That was a big step, big step, a big step.

TUCK: I came to Meredith, one of my big reasons that I think the way I found out about Meredith, was in a listing of Baptist colleges and seminaries. And it impressed me. I was interested in a school with a good music program. But yet I was interested in coming to a Christian college. My people were Baptist as far back as I know. And we were very active in the church, and I had been very active in the church. And I was dating my to be husband, who was going to go to seminary. So yes, it was very important to me that I go to a Christian college. And Meredith did not fail me in anyway there. I do feel that I grew spiritually while I was at Meredith. One of the things that was interesting to me and I've thought on it so many times, you now we had required chapel services. We went to chapel everyday with assigned seats. And three days a week we had a religious service. And then two days a week there were student activities. And one was an open forum student government meeting which I think was very profitable. But the worship services, I think there is something to be said in a Christian college for the student body to call come together in one place and engage in a time of hymn singing and prayer and proclamation of the word. And I'm sure as a student

there was many a day I'd just as soon not had to go there. But it was built into our curriculum. It was planned and we did it. And now that I think back on it I think having done that for four years that it effected my spiritual growth. And laid the foundation for my theological anchor so to speak far more than I ever realized at the time. Colleges don't do that today. And it's my own belief that there's something missing there. There's something missing by the fact that we don't do that today.

Of course I took religion classes. I took survey of Old Testament and New Testament with Dr. McLain, Dr. Mac. I loved him dearly. I loved his laughter and his sense of humor and his freshness of life and his perception of the gospel. He opened doors and windows for me. And I think, and he introduced me to books and writers and theological journals. Today I can discuss with some of my husband's colleagues and contemporaries journals and writers that I learned from Dr. Mac that seminary graduates don't know about today.

COOPER: Isn't that wonderful?

TUCK: It's a thrill. It's a thrill.

COOPER: I had Dr. Mac too and I just, it is as you say, you say, 'Oh yes I know that writer.' Or, 'I know that magazine.'

TUCK: That's right.

COOPER: I think that really is significant. You talked about your family background. Where was this? Before you came to Meredith you...?

TUCK: I grew up in Lynchburg, Virginia.

COOPER: Okay. And you knew your husband to be when you...?

TUCK: Yes. Because he's also from the same hometown. And his undergraduate work was at the University of Richmond. And he was a Baptist too. And he knew very early I think what he felt called and led to do. So we intertwined our lives early on.

COOPER: Yes. Okay, so you can really appreciate that one of Meredith's past presidents is now at the University of Richmond.

TUCK: Yes, yes.

COOPER: And we still hear good things from that school.

TUCK: Indeed we do, indeed we do.

COOPER: Okay, when you left Meredith then you were probably getting ready for a big wedding.

TUCK: Oh yes, oh yes. My parents wished very much that I would finish college before we married. So I graduated from Meredith on Monday and we graduated, we married on Saturday of that week. So we did not waste any time.

COOPER: And where has that lead you since then? What places have you lived since you left?

TUCK: Many places. We stayed on in Wake County because my husband finished a masters of theology Degree at Wake Forest, at the seminary at Wake Forest, Southeastern Seminary. And then he, from there he did a year of graduate study at Emory University. And then finally finished his Th.D. from New Orleans Seminary. So in each of those places that we lived I got a public school teaching job and then I was our sole support while he did his graduate work. And then from there he took a church in Louisiana. And from Louisiana we moved back to Harrisonburg, Virginia which is where James Madison University is. We were there three years. Then we were in Bristol Virginia, Tennessee where he was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in that town. And from there he was called to be Professor of Preaching at the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. And it was strange how he got sidetracked. He I think was grooming himself early for seminary teaching. But yet he has unfailing love for the pastor work. To him that is where the water hits the wheel. So for five years he taught preaching and loved it and enjoyed it. But then when the call came again from the St. Matthew's Baptist Church then he found himself back in the pastor again. And that is where we are now. But we maintain our relationship with the larger academic community of the seminary and with the people in Louisville. So as I said earlier though, everything that I do there's no problem getting into it in another place with public speaking and with being interested in history and doing the work in the church. And I'm in the most active Meredith alumnae group I've been in since I left the campus. And there's nothing to give you that great appreciation like being far away. That's why I'm willing to take the time and the effort to come back, to be able to serve the college.

COOPER: This is at least your second term as regional director.

TUCK: Yes it is.

COOPER: So we're most grateful for your special effort that you do have to make. It's not like getting in the car and driving across town to be here.

TUCK: No, no. Well, it's a joy to be able to do it.

COOPER: And you have to leave your family in order to come here too. And your family now consists of I know a son you mentioned who is in college.

TUCK: Yes. And our daughter lives in Richmond, Virginia. And she is married and she and her husband live there.

COOPER: And maybe it's of interest that your son is back in North Carolina. That's a good place to come back to school.

TUCK: Well, let me tell you, I had to leave this area to understand what it was all about. I think when you grow up in Virginia and North Carolina, I thought every state in the Union had as many good colleges as we do. It is not true. It is not true. And I was so surprised when I moved to Louisville and I would tell someone my home town. And these older ladies would say, "Oh I went to school there", referring to Randolph Macon Woman's College. And I would say, 'Oh.' And I thought, 'Why do these people go so far away from home to go to school. I didn't go so far.' It seemed to expensive. Well, I know now why they went so far. Because they were looking for the good quality schools that we have here in North Carolina and in Virginia. And that's just that I perceive that.

COOPER: Well, I know you have come into contact with a lot of Meredith graduates in all of your traveling around. But one who came to you in Louisville is of special interest to me because of your contact with Addie Davis, who is now the Reverend Addie Davis. And I think it's significant if you would share with us your experience in getting to know her, because of her particular relationship with Meredith and with the Southern Baptist Convention.

TUCK: Yes, she was invited to speak on the campus of the seminary last spring. And she came at the invitation of a group of women on campus called Women in Ministry. And one of the Meredith graduates, who happens to be the president of that group called me on the phone one day and told me that Addie had been invited. And she wanted to know if I could help plan and host a dinner for Addie, inviting our local Meredith graduates. And I said, 'Oh yes, surely. We'll get on this right now.' So we did. And we had about 15 people to come. That was my first occasion to meet Addie. She is a, impressed me as being very quiet and very unassuming. And I knew that she was to speak in chapel and I thought, 'Oh my. She has such a quiet soft

manner. How will she command this vast congregation of students? Oh how will this be? Well, I want you to know that the next day in chapel, there were a number of us there, I couldn't have been more proud in my entire life. Or as Gladys would say that Mary Lynch would say, "Grateful." When she stepped up and delivered her sermon the graciousness and the calmness and the serenity of who she is as a pioneer, being the first woman to be ordained in the Southern Baptist Convention, it was a moving moment to me. And they introduced her and there she was as a Meredith graduate. I just, I had great feelings about that moment. And part of it was that here are these young women today who are just very strong and almost militant about "My rights in this thing. And how people out to recognize me. And what I've been called to do. And what I can do." And Addie is on the other side of the women's lib movement. So she has not developed any of that stance. But when you hear her talk and your listen to what she says, I had no hesitancy or question about the call that she had received from the gospel ministry and about the work that she had done. But yet there was a quietness and a patience in her manner that came forth that was very refreshing. And I hope, a very unusual model, if indeed a clarion voice for these young women who are pursuing the same thing that she was pursuing. It was just a, it was just a real highlight for me to be able to be in that chapel as she was introduced. And then hear her words to the students, which really was a challenge to them in the face of all we're experiencing in our denomination today. And the problems that are besetting us. It was a strong, quiet word to press on with what we've been doing.

COOPER: That's great. Thank you. Okay, Emily there was a world around Meredith. Sometimes they talk about us being cloistered but I think we were fairly cognizant of what was going on in the world around us when we were college students. My day wasn't so far off from yours. But tell us what you remember of the world outside of Meredith while you were a student.

TUCK: Well, of course we were always encouraged to keep up and read and to be knowledgeable about what was happening in the world politically, and economically and that sort of thing. Especially being a history major. I mean that almost went without saying. But of course when I think of what's happened in the world since then and I think about what was going on from 1956-1960, well my goodness it was really another day and age. And of course Eisenhower was in the White House. And those fifties you know they were really very calm quiet years politically. As I say, compared to what has come since then. We talked a lot about the Cold War and there was a great deal of apprehension you you know, about Russia. And a regular fear about Russia of course. And Red China. We talked, that entered in with our worry about what was happening. But of course you know early in 1960, that was a presidential election year, an that was the year that John Kennedy was

running for president. Of course he did win and was elected. I'll never forget, in the spring of that year Kennedy came to Durham, I assume at Duke, to give a speech. This was very early in the year. And my suitemate and some friends of hers went over there that night to hear his speech. And they were very impressed. And they heard it mentioned in the presentation that night that he had to be whisked off early in order to catch a flight. So with their coming from the auditorium to where it was they caught the flight, 'Oh we go right by the airport. Let's see if we can go and see him.' Not only did they go to the airport and see him they walked up to him and shook hands with him. So they came in the door that night with their gloved hand in the air saying, "Guess who I have just shaken hands with? John Kennedy." Well, the thing that I remember most, he inquired about where they went to school. They told him they were Meredith Students. Of course he'd never heard of Meredith. But he wanted to know something about the school. "Is it a very strict girl's school?" Well, no they didn't think so. But he said, "Well, it certainly must not be to let two girls like you out here at this time of night." So that is my memory of the presidential election before we graduated in 1960. And then when you think of Kennedy being elected in '60 then you think of the things that began to happen. And the assassination in '63. Those were turbulent times, turbulent times. They were.

COOPER: Yes. You really were right at the end of an era.

TUCK: Yes.

COOPER: And the beginning of a new era.

TUCK: I have felt so many times in my life and looked back on it, felt like that when I graduated from college I was really on the tail end of an era, in so many ways. Because as events began to unfold and happen in the '60s well I feel like everything came unglued in the '60s. When you think of all the political assassinations, the civil rights movement which was not an ungluing, I mean that was necessary. But the events that intertwined there. And the Vietnam War. The way that we perceived of our involvement in the world. And the way in which we waged war. So many things changed or we changed our perception of things. The way in which we became educated. The style of college life, that changed too. All within that period. So we evolved on a new day. Some of it has been an improvement and some of it hasn't.

COOPER: And sort of the time that our multi-culture kind of concept came when values became to relevant.

TUCK: Yes, yes.

- COOPER: Rather than being able to point to something specific and say...
- TUCK: And the lack of respect for authority. That people would not longer accept rules and regulations for their own good. That they demanded rights and freedom. And the enormous abuses that came with that, as well as some of the good parts. [end of side one]
- COOPER: This is side two of a tape with Emily Campbell Tuck of the class of '60, as a part of an Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae. This is Friday, September 23rd, 1988. Emily, you've had lots of exciting things to talk about. Turning specifically to the college and how you see the college today and in contrast of what we were just talking about when you left Meredith in 1960, would you share some of your concerns of dreams? Or just your perspective of the college today, and its mission.
- TUCK: I feel very grateful for the fact that Meredith has remained an all female institution. It would have been very easy to have gone the way of co-educational campuses like so many schools have done. I remember when I came to Meredith in 1956 I bopped into a meeting one time and said, 'Well, I heard that Meredith and Wake Forest were going to merge and make a University.' And one of the professors looked down her nose and said, "Meredith has always been a female institution. And she intends to always be one." Well, I didn't ask anymore questions about that. And I say that with a chuckle now because I feel no one could feel anymore that way right now than I do. So if she intended to make a believer out of me she did. I feel very strongly that Meredith remain a single sex school. That she remain for women.
- I think so much in education here lately we've just gone with the wind. We've gone with every trend. I don't mean Meredith I mean the general education, universities. Every cockeyed notion that somebody comes down the pipe with we jump on the bandwagon and go do this. And then go jump and do that. And then later down the road somebody realizes, oh we need to kind of back up and go back to what we had. But why didn't we just stand still to start with? And that's what I feel that Meredith has done. We do have to bend and give and change with the times to a degree. But you can just bend so much so far that after a while you don't know who you are or where you're going. You've got to have some purpose and some direction. And I do believe that Meredith seems to have remained true to it's original charter. I do and I think that's unusual in this day and time.
- I feel that the school did a lot for me by the fact that I did not have to compete with men. I think in classroom discussions women sometimes tend to defer to men's opinions, especially if they are dominant. Sometimes men

tend to take over in discussions. But if you have all women in the classes then there is none of that. I also feel like, and we were told this too, that in a female campus there are no men to compete with for student government positions and elections. All the positions of leadership are held by women. And whereas sometimes on co-ed campus it's the man who becomes the president but a woman who will be elected to secretary. Well, that's eliminated when you go to a college like Meredith. Another thing which I think is significant today is that the school is not dominated by a large athletic program that has to bring in a lot of money. I feel like that many universities today have almost sold their souls and compromised all kinds of ethical procedures in order to recruit and get athletes. And the news of that just dominates the campus and the newspapers and the city and the state, all the time. So that it has really clouded and muddled the purpose of getting an education, which is why the institution is there to begin with. I have strong feelings on that as you can tell. So at Meredith you don't have that. That doesn't mean that we didn't encourage athletics. We did. My goodness, I learned to play quite a few sports here and enjoyed the participation in these every year that I was here. But in many cases it's much too dominant I think in many of our universities.

And one thing I appreciated about Meredith were the wonderful role models that we had in our professors. Many of them were Ph.Ds from some of the finest institutions in the nation. And I thought, well if this many female professors have these degrees and teach, you know, there could be just that many out there. Or I or any of my contemporaries could do this. I felt that doors were just open out there to do anything and be anything I wanted to be. And if there were any limitations it was just, you know, within me myself. I just felt that I was encouraged to do anything I wanted to do. Dr., there again Dr. McLain was a good role model. And you know he was dedicated to the education of women. He really, you know he really believed that if you educated a woman you've educated a family. He used to say that. And maybe he knew, I think he knew a lot of things that we didn't realize. He had a subtle ways of getting things across to us. Another thing that I appreciate about Meredith, not that it was just a woman's college, but that we were treated like adult women. And we were expected to act like adult women. We were not coddled and babied or pampered, or treated like children. I think that is probably one of the reasons that Meredith did not experience as much upheaval and rebellion as a lot of other campuses did during the '60s. Although that's a cautious statement on my part. Because I really was not here near the campus then and I'm not that familiar with what went on. But as I heard other campuses revealing the student activism and the student protest for more voice in the student government, more voice in the administration, more voice in how the school was run, I would shrug my shoulders and say, 'Well, I went to a school where we did not have dorm

mothers. We had hall proctors and they were elected by the students. And these hall proctors formed most of the student government. And the student government really ran a lot of the school, made decisions. We heard cases involving students who had violated the rules and policies of the school. And the decisions concerning this were left up to us.' Therefore, and most people were surprised that I had gone to a school back in the 50's where this was true. They could not believe it.

Also I recall talking to a professor in a rather large university and he was talking about this wonderful program that he had instigated of having small groups of students with one professor meeting with them several times a month to talk about their work and to help them on an individual basis with what they were doing on the campus. And I thought, 'My word, we did that at Meredith years ago.' What's new about that? But they thought it was some innovative thing they'd come up with in answer to all the problems on the campuses during the 60's. So I just remember at Meredith that we were given a lot of responsibility. And we were expected to live up to that responsibility.

I also remember that this was true not only in the governing of the students. But I had this feeling with my professors. There was not this over-under attitude of professors looking at a student as though we were very insubordinate to them. And yet I don't mean that we didn't thoroughly respect our professors, we did. Thoroughly and completely. But there was a graciousness about them. But there was a toughness and a firmness and a complete unwillingness to lower their standards for any reason. And this was a nice combination. That's a good way to teach someone I think. And I remember that many of my professors didn't hedge one bit when they gave out an assignment or when you did something that didn't measure up. You just promptly did it again. Or you didn't pass, or whatever. The work was there. And each professor, I felt, would give me as much individual help as I needed, to help me come up to their standards. But there was a quality of work and there was a way of perceiving our respected disciplines in an adult way that I have come to appreciate. And it was that we were to handle the knowledge in our various disciplines in an adult manner. It was not like you dole out a bunch of facts to a child and expect to recite these back on a test. We were not taught to handle information and knowledge. That was not the kind of learning that we received here on this campus. Rote memorization of facts was not the way we were taught. We were taught to think analytically and critically and philosophically, and many many other ways. And I just felt that from the time I came here as an eighteen year-old that I really, I really did grow up.

COOPER: And that's what I think our liberal arts was, really meant to us.

TUCK: Yes, yes.

COOPER: Because just in your speaking you've mentioned your, the music that you've used so much. And even though you changed your major how valuable that had been.

TUCK: That's right.

COOPER: And then the history and then the religion, all of these things that sort of made a tapestry for your life after you left. And adding all the parts to the tapestry to make it more intricate as you went along. But the basic foundation for all of them you got here.

TUCK: Yes, yes. The good liberal arts education, I just don't think there's anything any better. I'm very prejudiced. But I do feel that way. I see so many students today that are being lead down one narrow path to pursue one discipline or one area. Well, then if the student gets way on out there and he doesn't like that or wants to change his mind, he's got a lot of backtracking. And then he has missed out on a whole lot. And I think a good liberal arts education is just the foundation for everything that comes after. I do. I really do.

COOPER: And the majority of us do change our course somewhere along the way.

TUCK: Yes.

COOPER: And especially today.

TUCK: And I think more and more that is happening. But if you have a good liberal arts education then you have the foundation. You have the trunk for the tree so to speak. You can branch out in any direction. And it's ever so important.

COOPER: Okay, Emily, you've lived in lots of different places. You have continued your education geographically. You didn't go very far when you went to school but you've been around the country since then. So sort of lets tie up your feeling about Meredith and your life since Meredith, with us here tonight.

TUCK: Well, frequently people ask me if I have pursued a masters degree or if I've done any further study since I left Meredith. And of course you know I'm of the age and generation of so many of my friends now, everyone's getting a masters degree or a law degree. Or they're getting the Ph.D. or they're doing this and that and the other. And of course a lot of this, a lot of this is

for good reason. Some of it I think is a byproduct of the women's movement, that women feel that they have to do this in order to make a statement or in order to prove their educational worth. So when people as me if I have gotten a continuing degree of any kind, which I haven't, I just reply, 'No I haven't and I don't intend to. Because I feel like that I have more sense than half the Ph.Ds that I know. I got a good education when I went to Meredith. And I have continued to read and educate myself within my own discipline. And I just haven't seen the need to go chasing off to get another degree tacked behind my name to prove to somebody that I've got some sense.' Now that could change tomorrow. You know I could go out again tomorrow and decide that the time has come for me to do differently. And I'm not saying that I won't. But when I say that to people it sort of takes them back a little bit, that anybody thinks that way and feels that way. But I think for the time in which I said it it made sense. That was the way I felt. I did not feel that I was incomplete or inadequate if I do not pursue another degree.

COOPER: You've been pursuing a lot of further education...

TUCK: Right, right.

COOPER: ...on your own.

TUCK: And that's what education ought to be. If you can read and study you don't have to sit in a classroom to learn something. If you have that good foundation then you can pursue and enjoy many facets of life on your own.

COOPER: Oh yes. There's no end.

TUCK: No indeed, no indeed.

COOPER: But you've sort of, with your family you have been pursuing your education informally also by your mobility around the, to different geographical locations.

TUCK: Yes, yes. That's true.

COOPER: Cause you've experienced a lot of different cultures within the country.

TUCK: That is true.

COOPER: And a lot of _____. And in the different fields that you and your husband have been working I'm sure that you've had very different experiences.

TUCK: Uh hmm, that's right.

COOPER: Well, we do thank you very much for sharing with us. And we will look forward to very soon sharing with Meredith in their charter centennial in 1991. And we hope that this composite will be helpful to those who do the planning.

TUCK: Great. It will be exciting.

COOPER: Well, we appreciate you being a part of the Stage II.

TUCK: Thank you.

COOPER: This comment from the interviewer: Emily did an excellent job of an impromptu interview. She did not know until 6:00 that evening that I wanted her to do the interview. I gave her the questions and her cup just overflowed with Meredith from such short notice. I think it's, this tape is particularly significant from that standpoint that with almost no notice she was able to share with us so fluently.



JANET JO GROGAN SHEPHERD
Class of 1966

Today is February 3, 1989. And I am here with Janet Jo Grogan Shepherd, class of '66, to narrate this tape as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper, class of '54.

SHEPHERD: As Jean and I sit here at Summit School reflecting on our time at Meredith and the history of our school, I am greatly reminded of our heritage and what Meredith has done for the Winston-Salem community. Summit School is a private elementary school, kindergarten through ninth grade, and was begun back in 1933. Begun by a woman, Louise Futrell, who graduated from Meredith in 1914. Summit School grew out of a need that came about after the Great Depression. Many programs were eliminated from the public schools here and private citizens felt it necessary to see what could be done to have a school that would meet all around needs of the child, not just academic needs. But needs related to art, to music, to drama. Even introducing languages such as Latin before high school days. Miss Futrell seemed to fit that bill. She had taught German and Latin prior to coming to Winston-Salem in the '30s. The school flourished and grew. It started in a house on Summit Street, thus the name Summit School. And at the present time it is now located on Reynolda Road. It has grown from an enrollment of just a few students to a capacity of 660 students. Miss Futrell was named in 1976 Meredith College's alumnae of the year. We feel very honored here and very special that Miss Futrell undertook this what was a very difficult task here in the '30s to even think about beginning a private school. But we are constantly constantly reminded of what she stood for and what she represented in the field of education. She has been an active part of this school, except for the last three years or so. Her health has not permitted her to be on campus. But up until that time, even after she stepped down as headmistress from the school, she taught reading to our students who needed special help, and has really done a lot for this community, this school, and for me in particular. I feel very honored to be a part of her heritage and know that her beginnings were at Meredith College. And from there she has continued what Meredith teaches in the field of education.

COOPER: Janet, here on campus at Summit School today you fill the need of coordinator for the fifth grade exchange program. Can you tell us what you do with this?

SHEPHERD: Sure. This is a very exciting program I think. And one that's very worthwhile for the curriculum here at Summit. It was begun in 1977. We were contacted by a school in Mexico, the Olenca School, asking us if we would for a brief

period of time take some of their students and all them to come to America and stay with students here at Summit. Our 5th graders seemed to fit that bill, partly because in the curriculum for our 5th grade we have a program called MACOS, Man A Course of Study. And as these 5th graders study man and his environment, his heritage, it seemed appropriate to identify with children from other parts of the country and other parts of the world. So we said, "Yes, we would like for these students to come." Since that time we have had every year a reciprocal exchange with Mexico. Some years we have had as many as two groups. One year we even had three groups of students who went to Mexico, staying for a period of about three weeks. They in turn then send students to us. The program began to grow. We have what is called the Middle School Children Exchange Network, which includes about 70 schools all over the country, in Canada and in Mexico. And I am the head of that organization. Which entails basically just keeping in touch with these schools. We do a newsletter about two or three or four times a year to let the network know what is happening. And we try to all work under the same guideline and the same premise. So that we all agree on what our goals and objectives are of this program. And part of that includes teaching 5th grade students to be responsible citizens. To be responsible for their own belongings when they go away for anywhere from a week to three weeks, living with other students in other parts of the country.

It has really been a very successful program. I'm in my fifth year here at Summit doing this program. And have seen such growth in our students. Oftentimes we have students who find difficulty excelling perhaps in the academic field, but who are wonderful citizens. And who really do an excellent job representing the school, representing Winston-Salem and North Carolina, as we venture out. This year we will exchange with schools in California, in Oklahoma, in Atlanta, in Hamilton, Ontario, in Mexico, and a new school this year for the first time, in Louisiana. So each year the program changes a little bit depending on how many students we have involved in the program.

COOPER: Janet when you're here at Summit School you're just right on homebase. Because I see from this marvelous genealogy that you have here many relatives that you have that are right here in this area. So maybe you'd like to tell us some of your connections in this area.

SHEPHERD: Thank you Jean. Yes I did, I grew up here in Winston-Salem. And even on a daily basis I again am reminded of my heritage. We have several children of my family who attend Summit School. And we had lots who went to Meredith. I was going through this book that you're referring to, which was a genealogy of the Marion-Davis families and it was written or compiled by Maude Davis Bunn. And Aunt Maude was a graduate of Meredith in 1910

and spent most of her life in and around the Raleigh area. She did extensive traveling but when she was based at home she was in Raleigh. She was a board member at Meredith for several terms. And in this book I would just like to read to you something that she wrote out of her memoirs as she reminisced about her days and her connection with Meredith. She said, "I have served on the Meredith College board for some length of time. During those years I led the group of alumnae in decorating the administration hall with curtains and seats. And the Philoretian Society hall with curtains." And then in parenthesis she says, "I served it as president during my senior year at Meredith." She goes on to say that, "It was through the assistance of Mr. George Ross Kou, Superintendent of prisons, that cement benches were placed along the main driveway, and the tennis courts were built, at the new location of Meredith."

It is interesting to read through this book and find out all sorts of interesting facts that I didn't know. I guess I never thought about where the cement benches came from that went along the driveway at Meredith. But Aunt Maude was very instrumental in putting this genealogy book together in 1973. And it has meant a lot to our family. It is wonderful to look through and to see how many people in this family went to Meredith. The first person that I came across in the book was born in 1889, Lucinda Maude Davis, who went to Meredith. And since that time there have been approximately 25 Davis family members who have attended Meredith College. So when I went there in 1966 I already had some feel for what Meredith stood for and what Meredith represented. During the years, in the past years, since these people who are members of this family have graduated, lots of them have made special contributions to Meredith.

Eleanor Layfield Davis who certainly became a Davis by marriage to Egbert Davis, graduated from Meredith and served as a trustee many terms after 1960. Her major interest was art. And here in Winston-Salem she has made a big contribution to the arts in this area. The Sawtooth Gallery here has a room that was placed in her honor some years ago. Wake Forest University now has a beautiful gallery that was put there in her memory. So her contributions throughout Meredith and Wake Forest have made a significant impact on both of those schools.

Another family member, Elva Wall Davis, who also went to Meredith had a daughter, Nan. And as many of you recall several years ago we began the discussion and the fund drive to put a gate at the back of Meredith. We thought it would be nice since we have expanded the campus so to have a beautiful entrance there. An Elva Davis's daughter, Nan Van Every, was a significant contributor to that gate. And as you drive out through that beautiful gate at the back of Meredith you will see that her name is on that

plaque. So not only have our relatives made significant impacts here in the Winston-Salem area but throughout North Carolina, and especially at Meredith.

COOPER: Janet you've certainly been involved with lots of relatives here in Winston as they have sent their children to Summit School, and as you have been involved with them in the community. I know that one of the things that you've been involved with in this community is the local chapter of the Meredith College alumnae. Would you tell us a little bit about what you've done there?

SHEPHERD: Here again I continue to go back to this heritage, but it is so outstanding and astounding to me that so many of the people in my mother's family have made such significant contributions. And even though I don't feel that I'm in a position to make some of the contributions that they have made, particularly monetary, I think it's up to all of us to do what we can to promote Meredith College. And to continue what Meredith stands for in our local communities as well as in Raleigh. So several years ago, and I'm not sure now just when that was, but the local chapter here had begun to fall apart a little bit. We had had a couple of presidents who moved away and different things had happened that the local chapter was not flourishing as we felt that it could. So I became active, along with several other people here in the area, to see what we could do to build out chapter back up. And as that process began I was elected first vice-president. So within a couple of years after that I succeeded along the channels and became the president. And our chapter has done well. We have a long way to go. There is a lot that could be done here in Forsyth County. There are many, many alumnae.

COOPER: In fact you know Janet we're the third largest concentration of Meredith alumnae. Raleigh is ahead of us and Charlotte is ahead of us and we're third.

SHEPHERD: So you still have Greensboro. So you see we are not a small alumnae chapter if we are third in this state. And I feel that there is a lot we could still do. But we are a long way, we are way ahead of where we were even ten years ago. The chapter has really begun to make some contributions here in the community. And for that I am grateful and glad that I was able to have a small part in that. At the same time I was serving here in the local chapter I was also on the executive council for Meredith College. And that's one of those things that you sort of fall into. Meredith has a way, if you aren't familiar with this, of sort of getting a hold of you. I don't know where they get your name but it comes up frequently. And my own class, I was elected to be the class agent after some number of years. Maybe after our 15th reunion. I was asked, another girl and I would head up our 20th reunion. And we did and we had a wonderful time. It was just the most fun I have ever had,

being in contact with all of our class members. And we wrote letters and we went to Meredith for one meeting after another trying to do all the right things to be certain that we were recognized at our 20th reunion. And I think we were. Our giving had been absolutely insignificant and we were able to give a sizable donation on our 20th reunion at Meredith. And we felt good about that.

COOPER: And I believe it was, was it after that year that Cleo had you then be the coordinator of all the class reunions?

SHEPHERD: Right. See, I mean they get you all the time. So after that Cleo Perry, who was the director of our Alumnae Association at the time, called and said, "Gee, since you did such a good job with that class how would you like to be the reunion class coordinator for all the classes?" And that was fun too. You get a little bit of inside information into what actually makes Meredith tick. And it is the alumnae. I am convinced. I know that students make a big contribution. Faculty certainly, without the faculty. But when it comes to actually keeping Meredith going it is the alumnae. And until you have really had an inside track I don't think I was aware of the significance of the part that the alumnae play.

COOPER: Cause they're in Raleigh, we're everything.

SHEPHERD: Exactly. And I always thought of Meredith as the school in Raleigh. Meredith is actually the school at large. The building is in Raleigh but we are Meredith. And represent that school every single day. But to be in on some of the planning, some of the things that, the background that goes on to figure out how much money it's going to take and where it's going to come from. And all of that sort of thing. Which is part of what the reunion classes are about, is to get people back to see what's going on at Meredith. To note the changes. And certainly you cannot go five years without coming back to Meredith and see great changes. Every reunion that I have gone back to, I mean there's been some big change, some new building or something's been moved, or we've added a graduate program. Or something that is really significant. So we really encourage our alumnae to come back for those reunions. And my association for that two year term was really a wonderful experience that I'm glad that I had the opportunity to do.

COOPER: Yeah, you've sounded almost as enthusiastic here as the day that you were leading this group in the dining hall and I went in and heard you. And I sense that same enthusiasm coming back there.

SHEPHERD: I have a tendency to get excited about these things. And I don't know that I am anymore equipped to do that sort of thing than anybody else, but I really

enjoy helping others. We had a good success and it was fun to try to help other classes to latch onto that. And maybe give them a few ideas that we stumbled into a lot of that sort of thing. And to give a little direction and help.

COOPER: Well, I know that you have been back to the campus for, in so many ways with reunions and with the council and all of these times that you really haven't left the campus for very long at the time. But maybe now we go back to when you really actually were on the campus. And tell us a little bit about how you felt about Meredith then.

SHEPHERD: I am almost embarrassed to tell you about my beginnings at Meredith. When I look at myself now and think, 'How could that have been?' And I guess Meredith has been a big part of what I have become. I went there right out of high school of course, in the fall of 1962. And I thought, 'Gee, how hard can it be?' I mean you know, I graduated from high school and I did well enough to get into Meredith. I mean, can it be much harder? Well, those of you who have been to Meredith know that yes it can be much harder. And so my first year I am plopped immediately into Dr. Johnson's English class. And I don't know that I've ever been more frightened. We had weekly little sessions with Dr. Johnson where we wrote these little papers every week. And I cannot ever remember being so frightened as I was for those conferences with Dr. Johnson. Now granted I'm sure I learned something, but I was so terrified that I'm not sure what that was. At about the end of six weeks, at the time that I went to Meredith you could not go home for a period, I think it was six weeks, you were not allowed to leave the campus for an overnight. Your parents could come to visit after a few weeks but you were not allowed to leave the campus. And before that six week period was up I decided that I had had enough. This was too much for me and I didn't like it. And it was real hard. And I just didn't have to stay there. So I took my curtains off the wall. And I took my bedspreads off the bed. And I got my trunks out and I took all my clothes and I put them in the trunks and my suitcases. And I put them in the hall and said to somebody, 'Call a cab. I'm going home.' Well, instead of calling a cab some of my wonderful friends there at the school called another Winston-Salem girl, Velma McGee, who was at that time head of student government. And she and Jane Link, who was head of the judicial board that year and who was Velma's roommate, proceeded to come to my room. Now I was terrified enough at being there. And I was terrified enough that I had decided to leave. But when you see the judicial board and the student government head coming down the hall, as a freshman, that is really terrifying.

And they came right up to me and Velma said, "I heard you're leaving." And I said, 'Yes.' And she said, "We'll talk about this in a minute." And she and Jane Link proceeded to put everything back where it belonged in my room.

And then she said, “Now we aren’t going to discuss this anymore.” Well, believe it or not, I mean I was, that was the end of that discussion. And I certainly was not about to leave. And when my parents were allowed to come for a visit my father said to me, “You must stay here one semester. After that we will talk but you don’t have any choice for one semester. If we have to chain you to the bed and hire somebody to take you to class and drag you around we will. But you are, I have paid for one semester ” he said, “and you are going to stay that semester and get my money’s worth.” Needless to say it only took a few more weeks after that and I began to think, ‘Gee it’s not so bad. I mean everybody’s not making A’s.’ I thought you had to go down there and if you didn’t make A’s you were just in big trouble. And I found out lots of my friends weren’t making A’s so I sort of fit into the average there and thought, ‘Gee I can do this.’

The other thing that I did not do, and that was a mistake that I made, was I had had lots of music prior to going to Meredith. I had had piano for twelve years and I had had voice for three and I thought, ‘There must be something else I can do.’ I don’t know why I have to keep taking all this music.’ Well, by the time I finished with Dr. Johnson’s English course and Dr. Canaday’s math courses I thought, ‘Maybe there’s not anything else I can do. Maybe I’d better get into something I know something about.’ So I decided that I’d better get over to the music department and see what they had to offer. I was never unhappy about that decision. I had a wonderful three years at Meredith after that, once I sort of got into that niche that was where I belonged. But because of Meredith and because of the caring of not only those students who were around, but because of the people who were advisors and professors who really encouraged you to stay with the program, who really helped you to, you know I think that they saw so much in us than we ever envisioned in ourselves. And that sort of thing has come out and really has made all of us I think, stronger individuals, more capable individuals. Certainly a lot more confident people than we were when we began at Meredith. Now I realize that we have just a growing period that happens over four years but I think Meredith really pushes the inner person. They know it’s there. If you came to Meredith and you were capable of getting into Meredith they know that you’ve got something to offer. And I think that’s what I have always appreciated about the school is that they constantly were pushing you to strive a little harder for a little more excellence. Certainly in the department of music. You know what that’s like, Jean.

COOPER: I was just going to say that, yes, I remember about Dr. Canaday’s math. And I remember Dr. Johnson’s English.

SHEPHERD: And you went to music too, didn’t you?

COOPER: And I can certainly say we certainly didn't choose something that was easy by any means. And I could say that you probably found just as great a challenge from Miss Donnelly as you did from Dr. Johnson. But you were just a little bit more ready for it by that time.

SHEPHERD: I think I was just more equipped to handle it. Although I must say, that woman could scare me almost as Dr. Johnson the first years that I had here. She was a wonderful person. And my recollections of Meredith when people talk about somebody who made a significant difference in their life, and Miss Donnelly has been that person for me. Long after I left Meredith we continued our association as friends. She's still helping me along with the voice after I left there. Even after I completed graduate school in Indiana she was still helping me out. And really was the kind of person who saw in all of us that little bit of something that could be better. Not that we weren't capable of doing good work. But she wanted excellent work and then some. And Meredith constantly pushes students to be that kind of person. And I really appreciate that. I think that my life has been greatly enriched from having known Miss Donnelly, from having studied with her. Certainly vocally I have been enriched. But as a person her values, what was important to her, was what she tried to do for us. And I constantly appreciate all of that.

COOPER: And she gave the school how many years? It's about forty years?

SHEPHERD: Close to. She came to Meredith I think in the early '40s on the faculty. And I could be wrong about that but it seems to me about 1941 she became a full time member of the Meredith faculty. She had done some part-time work on campus prior to that. But she had been there for a lot of years and continued I think, even after her retirement, to be in contact with students. To be helpful to us. To be ears for us. And a wonderful companion to many of her students.

COOPER: And you were with her when she really probably was at the very height of her teaching career. Cause you were there in the '60s and she stayed there until '77 I believe.

SHEPHERD: About the mid to late '70s. And she was still doing some performing when I was there. She was not doing as much as she had been in the '40s and '50s and early '60s. But was still doing some wonderful wonderful singing. I think that I have never worked under a choral director who was as good as she is. She was wonderful. And taught all of us not only how to sing as a group, how to stand, what to wear and what not to wear, those shiny earrings you just knew if you had those on they were going to be taken off. And she taught us a lot about being a lady, being a whole person. And her choral directing I think was unsurpassed. You always knew exactly when she wanted you to come in. And when she wanted you to get off. And what she wanted from

you. And all of us were enriched by that experience. And her ensemble, touring with the ensemble at Meredith was a wonderful experience. We went to lots of places. We sang for the Governor. We sang for balls. We sang for arts programs. Anytime anybody needed anyone to sing they would call Miss Donnelly and the ensemble would go. And so we had a lot of exposure outside the Meredith community with singing.

COOPER: And you always felt prepared when you performed for her, right?

SHEPHERD: Absolutely.

COOPER: She didn't let you down.

SHEPHERD: No, you did, you knew exactly what note you were to sing when. And you were told in no uncertain terms that you did not sing that note. And the one thing you never wore was black. You never wore black. You always wore bright colored long dresses that looked like spring. Even in the middle of the winter you wore great colored spring dresses and never black.

COOPER: Yet, did she still have the tradition of the Christmas program singing "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht?"

SHEPHERD: Yes. And is that not a wonderful arrangement? One of the nicest I have ever sung. And a lot of us have used that arrangement from time to time. But always yes Schtela Nacht.

COOPER: Well, now isn't that something? Cause you and I can share something that we never knew before that we'd shared.

SHEPHERD: That's right.

COOPER: Because I sang it in the fifties and you sang it in the sixties.

SHEPHERD: And I'm sure that it was sung in the forties and the seventies.

COOPER: Well, I know that from having talked with you several times recently that Miss Donnelly has been an important part of your life. [end of side one]

COOPER: This is side two of a tape being narrated by Janet Grogan Shepherd, class of '66. The interviewer is Jean Batten Cooper. When we, when the tape stopped on the other side Janet we were talking about Miss Donnelly and what she meant in your life. You went to a memorial service for her just recently. Would you share with us about that please?

SHEPHERD: Yes, I went down on Saturday the 21st of January for a memorial service for her that I think, knowing her, would have been exactly the kind of service that she would have liked. She had one sister, Betty. Many of you know her as B.J. And I'm not sure what year she graduated but it must have been somewhere in the last forties maybe. And she lives in New Jersey and came down because Miss Donnelly had requested that there be a service for her at Meredith in the chapel. She was buried in Pennsylvania. And there was a brief service for her in New Jersey since that's the only family she has. And she was with her sister when she died. So this service was done a couple weeks after her death. And it was a wonderful service. And if you had ever known her or been a part of Meredith when she was there you would know that it was just her kind of service. David Lynch, who is head of the Department of Music now, played the organ. And all of those kinds of things with lots of pomp and circumstance that she really enjoyed I think. She had two nieces, both of whom sing and both of them sang. And I was very impressed. Not only because I know that it was difficult, I think that all of us would find that singing difficult for someone that you had loved and cherished for many years. They both sang and did an excellent job. Singing things that she would have liked, "My Heart Ever Faithful" and "I Know that my Redeemer Liveth." Both exciting pieces and things that she would have felt good about I know.

We sang as a congregation, "A Mighty Fortress is our God." And another thing that I just loved, I loved how all of this worked together. When I was at Meredith and taking piano I studied with Jim Cliburn. And Jim Cliburn and Miss Donnelly were very close friends. Jim has a daughter, Claire, who is now the associate minister at Benson Memorial United Methodist Church. And Claire read the scripture and had a prayer. And I thought that was most appropriate. I think that that would have been special to Miss Donnelly even though Claire was younger by a lot of years and didn't have that close association with Miss Donnelly than those of us were older did. But that association with her father, I think that was really really nice. Several people had things to say about her. Alan Burris, who is vice-president and dean at Meredith College, who came right after I graduated, had been a close friend of hers and had things to say about her from a peer standpoint. He's the only one who got in that platform who could refer to her as Bea. And that was refreshing you know. Anita Burt, who is the class of '69, who had been close to Miss Donnelly in her later years, also talked. And then a very close close friend of mine, Margaret Simmons, who graduated in '65, the year before I did who is now professor of music at Southern Illinois University, came also to just reminisce a little bit and remind us of some of those things. One of the things we've all laughed a about is the Donnelly National Anthem which was "Drink to me Only with Thine Eyes." And if you ever studied voice with her until you could sing one whole phrase in one breath or something like that,

you couldn't get your first assignment. So when they were planning this service, and my friend Margaret Simmons had called and we were talking about it and we were talking about what the service would be like, she said, "Do you have any suggestions? And I said, 'The only thing I can think of is I would like for us to sing, "For All the Saints." I think that that was one of her favorite hymns. I can remember her having somebody pound that first note on the piano you know, "I want to hear that note"... "For All The Saints." And we did. Whether it was at my suggestion or not I don't know but that was the last hymn we sang before the benedictions. But then an interesting thing occurred at this service Jean that I have never experienced in all of my life. The response was the _____, The lord bless you and keep you, which is the sevenfold amen, as we all know. The entire congregation sang that. Have you ever been anywhere where everyone starts singing the sevenfold amen. And there was a voice here and a voice there. And we had that all together. It was really interesting though to be somewhere where we sang the benediction. And I thought, 'How fitting.' They had a little thing underneath it that said, "The members of the congregation are invited to sing the response together." And never would there be anything more appropriate, I think, than to sing the response.

COOPER: I think that was certainly, Doris Litchfield who sent me a copy of that and said that it was just in tears. It was so so wonderful to hear that song at the end of the service there.

SHEPHERD: It was. It was something that I don't think, I mean how many places would attempt that sort of thing. But I guess with as many people, there were a lot of people there, and a lot of them were former students. So I guess they figured, you know, there'd be enough musical talent in the congregation to carry that off. And it was really nice.

COOPER: I think she is one of the teachers who stayed for so many years and influenced so many people, that I'm just glad the school helped to put this together for her.

SHEPHERD: And I think there's to be a scholarship fund in her name. I'm not sure where I read that and I could have that information incorrect. But I think there is to be a Beatrice E. Donnelly scholarship fund at Meredith College. And I think that will be a blessing to a lot of students who will benefit from what she stood for at Meredith for many years.

COOPER: Janet your musical experiences didn't stop with Miss Donnelly. They didn't even stop with graduate school in Indiana. You're still singing I know. Tell us what you're doing with your music now.

SHEPHERD: Well, my husband and I both are soloists at Centenary United Methodist Church here in Winston-Salem, which has a membership of about 4500 members. So it's a big church with a big choir. And we love it. The choir was the drawing card for us when we came to Winston, came back to Winston-Salem to live in the early seventies. I had been teaching at Butler University in Indianapolis, where I'd done my graduate work. And had met my husband David there. We were both trying out for solos with the Indianapolis Symphony. You know how you go and you sit and you wait your turn to sing. And then if you're lucky enough to get called back and so the group begins to narrow down and you get to know those people sitting around you. And we just got to chatting and met. And later found ourselves as soloists at a big downtown church in Indianapolis. So we constantly sort of kept running into each other. And later he was part of a television ministry and they did songs every Sunday for this worship service kind of thing. So he asked me to come and sing on that program. So then I really did get to know him. And we were married in 1971.

He, wonderfully enough, has wonderful experience with Fred Waring of the Pennsylvanians. He was a soloist with them for four years, prior to my meeting him he had been with them. So he's had lots of singing experience as well. So here, when we came back to Winston-Salem and were married in 1971 we did a lot of singing in those early years with the Winston-Salem in the opera with the symphony chorale and all those things. That seems to have dwindled down. I don't know what's happened. Our lives seem to be busier and less time...

COOPER: I know what's happened.

SHEPHERD: ...less time for some of those things. One thing, we have a son who is 15 who is a sophomore in high school this year. And you know people say babies are a lot of trouble. Now I found him to be easier when he was a baby. We could just carry him to those rehearsals, sit him down behind the stage somewhere in his little seat and he would snooze and chat and laugh and carry on. Now its, "Mom I need to be taken somewhere." Or, "I have a meeting." Or, "I have to be at the library." So I find myself in the car running him around more than I do singing in all these other things. But we've enjoyed our association with the church and we do a lot of other singing for weddings and things that happen around town. So we're not totally out of the music field by any means.

COOPER: Goodness. Does your son get caught up in with this singing or I'm, maybe as a younger child he's probably out of it right now.

SHEPHERD: I think we're going through a phase. He went to Summit School as well,

finished here in the ninth grade. When he was in the eighth grade, Summit does a musical every year, and they did Oliver that year. And he was Oliver, which was wonderful. I didn't know he could sing. I'd never heard him sing a note in his life. And I thought, 'Oh dear me. How is he going to do?' But he did wonderfully. And he looked just like a little orphan that somebody had neglected you know. I was afraid they were going to cart me in or something. You know they can make these children up to look just like they want them to look. And he certainly did look like a little orphan. He did a very good job singing. He was associated with the Handel Choir at St. Mary's for a few years. But this year he has sort of pushed some of that aside and we decided it was time to let him make some of those decisions for himself. Although his Dad and I would really like for him to be doing a little more with his music. But I think he'll come back to it. I don't think we've lost it with him. I think he's just to the age where he needs to decide for himself what he wants to do.

COOPER: And 15 is that age that, oh you really do have to hold off.

SHEPHERD: That's right.

COOPER: Janet this tape is significant that it will complete our mini history of Forsyth County Meredith College alumnae. And I really think it's significant that this tape, not only do you live here but so many of your family live here, that it's just full of significance for Forsyth County as well as for Meredith. So I really appreciate your letting me come and for sharing this with us for the Meredith College archives.

SHEPHERD: Well, Jean I really appreciate this opportunity. I have to admit I was a little apprehensive when you said, "Were going to run this tape and it's going to go for about an hour and you're just going to talk." And I thought, 'I don't know enough to talk about for an hour.' I could relate my whole experience at Meredith in at least ten minutes and I should be, I couldn't think of a thing I wanted to talk about. But I think it's interesting, as we reflect on all the things that we've talked about today, I continue to bring us back to this idea of our heritage and what the family has meant to me. Not just the Davis family, my own heritage, but the Meredith family. My mother's father who with several of his brothers and sister and many cousins all lived right along Reynolda Road all of my growing up years. So we as a family, a small immediate family, always felt part of a greater extended family. And that sense of community was always there. And our allegiance to and responsibility for each other. And I think that that's how I feel about Meredith. The alumnae are also part of an extended family. I think it's a family we can all be very proud of.

COOPER: Well, I know I'm proud to be part of the Meredith family. And I'm proud to

have that common strong significant bond with people like you. Thank you.

SHEPHERD: Thank you.

COOPER: As an addendum to this tape I'd like to mention a relative which Janet and I did not mention as we recorded together. It is Mrs. Clifford Perry _____, better known as Pinky Davis Perry, class of '37. Janet's mother and Pinky's mother were first cousins. She lives here in Winston-Salem and has been active in the Meredith affairs, both at Meredith and here in Forsyth County attending meetings. She is a very enthusiastic supporter. She helped with the Visions campaign that we had here about three years ago. Pinky is also the sister-in-law of one that was mentioned on the tape, Eleanor Layfield Davis. Pinky's brother was Eleanor's husband. This now concludes side two of the tape on Janet Shepherd.



DOROTHY ANNE BRYAN
Class of 1971

Today is Friday, September 23, and I am in Raleigh, North Carolina at 705 North East Street with Dorothy Anne Bryan, class of '71. This is side one of a tape that Anne will narrate for us for an oral history of Meredith College alumnae.

COOPER: Anne, thank you for taking out time on this beautiful autumn afternoon to share with us some of your memoirs of Meredith days and your involvement with Meredith since then, and your life since Meredith.

BRYAN: Well, I'm certainly delighted to have the chance to do it. Thank you. I guess as I was thinking about doing this I was thinking back to Meredith days and what Meredith meant to me. And I would say the same thing that I said, I guess three or four years now when I received the young alumnae recognition, that I consider Meredith, along with my mother and father, to be the greatest influence on my life. So it is a real pleasure to get to talk about those days and what they've meant to me.

COOPER: Yes, Anne, and I believe you were the first recipient of the recent graduate award. Is that correct?

BRYAN: Yes, I was. And I was very honored to be that when I think about not only my classmates but the other Meredith graduates that I know and respect. I really felt privileged to be considered for that honor.

COOPER: And the year that was awarded to you, do you remember?

BRYAN: I was just trying to think. 1984 I believe.

COOPER: Okay. I know you do have some very good memories of Meredith, although it hasn't been that long ago. But I'm sure they must have sort of kept alive because of your involvement with Meredith since then.

BRYAN: Well, that's true. I have enjoyed having the chance to be involved with Meredith over the past I guess 17 years since my class graduated in May of 1971. And I've had a chance to be involved in a number of ways. I guess the two particular involvement's that stand out in my mind; One, the chance that I had to serve as president of the Alumnae Association. And I should have looked to see what years, '75, '74...

COOPER: '74, '76.

BRYAN: '74, '76, so I had been away for three years then when I came back as alumnae president. And that was a certainly high point of what I look back on as what I hope would be considered a contribution during that time. It was an appropriate time for the alumnae association to look at itself, herself, and to maybe get some new direction. And during the time that I was president we had a long range planning committee that did a great deal of study about Meredith's Alumnae Association and how the Association could best serve alumnae and best serve Meredith. And out of that long range planning came a new constitution for the Alumnae Association and a direction that we have continued on for the past decade. So I, being a person who likes to plan and likes to organize and hopefully get things on a roll, that was a feeling of accomplishment there.

I guess the other high point for me in my active involvement as an alumna was in 1986 when I served as chair of a special alumnae study committee that was appointed by you when you were president of the Alumnae Association. At the time of the appointment Meredith was at a point of looking at the possibility that men might be admitted to the College as degree candidates. And naturally that was an issue with which the Alumnae Association was greatly concerned. There were opinions on all sides. But no matter what the opinion was every alumna agreed that it was something that alumnae should have input into with that decision. So through the special alumnae study committee, through a survey that we conducted, through discussions, we came up with recommendations and delivered a report to the Board of Trustees that recommended from the Alumnae Association that we remain an institution that grants degrees to women and that has as its mission the education of young women. That was a gratifying experience in a number of ways. Primarily I guess to show me once again how strongly Meredith women feel about Meredith and feel about the important role that Meredith had in their lives. And it was just another example of what a good group of people we have to work with and how much we can accomplish when we set our minds to it.

I said two but I'll mention one other high point for me and that's something that's going on right now. I was appointed at your recommendation, by Dr. Weems, to his task force on excellence. Looking ahead to Meredith's second hundred years we're considering ways that Meredith can continue and build upon our tradition of excellence. And it's been a fascinating experience to find out what is happening at Meredith, learn about the dreams of administrators for all of us to dream together about what Meredith can be. I feel very good about that group which includes not only alumnae but faculty, students, trustees. The several different constituent groups that have to come together and agree upon a direction if we're ever to, or if we're able to continue to move towards the heights to which we all aspire.

COOPER: Meredith certainly is indebted to you for much time and talent that you have shared with them since you graduated. One other thing that I remember was former president Carter's visit to Meredith that you were involved in.

BRYAN: Yeah, that's all a different, different kind of involvement and I certainly wouldn't want to forget that. That has also been a great opportunity to be involved. You mentioned appreciation for my involvement, the involvement I have had has really been something that I've always enjoyed. And so it's been my pleasure to be involved with it. And then with the Lillian Parker Wallace endowment to which you refer when you talk about bringing president Carter to the campus, was just a real chance to grow and to learn and, as we continue to be involved with Meredith. When our class graduated back in '71 I was the class president. And I was involved in the establishment of the Lillian Parker Wallace endowment, which was our class gift to Meredith. We decided with the funds that were in our treasury which we would make as a gift to Meredith those funds would go to start the endowment. And then we pledged our continuing support throughout our years as alumnae through our financial contributions to Meredith to make those contributions to the Lillian Parker Wallace endowment. What we wanted to do was to have the opportunity to bring to the Meredith campus the most outstanding scholars that we could find in the many different disciplines. And we decided not to limit it to any one discipline. For one reason because of the person for whom the endowment was named, Lillian Parker Wallace. Whom we knew as a lady who would always greet us with a smile on campus and who came occasionally to our Monday afternoon history lectures to give us a lecture which was always stimulating and interesting. And so in keeping with her reputation as a Renaissance woman we decided that we should move from discipline to discipline. We had the resources at this point through which we had been able to bring two guest lecturers. The first one back in the '70s was Sir Harold Wilson, the former Prime Minister of Great Britain. And then in 1986 we brought president Carter. And I think both of those are events that I've heard Dr. Weems describe as among the most outstanding in his tenure at Meredith. And I think anybody who was a part of those two evenings would agree that those two men brought their wonderful talents, skills, their knowledge, to the campus and enriched us all.

COOPER: I know that since perhaps you, at this point in our oral history, will be the only person representing the seventies, that you might tell us a little about some of your involvement with other alumnae who are representative of this era who have been very active in alumnae affairs. With the ad hoc committee, with the Lillian Parker Wallace lecture series, and with the task force.

BRYAN: Alright I will do that. Are you specifically thinking of people in the seventies?

COOPER: Yes.

BRYAN: Okay.

COOPER: And people that you worked on these projects with.

BRYAN: On the projects with, alright. Well, I'll start with my class. We've had a number of alumnae in the class of '71 who have been very faithful to Meredith. And I think have made contributions not only in their own situations and their own communities, but have made contributions to Meredith. Two of those were on the special ad hoc committee with me. One was Mary Stuart Parker Brooks, a classmate who now lives in Charlotte. Mary Stuart was also a recipient of the recent alumna award, the other member of the class of '71 who won the award before we lost the opportunity after 15 years to be there. But Mary Stuart's been very active in her community as a volunteer. As well as active with the Alumnae Association, serving as vice-president a couple of years ago.

COOPER: And I believe another of your classmates helped on that committee.

BRYAN: Yes, she did. Suzanne Reynolds, who is now living in Winston-Salem and is a member of the faculty of the Wake Forest University School of Law. Suzanne's particular contribution to the committee's work was in doing some legal research, which lead us to the conclusion that Meredith was still within the law, or could be still within the law by maintaining our single sex status. And that was a great help to the committee in knowing that we stood on, or in feeling that we stood on firm ground, in making the recommendations that we did. Suzanne also serves with me as the other class agent for our class. So we have a number of people who are very active.

A number of my classmates have also been active, naturally with the Lillian Parker Wallace endowment in our class's continuing work there. A couple others that I would mention with that, in addition to Mary Stuart and Suzanne, would be Olivia Harris Fleming, who lives here in Raleigh. And Marilyn Ballard Gardner has also been very active with us. Other alumnae, because of various commitments, haven't been able to be as directly involved. But they help in whatever way they're able to wherever they are. A good example would be Jane Allygood Devose, who lives in New York City. But in her position as Assistant Director of Admissions at the NYU Graduate School of Business has been able to share with us a great deal of information that has helped us in developing our perspectives and our recommendations

as alumnae. A good example of how an alumna, building a career based on her background at Meredith, is able to continue to contribute to Meredith from her particular perspective.

And there are certainly many others in other classes throughout the seventies that have been involved. Carolyn Carter from the class of '73 is another good example. It was Carolyn who originally came to me and said, "I understand that some changes are in the wind at Meredith and I really think that the Alumnae Association needs to be involved." Carolyn and I both were very actively involved in the special alumnae study committee. And Carolyn, I keep going back and forth between that and the Lillian Parker Wallace, but Carolyn is a member of the class of '73, our little sister class which joined us in support of the Lillian Parker Wallace endowment. Their class, the class's gift of the year also go to that endowment. And Carolyn's been very active there. As have other folks like Susan Lassiter Lampley, Michele Rich, my sister Julia Bryan. A number of people who just really believe strongly in Meredith and are willing and able whenever the situation arises to help in any way they can.

COOPER: Well, you have been so active on the campus. By being here in Raleigh you certainly have a lot going for you in being able to do that. But let's go back just a little bit more. You told us that you were the class president as a senior. But maybe you'd like to share a little bit more of your college days.

BRYAN: Okay. Well, since you just mentioned the role as class president I'll also mention that I was active with the Student Government Association. I served as secretary of the legislative board, if I remember correctly, in my sophomore year. I was a member of the campus, the Student Life Committee in my senior year. And was generally active in various ways throughout the years at Meredith. I guess just because I enjoyed it. And others in the class were all taking their roles too in various ways. Whether it was with the Meredith Recreation Association, Student Government Association, the Meredith Christian Association, or various of the clubs.

And I think that's one of the wonderful things about Meredith, that it encouraged all of us to be active in whatever way seemed appropriate to us at the time. I remember a quotation from the president of one of the, I believe one of the women's colleges in the Northeast. An she said to her one of the greatest reasons to be for a woman's institution is that there, "Not only to women have equal opportunity but they have every opportunity." And I know for me that was important. Of course you never know what would have happened in another situation but I don't believe that in a large setting, in a setting with men, I would have been involved in as many ways as I was. Just purely because of tradition. That's bound to have some impact and those

years at Meredith, I won't say when I was "cloistered" but I will say when I had that "every opportunity," it gave me a wonderful bridge into a setting where I was perfectly at ease in a situation where I was working with men and was taking leadership roles.

I did move from my college days and my graduate school time at Duke into a setting where I worked for twelve years in the criminal justice system. And I many times was the only woman in meetings with judges or district attorneys or police chiefs, whoever it might be. People who are still primarily men, in 1988. But I never hesitated to state my views, to make the points that I thought were important. And I really have to go back to my days at Meredith when I was able to take those roles to, if I think about how I was prepared to do that. So that part of Meredith was such a positive opportunity for me.

Many many more aspects of my Meredith experience stand out in my mind as well. I'd certainly have to think about the academic environment that was there. I go back to various classes that stand out in my mind, various professors. And there are many. I couldn't on this tape name all of them. Let me just name a couple that stand out particularly. I guess Dr. Knight, who was my professor of English for my freshman and sophomore years where that real foundation was laid. I can't imagine a teacher who expected and demanded anymore of her students. Or one who gave anymore. You just were always sure that she cared and always sure that whatever the assignment she felt that it was one that was important to our growth. And as I look around now at the, at others, I just am so appreciative of the foundation that she gave me in being able to write. And I hope that, at least on paper, to be able to express myself well. I don't now, this tape may prove otherwise. But at least on paper I think I can definitely do that. But just so much I've appreciated that in those early years at Meredith.

And then the other professor that I would have to mention is Dr. Lemmon who just helped me to grow in so many ways. I couldn't even begin to name them all. First, to understand what the possibilities are for a young woman, for any woman, and helped me open my eyes to those many possibilities. And who, just as Dr. Knight, had the highest standards for her students, and once again, gave of herself just as much or more than she expected from her students. Who obviously cared about her students. I remember probably, well it was my second trip to New York City, I went with Dr. Lemmon and another group of Meredith students to the model U.N. program in New York. And it was obvious, being there with her how, I wanted to say, I don't know exactly how to say this but I guess my point would be that she opened my eyes to possibilities that I might not have been aware of before. I remember so many of her classes when she just encouraged us to think. I don't so much

remember the facts. Although I'm sure that I learned a lot of facts. But what I remember is her emphasis on concepts and ideas and the opening of the mind, and being aware of the many different ways of looking at things. The class that I think most stands out in my mind is our Social Intellectual History class, which was a whole new experience for me. And a time of looking at ideas when we really weren't looking at right and wrong, but just different ways of looking at situations and understanding other people and the way our world has developed. And from there how it might develop in the future. So many many teachers, but these two that I would mention specifically that have had so much influence on me.

And there were lots of other influences at Meredith too. I certainly would have to talk about how important my, the friends that I made at Meredith were to me then, and have continued to be the very best and most deepest friendships that I've ever had. In fact, a good example would be that back last spring I received a letter from one of my classmates saying that she and another classmate had gotten together and thought that maybe a few of us who were particularly close friends would just like a chance to get together in between reunion times. So as a result of her initiative about eight or ten of us got together last July, a couple of months ago, in the mountains and spent a weekend, sort of a dorm weekend just having a wonderful time. And as it has always been in our reunions it's as though we never left each other. We certainly have grown and we have a lot of memories to talk about. But we just pick up where we left off. And that is such a treasure. And something that I know is not something that students, graduates of every institution have. And it really is a great source of strength I think to know that no matter where they are those friends are there and are there for you whenever you might need or have the opportunity to call on them. So during the time we were at Meredith they were tremendously important. And they continue to be.

COOPER: I have a feeling that you feel like you've grown a little bit after you get together each time.

BRYAN: Well, that's true. And the conversation is always different. This time we were talking about families and children and our careers and our concerns about the world as it is today. But we continue to have a common foundation that allows us, that has allowed us all to grow in our own ways. But yet to keep some of those deep down important sensibilities and sensitivities that keep us close together.

COOPER: Since you mentioned Duke you might like to just give us a quick glimpse of your work at Duke.

BRYAN: Alright. I did complete a masters in history at Duke just after I worked at Meredith, or just after I completed my work at Meredith. And that was a very different experience for me. And I think the experience that I had leads me to value even more the experience that I had at Meredith. Not that I didn't enjoy my stay at Duke, I did. But I really feel that the background I had at Meredith, the strength that I gained from the setting there with the small classes and the encouragement of me as a young woman to speak out and to be very much a part of what was going on in those classes, helped me when I was at Duke. With not only older people but men and women from various backgrounds. But I felt very much prepared for that setting and don't think I shied away from it at all. And now I can't prove that it was because of the particular situation at Meredith but I do believe that strongly. I think that the other really good thing that I could say about how Meredith prepared me is that while I had peers in my program at Duke from many many different backgrounds I don't think anyone was any better prepared academically than I was, having come from Meredith, to go on with those further studies.

COOPER: I know that you feel that one of the fundamental decisions that you made in life was to come to Meredith, how did you decide to come to Meredith?

BRYAN: Well, my mother is a Meredith graduate. And I guess for a while I had more or less assumed that I would come to Meredith. Then as the time came closer and closer and maybe as I became a teenager and not so sure I wanted to do exactly what my mother had done I began to think, 'Well, maybe I don't want to come to Meredith.' And I had three schools on my list as I recall it, in my sophomore and junior years. One was Meredith. The other was Salem and the other was Duke. I had a chance after my junior year in high school to attend the Governor's School, which was just in I believe it's second year of operation, and was on the campus at Salem. And that was my first real opportunity to be away from home very much. Even in the sixties it was a very different environment from what it is today. Most Eastern North Carolina girls didn't have, and I didn't, as many opportunities are as now available to young women to be away from home, to experience as much independence as I think is probably good. And so going away for those seven weeks was one of the most jolting experiences of my life. And perhaps because of that I decided that summer I wasn't going to Winston-Salem. And also after that I think that I decided that a small setting was probably the best step for me. So for whatever reasons, and I can't remember now exactly what they were, I did decide to apply to Meredith on the early decision plan. So I never did apply at Duke. I just decided that Meredith was it. And yes, what I had thought all those years was probably the best way for me. And because I had that particular affinity for Meredith because of my mother having gone there, and because I believed that it was an excellent school, I did decide on that.

COOPER: And just got Duke in a little bit later.

BRYAN: That's true, that's true.

COOPER: Okay you said eastern North Carolina, where was your home?

BRYAN: I grew up in a little place called Institute. Institute is a little crossroads really. Really two families, the Bryans are on one side of the road and the Hardy's are on the other side of the road. It's about six miles from LaGrange, about ten miles from Kinston. And our families had farms there and so we had a little community. But I did grow up in the country. Institute by the way, was the site of one of the first co-educational boarding schools in the south. And the old homes in Institute were part of the school. And our church is part of the school. So I have a great affection for Institute. And that's a real important part of my background too I think.

COOPER: Well, I'm glad that the Governor's School gave you a chance to see Salem too cause that was a very valuable experience.

BRYAN: Oh well it certainly was. And that was the beginning of I think the opening of my mind. Not that I think that it was closed but being from a small town background there just, in fact opportunities that are real just now becoming open to students in that environment. I work now with the State Department of Public Instruction and am very much aware of the state basic education program. Which is making sure that students all across the state have a basic level of opportunities in those schools. And they aren't opportunities that were always available in 1967. I have to credit my parents with all sorts of efforts, and successful ones I think, to give me opportunities that weren't necessarily there in the school setting. And to encourage me to look at different ways of thinking. But there's something about that formal setting that you have in a formal academic setting that really can give an extra push there. And Governor's School started that and Meredith certainly carried it a long way I think.

COOPER: Oh good. Exactly what is your title now? I know you were with the educational system.

BRYAN: Yes. I am responsible for the state's program for students at risk. Our effort to keep students in school and to successfully complete their high school education. We lose about a quarter of the students who come through high school in any given class. And that's a tragic loss of human potential. And a loss that society just can't continue to accept. So we're taking bold steps I think and in the years ahead are going to ...[end of side one]

COOPER: ...Dorothy Anne Bryan, class of '71, as a part of an Oral History of Meredith College alumnae. Anne is giving us a more or less impromptu interview. She doesn't know what question I'm going to stop and ask her next. And she's doing a beautiful job of expressing herself and giving us a great deal of valuable information. Anne perhaps you'd like to begin this side telling us a little about your family.

BRYAN: Okay. I guess to go back I'll mention that, I did mention that my mother is a Meredith graduate. I lost my father about six years ago but as I mentioned before my mother and father were just considered to be probably the greatest influence. And with Meredith right up there as also a tremendous influence. I have one sister, my sister Julia is a graduate of the class of '73 too. Also my mother's sister Iris was a graduate of the class of '45. So we definitely have strong family ties to Meredith. I've been married just almost four years. We have our fourth anniversary next year. I was 35 when I was married. My husband is Bruce Cosgrove and as you and I were talking a little earlier Jean, I did keep my name. And that is probably something that probably as late as the sixties not many Meredith graduates did. There are more and more over time who have. Others in my class also have. And we were talking about reasons why and I guess I don't have any one answer to that. I guess the two biggest influences on me, or three maybe, in decided to do that; one was perhaps my age. I had been Anne Bryan for a long time and it might have been a little harder to change. But I really think even if I had been married earlier I might have kept it. That is my name and it seemed appropriate for me to keep that name. The other influence probably was that my husband had the same feeling that he had his name and I had mine. With our daughter, she has Bruce's name and I think just because there must be a convention that we follow it made sense to me that she have his name. The idea of a double last name is a bit cumbersome I think. And so that's why we made the decision that we did there. But going back to the family I was married in 1984 when I was 35. And in February, February 16th of '87 our daughter Claire Bryan Cosgrove was born. And when you suggested the things that we might talk about you mentioned a mountaintop experience. And if I had to, I might cry when I say this, if I had to say a mountaintop experience it certainly was the birth of Claire. It's just almost indescribable. And she's just a wonderful little girl. And it's true that number of alumnae in my generation, certainly it's been true through the years but more so in the last ten to fifteen years, alumnae are continuing to be in the workforce outside the home as I am, after the birth of their children. But I can't speak for others but for myself I certainly would have to say that although the professional experiences are important to me and I feel that that's important for me to continue on there, those experiences can in no way compare to the importance of my family, and giving everything that I possibly can to Claire to help her to grow up to have

the happy and fulfilling life that I hope she has.

COOPER: Well, I think that's right. I can share with you the experience of motherhood. It is different.

BRYAN: Yes, yes. And the professionalism is so important. I do think there are ways to pull it all together and make it all work. It certainly is not always easy but I think it's worthwhile. And I would always want to keep uppermost in mind that responsibility and pleasure and delight I have in being able to be Claire's mother.

COOPER: Yeah, and as Claire's mother maybe you would tell us what you're doing right now as a part of your motherhood with her.

BRYAN: Well, I, Claire is 19 months old right now and she is just at a point of becoming such an individual. She's understanding so much about what's going on around here. And just wanting to take in all the knowledge that she possibly can. We have, she and I have just begun together to participate in a parent-child class that's offered through Raleigh Preschool, which is just behind Meredith on Ridge Road. I understand that a number of the Meredith students in the child development program come over and assist with that program from time to time. So that's a nice tie-in with Meredith. But it's a great chance for me once a week to get to spend some concentrated time with Claire in just having fun. And also to then go off and give her a chance to spend some time with some other children her age while the other mothers go off and talk about our common concerns and interests. During the other time while I'm at work we have a situation where our family shares a nanny who takes care of Claire with some friends of ours who live in the next block. They have a daughter who is ten days younger than Claire, ten days older than Claire. And the two girls are together while I'm away at work. And they just, it's just been a great experience I think for Claire. She has such a wonderful friend in Elise and they are very close to each other. And in the way that one and a half year-olds can are very very good friends.

COOPER: Well, I think you also are serving as a very good role model for other parents as you are in this education business.

BRYAN: Well, I hope so. And I mentioned earlier that I was formally in the criminal justice system and have moved now to education, did that primarily for professional reasons. As I worked more and more in the justice system I was aware of the fact that if we're going to make progress with that system we have to begin at an earlier point to prevent some of the problems that lead to crime later on. So that was why I was glad to have the opportunity to move into education as the education system began to take some real positive steps

towards drop out prevention, towards building success for students in school. But a side benefit of my work with education is that I am more aware and in tune, I hope, with the latest thinking in educational theory. And I hope I can put that to some advantage with Claire as well.

COOPER: I know that you, as you say you had used your name professionally for a long time before you were married. And I think that certainly made it a logical thing for you to keep your name. Where do you stand in history as far as the use of “Ms” in substitution for Mrs. or Miss?

BRYAN: Well, I think that probably about the time or probably soon after, the use of “Ms” came into vogue. It possibly was more in vogue a few years ago than it even is now. But as the women’s movement came to the fore it didn’t seem that the two appellations of tradition, the Miss or Mrs., exactly fit the situation. Miss clearly indicated through tradition that a person was not married. And Mrs., with usually the husband’s name following, that they were. But there was this other piece of the puzzle where a woman might intend to keep her name and yet be married. And so Ms fit in that particular situation. Also I think women in general and not necessarily, this was not necessarily my concern, but women were in general saying, were saying, “Why does it matter whether or not I’m married? Why isn’t it just sufficient to have one courtesy title for a woman just as there is one with Mr. for a man?” And so that certainly had a great deal to do in general terms I think with the reasons behind the, with the reasons behind using Ms.

COOPER: I think it’s a very convenient term too just to be very practical because if you don’t know if it’s Mrs. or Miss...

BRYAN: Well, that’s true.

COOPER: ... you can always use the Ms. And that just solves all your problems.

BRYAN: Then you’re safe. Unless the person is named Leslie or whatever and you don’t know if it’s a man or a woman. You still haven’t dealt with that one. Maybe it doesn’t even matter if it’s man or woman. But at least Ms helps us to some extent.

COOPER: Okay, we have heard about *Alice in Wonderland* on almost all of these tapes of Meredith alumnae. You have a very special significance to your evening of *Alice in Wonderland*. Would you share?

BRYAN: Yes, well you had, you had said that you might be interested in special memories and some things that really stood out in our Meredith years and one that immediately came to my mind was the experience of my class with *Alice*

in Wonderland. *Alice in Wonderland* was presented in April of our freshman year. And we all were anticipating the production excitedly. And it was in fact all that we had been told it would be. And certainly in and of itself it's something that stands out in our memories. But something else happened that night that I think will forever be tied to *Alice in Wonderland* in our minds and that's most definitely a very sad thing. And that was that Martin Luther King was assassinated on that very night. And I can remember vividly coming back to our dorm after *Alice in Wonderland* and going out on the balcony on Third Stringfield where I lived and seeing a bright red glow in the sky over downtown Raleigh. And just as in other cities across the nation people were reacting angrily to that tragic event. And just the kind of event that really stands out in your mind and really has an impact on your thinking. Here again I would go back to how, to the impact that a Meredith experience had upon my view of that event.

I suppose it was the next day when we all as a college gathered in the chapel. This is kind of, you know it really is, it's hard to think about this too. We gathered and I remember the discussions that went on and how we were all thinking about it. And I remember us all singing together "We Shall Overcome." And it, that kind of thing really does stay with you and has an impact for your entire life. I had the advantage of growing up in a situation that was very much more open I think, and tolerant of a wide range of people than many other situations. If I could just speak about that for a minute.

COOPER: Yes.

BRYAN: My parents, as I look back on it now, were remarkably tolerant for the time and the place where they grew up. I remember clearly, we grew up on a farm where there were many people who worked for us. But I remember my mother saying to me, I did not use the term "Negro" even though that was an acceptable term at that point, but I remember getting the impression from mother that that might be considered a derogatory term by someone. And my father who had number of people working for him to whom he was most kind and most respectful when I know that a lot of other people were not at that time. But still there were vestiges of a feeling that maybe whites and blacks were somehow different. And I credit my parents for having me as open as I think I could conceivably have been at that time. Then with that experience at Meredith, seeing things even more broadly. I really do have to, and I would want these feelings, I hope I have let them know how much their influence has meant to me. And I'm certain others in my class and in other Meredith classes over time.

COOPER: Anne, as a part of the Task Force you're doing a lot of dreaming I know. And a lot of these dreams will be realities a few years down the road we hope.

And so as people look back to this Task Force what are some of the things you hope they'll see as having come to pass?

BRYAN: Well, I hope that the name of the Task Force, the president's Task Force in Pursuit of Excellence, really does turn out to be something that we're able to do, really pursue excellence. And I hope that years later people will say, "Yes indeed, they did something to encourage Meredith." And we now have excellence in a variety of ways as a result of the work of this group and other efforts that are going on at Meredith. What I've realized in working with the group is that excellence is multi-faceted. And the many different aspects of life at Meredith are so tied together. So I would hope that we have excellence in a number of ways, including excellence in the academic program. Particularly keeping an emphasis on the liberal arts and recognizing their importance to the development of a well rounded and open individual.

I believe too that excellence has to do at Meredith with the development of the whole person, the awareness of the fact that we aren't just minds, there are hearts that go along with it. And the need for us as Meredith students going out into the world to be aware of the problems facing our world, and be a part of the solution to some of those problems. And I, so we're looking at how Meredith as an excellent institution can foster that. We are also looking at the spiritual dimension of our students. And being aware that Meredith needs to continue in that tradition of excellence in encouraging our students to look critical at their, critically at their own beliefs and values and to continue to develop them over time. So there are many ways that I think we're working towards excellence through that Task Force.

Actually a good blueprint I think that's already in existence for a lot of what we need to do is something that our Alumnae Association has put together as a follow-up to the work of the special alumnae ad hoc Committee. Eugene appointed a committee that's called the New Visions Committee. Many of the members of the ad hoc Committee have continued on that committee. And you added others who are looking at, looking ahead and trying, as the name applies with New Visions, to give the alumnae perspective on how that excellence can be put into practice. And while we don't have time on this tape to go down that full list, we talk more specifically about some of those general ideas that I've just mentioned. And I really do think that with that our Task Force appointed by the president has some good guidelines. And we are in fact using that, as well as other recommendations from the various groups that I mentioned that are a part of that Task Force, in coming up with our recommendations.

COOPER: I really do appreciate you serving on the Task Force after having served on the Visions Committee and the Committee for the decision on graduate, men

in the graduate school. Because I feel like you have so much background to lend to the committee of things that have been worked on...

BRYAN: Well, I do think that's important, that historical perspective. Being a history major I would think that that's important. But I really do think that that gives you a broader perspective. And I certainly am aware in serving on this Task Force what a complex task is before Dr. Weems and the other administrators at Meredith. What a complex job it is to operate an institution like Meredith. That it's easy to second guess. But when you're in there, as our Task Force is, as the New Visions Committee is, and looking at the various factors that play into final decisions that have to be made, it becomes so clear that we all have to be involved and that we all have to give our best shot at providing our perspective to allow us to come out with decisions and directions for Meredith's future that will be the most effective for Meredith in the years ahead.

COOPER: Before you have to go back to your work, to your next appointment, would you like to say a word to those who may be at Meredith now? Or those who will come to Meredith in the years ahead?

BRYAN: Hmm, there's a lot of things I would like to say. Maybe two or three that I think might encapsulate some of the, what I consider to be the most important notions to guide us. It's certainly how I would want to encourage Claire if she were at Meredith age right now. And one would be the idea of just, while you're at Meredith take it all in. Don't let it just slide by. I know that it's a different day and time but I often hear now that students are away from the campus quite a bit. And that there may not be as great of participation in some of the activities that are available. And that's good and bad. I know there are a lot of, a lot more activities that are available outside the campus than there were 17 years ago. But I would say that I would hope that Meredith students would really immerse themselves in the opportunities and the environment that are there for those four years. And to just be a part of it. I always thought that I really wanted to enjoy every minute of it because I knew that those minutes were finite. And that once gone, although I would have the wonderful memories, I wouldn't be back at Meredith as a student again. So I think it's so important to enjoy it while you have it.

Another would be the hope that students take as their creed that they will always do their best at whatever they try to do. I think that's important for all of us no matter what age. But at that particular age while students are just getting ready to start out on their own it's a great time to make that kind of commitment that I think stays with you, can stay with you all your life.

Another would be to be very actively involved and not just be a spectator, but

to get in there and to be a part of what's going on around you. And to take the initiative and to accept responsibility for helping to make this world a better place. And then maybe finally, to enjoy it all. And to realize, be aware of just how great life is. Maybe not every single minute but just really to enjoy the time that we have.

COOPER: Well, you certainly have made such tremendous advantage of your almost 40 years.

BRYAN: Oh no, you didn't have to say that!

COOPER: No, but I think you would have said it..

BRYAN: It's true though.

COOPER: ...life begins at 40. Can't say that for you because you have been so full of life before 40. But I do, as one whose quite a few years past 40, I can say with a lot of encouragement now that the last of life for which the first was made, so...

BRYAN: Well, I appreciate hearing that. You're in about the same position with me that I am with the current Meredith students. And I certainly take in what you say and it's really encouraging to me. Because as you approach 40 you naturally are thinking, "What does lie ahead," no matter what age. But that's a real significant milestone so I am appreciative of hearing that from you. But I do look forward to that.

COOPER: Well, I look forward to hearing from you again in about 16 or 17 years when you are my age. And I think you'll be just as full of life as you are now.

BRYAN: I sure hope so. I hope I'm as full of life as you are.

COOPER: And making a great contribution wherever you are. And that'll be about the time when Claire will be in college.

BRYAN: That's right.

COOPER: And we'll find out what Claire is doing.

BRYAN: Let's do this again.

COOPER: Okay, thank you so much. With Anne's permission I, Jean Cooper, am taking time at the end of this tape to comment on Meredith's contribution to the community in which it resides, that of the capitol city of Raleigh. She

mentioned president Carter being on campus as a part of the Lillian Parker Wallace Endowment fund. I was there for that occasion. It was a beautiful afternoon and the amphitheater was filled and running over with persons who were anxious to see and to hear former president Carter. There were faculty and students and there were also many people from the community. We can truly be proud of the contribution, the educational contribution, that Meredith makes in the Raleigh community. This is the end of side two of a tape made on September 23rd, 1988.



JUNE CAROL WILLIAMS
Class of 1978 and 1985

Today is December 2nd, 1988. I am here with June Carol Williams at the Law School of Wake Forest University. June is doing, is narrating this tape as a part of an Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae. June is a 1978 graduate and a 1985 graduate school candidate.

COOPER: June, thank you so much for letting me come to hear your memoirs of Meredith and what it's meant in your life.

WILLIAMS: Thank you. It's really a pleasure for me to be able to talk about Meredith because it was such an exciting experience in my life, both undergraduate and in graduate school. Educationally in thinking about the classes I took, particularly in graduate school, I was reflecting on my most enjoyable and it's really hard to pinpoint one. I guess probably the most enjoyable thing was Reading Across the Curriculum, which was taught by Dr. Mary Johnson. And the reason that that was such an exciting class was that Dr. Johnson made reading such an exciting thing for her students. And in turn was able to motivate us to make reading exciting for our students, if they were in kindergarten or if they were in twelfth grade. She was such an excellent role model for students and was just able to really convey that. And convey that enthusiasm which is just a terrific idea. It's been real helpful in my profession because during the time that I was doing my masters I taught kindergarten. So graduate school things were practical things that I could take back and use in my classroom. As far as my homemaking and community activities, don't have a whole lot of time to do homemaking things. But community activities, it's, the graduate school degree has been very, very helpful. And just being at Meredith I guess was very helpful. Because I got an opportunity to meet a lot of people, and probably to gain some self confidence. It's been wonderful.

I guess there's really not a professor in graduate school that I actually feared. There were a number that I truly respected. I've already mentioned Dr. Johnson, that's probably one of my favorite professors. But the graduate school experience was something that was very, very practical. Not very theoretical, but things that I could take back to my classroom and implement immediately. And things that I could understand and just do something very easily with. It probably helped me in all areas of my life as far as I've done some directing of children's choirs and children's Handel choirs, and just some techniques that I learned in there certainly enable me to carry out those a little bit better.

COOPER: Yes. And I might interject here that when you were a student at Wake Forest

you even did some of that Handel work, and stepped in our church I know when there was a particular great need. And we were grateful to you for taking out time from your law studies to do that.

WILLIAMS: Well, that was certainly an exciting experience. And one that I will certainly treasure. There've just been a number of things that Meredith has done for me in my life. Just the Meredith experience, graduate and undergraduate. I'm looking at the suggested questions that you have and I guess my social life at Meredith on a scale from 1-10 was probably maybe an 8 or 9. I was very active in a lot of Meredith activities and a lot of community kinds of things. I really enjoyed the experience of being able to interact with other people. As an undergraduate, I was a hall proctor and was on legislative board and was able to just help make some decisions about Meredith. But in graduate school we really probably didn't have as much of an opportunity to interact. But I was fortunate enough to be able to do the graduation speech representing our class, which was really exciting. So it was an opportunity to be active and to participate in some of the Meredith activities. And I think the community spirit was something that was just real helpful to me in both areas.

As far as friendships, probably the closest friendships that I've ever developed in my life came from there. My college roommate from my sophomore year through my senior year has remained my very best friend. And we still keep in contact two or three times a week. She fortunately lives only about an hour from here, so.

COOPER: Oh, and who is this?

WILLIAMS: Mary Anne, Thompson now. She used to be Mary Anne Watts. And we roomed together for three years, and as I say have just really maintained very close contact. My suitemates were people that I lived with for four years, so we remained close.

COOPER: And who is that?

WILLIAMS: Sarah Due, who is now Sarah Gain, and Pin Irvin. And they've been real close. And even in the graduate school experience Peggy Williams has been a really close friend of mine that suffered with me through many late nights trying to develop that thesis and get everything done. She and Fay Spanauer were two of my closest friends.

COOPER: Fay and you even shared the same last name.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, we sure did. Among many other things. And she was probably the person that helped me most on my thesis, as far as support and all that is

concerned. So, those people have remained very very close friends. So that's been a wonderful experience.

As far as spiritually, I've always thought Meredith College has been true to its mission as a Christian college. In undergraduate school I was a little bit disappointed that they didn't have worship services there on Sunday morning. But there were so many other churches in the area that were able to lend those. The Wednesday morning service was always something that was very inspirational. And I was involved in the Meredith Christian Association. To maybe not as great an extent as I could have been, but did some things with freshman devotions and that kind of thing, the last two years I was there. So that was real inspirational.

COOPER: Let's see, the chapel was there for your graduate school.

WILLIAMS: Yes it was. And...

COOPER: How do you feel? Cause you're one of the few who was on the campus when there was no chapel and then when there was, in a very intimate sort of way? Did this help as far as, you think the Wednesday morning services, is that where they're held now?

WILLIAMS: Yeah. I think probably the chapel as much as anything else provides an inspirational building, so to speak.

COOPER: A visible sign.

WILLIAMS: A visible sign of Meredith's Christian commitment. Which has always been there. But I think probably that has certainly helped. And in addition to that I think a number of people have been able to use that chapel for weddings. And not just as a place to get married but as somewhere that represents a real commitment in their life, that they were able to be able to share it there now. And we had our baccalaureate service there. And it was very inspirational to be able to see all the professors and there's something just exciting about them marching down the aisle in their caps and gowns, particularly in the chapel as opposed to Jones Auditorium. So it was, it was a nice experience.

COOPER: I would think, Jones Auditorium is good for some things but it doesn't have the atmosphere that the chapel would, for sure.

WILLIAMS: The community church, as far as the churches around Meredith, really participated quite a bit with the students. I was not really involved in one of those churches, unfortunately. I was very involved in one at home, which was about two hours away. So we traveled back and forth almost every week.

But I think the atmosphere itself and the fact that there were a number of places to go, and things to do spiritually that were just really uplifting. That you weren't knocked over the head with that, but there was that opportunity, I think was probably very inspirational. In addition to the various choral kinds of things, concerts and that type of thing, which were always just terrific and filled with lots of inspirational kinds of music. So I guess my memories of spiritual things at Meredith center probably mostly around not only the Wednesday morning services, but a lot of times just the intimate discussions with hall mates and that kinds of thing.

COOPER: Did you have opportunities to sing with the chorus?

WILLIAMS: Yes, I did.

COOPER: Okay so that, you participated in a very intimate sort of way during some of these.

WILLIAMS: Exactly. That was a real, a terrific experience. A real opportunity that I cherished.

COOPER: And who was the choral director at that time, do you remember?

WILLIAMS: I don't even know.

COOPER: Okay. Miss Donnelley had retired before your time.

WILLIAMS: No, I think she may have been there part of the time. I think that she was probably there the first couple of years that I was there. And that was real exciting. And the music department at Meredith is so terrific that anybody that was in there was just a real inspiration. Uhm, let's see, when I think about my relationship with the outside world probably the thing that comes to mind more than anything else was the 19, I guess it was the 1980 election between Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. Which we participated very vividly and very enthusiastically in. And Jack Ford came and spoke to the Meredith campus. And there was a just a very devoted group of young Republicans at the time. And something that probably really influenced us quite a bit because we were able to get involved in the issues and stayed up all night and watched the election. And that's probably my first introduction to politics.

COOPER: Oh, great.

WILLIAMS: Which was real exciting.

COOPER: Now, is he the one who has the relationship here?

WILLIAMS: Uhm, but that certainly added to our ideas of being able to participate in the community. Have some place to share our ideas. I guess my fondest memories of Meredith are probably with individual people, in hall meetings and those kinds of interactions. Meredith provides an opportunity to develop some real intimate relationships with a number of people. I think due to the fact that they're all women that enables an opportunity to give you some time to spend some time with other friends and, when there are no men around. And there's nobody really to compete for attention. You can run up and down the hall late at night. And two, the campus is so small that you really get a chance to know a number of people. You're more than just a number there. You're a real individual that can develop some individual traits and qualities. So probably my fondest memories would have to do with just the relationships that I formed there.

I like the all female institution. I think that just because of its very location that Meredith is a wonderful, affords a wonderful opportunity for the best of both worlds. Because N.C. State is just down the street. And Carolina and Duke are not very far away. And when you want to be, when you want to have contact with the male sex there's an opportunity to do that. But I think that the fact that there's an all female university just lends a lot of unity. And the, you know, immediately the Thanksgiving meal comes to mind. And the time, Cornhuskin', and the time that people would unite. That they may not be as willing to do that if it were not an all female campus. So I think that's probably lent a lot to Meredith. Not only to their credibility but also just to, as drawing factor for a number of people. Because you have the best of both worlds. Aside from the fact that it's wonderful to go to class with dirty hair if you wanted to.

COOPER: And warm-up suits.

WILLIAMS: Exactly. You didn't have to worry about dressing up till Friday afternoon. I think also that with the absence of a male figure, male figures there, that it gave an opportunity to lend some self confidence to some females that ordinarily may feel a little less able to contribute. Because they're maybe not as dominant personalities. I think that that gave a number of people an opportunity to really grow. And to develop some leadership skills that they may not have developed otherwise. I personally see that as an experience that really helped me to grow and develop some self confidence. And that's probably the best thing that college did for me, was to make me see who I was and sort of give me some direction as far as where I was going. That kind of thing. So I think that the all female institution has been great.

In thinking about my life since Meredith. Actually since there have been two

major segments with Meredith in my life, since finishing my graduate degree I've come to law school and finished and successfully gotten through the bar and am now teaching. So certainly my master's in education has been a real benefit, as far as teaching law students. And I'm also doing some work in the school system with law related education. So I've been able to kind of combine both degrees.

COOPER: Can you tell us a little bit about what you're doing in public school?

WILLIAMS: I'll be happy to. I have, at the beginning of the year I started a street law program where law students who are interested maybe in doing something in the public schools, maybe who don't have any knowledge of teaching at all but are interested in sharing some of their experiences with either young children, or it can be all the way through twelfth grade, have an opportunity to come to a few classes and have some developed lesson plans already on subjects that would be of interest to young children. For example, this semester we did a lot with voting in the election. Which is something that law students would be interested in. But also certainly children would be interested in. So most of our work was in the elementary school this semester. Second semester we're doing some consumer law kinds of things. Such as how to rent an apartment, how to sign a lease, what you're responsible for, when you buy a car what are the legal implications. And things that people really need to know to be not only effective citizens but also to just be able to function in the adult world.

COOPER: That sounds super. How do you choose which schools you'll offer this to and, does the school system choose for you?

WILLIAMS: No. They've actually chosen for us but at the first of the year I thought that maybe we would have three or four students sign up and we had 34. So it's been an overwhelming success except it's just been kind of one of those things that's just snowballed. And we're still trying to get our things together as we go along. Hopefully next year it'll be a program that will have a focus, an entire year focus, and will be focused in several of the schools instead of... This year we're doing about five or six but we hope to expand that to maybe 15 to 20 next year.

COOPER: Great. And is this a seminar type thing that they take at an optional period or after school?

WILLIAMS: This is something that the law students just do as a volunteer type of thing.

COOPER: But the students?

- WILLIAMS: The students, it's sort of integrated into their regular curriculum. So the teachers are also there and lend their support and are very cooperative. And it's worked out real well. The students in the school system have thoroughly enjoyed it. And the law students have had some real positive experiences. And feel like that maybe they're lending something to community supports. So that's been fun.
- COOPER: That sounds like an excellent idea. Did you just have to start from the very beginning on this? Had there been any work done to precede any of this?
- WILLIAMS: Last year I think there had been some talk about it but never, no one had ever actually gotten it started.
- COOPER: So you had to lay the foundation.
- WILLIAMS: Exactly. And we're still not, we don't have all the bugs worked out of it yet. But we're proceeding in that direction.
- COOPER: What year law student is able to give this sort of time?
- WILLIAMS: Surprisingly enough most of the people that have come to volunteer have been first year students. Partly because by the time they get here they're fresh and excited and whatever. After they've been here a couple years they're kind of ready to finish law school and go onto their profession. But we've had a few second year students and hopefully maybe we'll have a few third years before it's over. But that's been our main focus.
- COOPER: I think Wake Forest is pretty much known for it's involvement in the community. And this is certainly one very strategic area in which they can serve.
- WILLIAMS: And that's been real exciting, personally rewarding for me as well as the students. I've also been able to spend, as a part of this program, I've been able to do some law related, actually citizenship kinds of lessons in the elementary school with the kindergarten class once a week. So that's been kind of exciting.
- COOPER: So you're almost like an ambassador from the school out to the city.
- WILLIAMS: Out to the city.
- COOPER: Yeah. Do you have teaching responsibilities here on campus?
- WILLIAMS: Yeah. I teach a legal research and writing class here in the University, in the

law school. Which is almost like the English composition of college. So it's an interesting course where students learn how to write legally, how to think in a different, entirely different vein than they've ever been used to before. So it's kind of an interesting life.

COOPER: But I'm sure having had English at Meredith of course...

WILLIAMS: Not one of my _____.

COOPER: No, not with Dr. Johnson, but you learned a lot so that should come in handy.

WILLIAMS: Yes.

COOPER: Well, I think it's great that you're here on the campus that, to be able to stay at your alma mater and to make a contribution in a different sort of way is exciting.

WILLIAMS: It is exciting. I am looking forward to, next semester I'm going to be able to work some with the educational department. They've asked me if I would help them supervise some student teachers. So I'm having an opportunity to do all kinds of things which combine both degrees. Which is nice.

COOPER: Since we're talking about degrees let's go back and sort of tell what your background degrees were and where you...

WILLIAMS: Okay. My undergraduate degree at Meredith I double majored in religion and sociology. And got a social work certification and a K-3 teaching certificate. Thinking at the time that maybe at some point I would want to work with the Baptist Children's Home, thinking that that would be a great combination. In the meantime I went to Duke Divinity School for a year and took some terrific courses, but decided that maybe that's not what I needed to do long term. And so I went back to Meredith and got my graduate degree in education and then came to law school.

COOPER: And all the time you were getting your graduate degree you were teaching.

WILLIAMS: Right.

COOPER: And you were teaching kindergarten all of this time?

WILLIAMS: Yes. I taught kindergarten for seven years in the Wake County School System.

COOPER: So you have had quite a sweep of the private colleges in North Carolina.

WILLIAMS: Exactly.

COOPER: That's terrific. Okay.

WILLIAMS: As I say my feelings of Meredith are just real positive. I feel like that has really positively influenced my life.

COOPER: It's probably unfair to ask you to compare Duke and Wake Forest with Meredith since they are all somewhat similar institutions, other than being co-ed, as far as being church related schools and small schools. But do you have any particular thing that you'd like to relate between the two schools?

WILLIAMS: Probably they all have differing personalities as far as a campus is concerned. I probably see more similarities between Wake Forest and Meredith than I do between Duke and either one of the two schools. Partly because Meredith had such a personal atmosphere. That you always felt like you were just a real special person. Wake Forest tends to have more of that but maybe not quite as much...

COOPER: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: ...as the Meredith campus. Duke on the other hand tends to make you feel like you're a special person partly because you're intellectual, not really because you're just a person I think.

COOPER: Yeah, I can understand. And we can see the similarities since Meredith in the "old days" was the sister college of Wake Forest. It's nice to see somebody's perspective 30, what 35 years later. And that they can still see those similarities. Great. June, you have very positive memories of Meredith and that is in line with most of the others on this oral history. But would you like to share with us something that is maybe not such a good memory? Or can you?

WILLIAMS: I think probably that there were things, or I'm sure there were things that I was unhappy about at the time. But I guess those have all just been blocked out. I guess the fact that there were so many positive things about Meredith that they seemed to overshadow the negative things. And you just tend to remember only the things that you liked the most. And in this case there were so many of them that I probably have just tended to block those out of my mind.

COOPER: You've done real well then if you've blocked these out, well since '78 has been ten years, but since '85 has only been four years. Ah, I think that speaks

very strongly for Meredith. I do know that not only as a student but in having served on the Alumnae Association Council you have been back to Meredith even since you graduated in '85.

WILLIAMS: Right.

COOPER: So you want to tell us about that?

WILLIAMS: Actually I have been thrilled to be back to Meredith. I haven't been as much as I'd like to have been. I was able to go back for my reunion in May of this year, which was real exciting to see people after ten years and what they've been doing, and those kinds of things. I hope in the future that I'll be able to be more active with the Meredith Alumnae Association. But since I've been I law school for the last three years that's kind of been a major priority in my life.

COOPER: Yeah. But you did represent the graduate students officially on the Council.

WILLIAMS: Right. And we've had some meetings and talks specifically about some things that we could do to make the graduate school more appealing to people. And to make graduate students feel more a part of the Meredith community. So there've been, I've attended several meetings that that's been the major topic of discussion and the need to more fully include the graduate students in that community.

COOPER: Because actually this now spans the period of how many years that we've been, the education degree has just been for how many years?

WILLIAMS: I think the first degree was offered in, or the program was offered in 1983. And the first class graduated in '85.

COOPER: And you were in that first class?

WILLIAMS: And I was in that first class.

COOPER: Yes, I remember how excited you were when I met you at _____ for the first time there when I was in the dining hall. And you were excited about having come to that point in your life in '85. So you're not really talking about a lot of students that you are working with, or a lot of graduates that you are trying to meet a need for. But an important aspect of it nevertheless.

WILLIAMS: Right. As far as how I chose Meredith, undergraduate, that was probably from the time that I was a small child my Dad had told me that that was a wonderful place to go. So I never really considered anywhere else. I think I

applied to Duke and Wake Forest and N.C. State and got very positive responses from everybody, but really wanted to go to Meredith. And never thought about going anywhere else. And didn't actually see the campus until I arrived the first day.

COOPER: My goodness.

WILLIAMS: Talk about step of faith.

COOPER: Yes. Now home was where?

WILLIAMS: Well, home at that time was in Whitsett, North Carolina, which is in the middle of nowhere. But it's between Greensboro and Burlington.

COOPER: Okay.

WILLIAMS: But my mom remarried and we moved to Greenville, North Carolina.

COOPER: Even being that close you had not seen the campus?

WILLIAMS: I had not seen the campus.

COOPER: Oh, that's marvelous. And how, what was your Dad's association that he thought that was a good place?

WILLIAMS: My grandmother, his mother, had had a brother that apparently in 1925 when the campus moved to its present location, helped to build that. She had always, and being a very strict Southern Baptist, she had always thought was next to heaven. And so I kind of think that got passed down. She was just real excited to have someone go there. My, in fact I'd had several other people in my family that had attended Wake Forest and Campbell. But nobody had been to Meredith and that was just such a special place that it was, I think it was just real rewarding for them as well as for me.

COOPER: Well, and you said you initially thought about Duke and Wake Forest and in the meantime you've incorporated those two institutions into your learning, so...

WILLIAMS: So I've gotten them all.

COOPER: All except N.C. State. Did you ever take a course at N.C. State?

WILLIAMS: Actually I did. I took a couple courses at N.C. State. Right before I started my master's degree. So I've hit almost everybody.

COOPER: You've gotten them all in.

WILLIAMS: Right.

COOPER: That's great. Well, I'm glad you decided to stay with Wake Forest for a while though. And that you're a part of the Forsyth County chapter of Meredith alumnae. And now that you have gotten out of law school maybe you can make it to a chapter meeting and meet some others.

WILLIAMS: I'd like to do that.

COOPER: There's another law school graduate that also teaches in your field here. Tell us about her.

WILLIAMS: Well, Suzanne Reynolds teaches here in the law school and graduated from Meredith before I did. I didn't have the privilege of knowing her as a law student but she's just been a wonderful wonderful supportive person this year as a faculty member. And has shared some of her Meredith experiences with me. And even shared that during the bar exam she... [end of side one]

COOPER: This is side two of a tape with June Carol Williams, class of '78 and '85, being narrated as part of an oral history of Meredith College Alumnae. June, when we turned the tape over we were talking about Suzanne Reynolds and your relationship with her here. There are not a lot of Meredith graduates who have become law students, lawyers or attorneys. Do you anticipate that there's going to be more of this in the future?

WILLIAMS: I anticipate that as more women get into the field of law that probably more Meredith graduates will be interested in that vein. Law has certainly become more competitive and has certainly opened up and is not no longer just a man's field. So I think probably as more women are able to get into that field that there will be more Meredith graduates that are interested in that.

COOPER: Mary, Memory Farmer Mitchell of the class of '44 I believe, was one of the first ones who got a law degree. And became one of the first female judges. There is another one I understand in Durham that I have not gotten to know. Do you know anymore recent graduates of Meredith who are in the field of law?

WILLIAMS: Actually I don't. I'm not aware of anybody else as a matter of fact, except for Suzanne Reynolds who I met when I first came here.

COOPER: Okay. I know that you've been so involved with Meredith and now working

on the campus, did you have probably in your busy schedule set some moments aside that you dreamed for Meredith as we come to the Centennial in 1991. And what do you hope to see in the future for Meredith?

WILLIAMS: I guess when I think about what Meredith has offered me I would wish that it would continue to stay an all female campus. That the size of Meredith as far as it's undergraduate class would continue to stay about the same. Because I think the, just by nature of the few students that are there, just enables a real sense of community. I would like to see Meredith branch more into the areas of education and business and other areas in the graduate school campus. Because I feel like that the professors there have so much to offer. And that there are a number of things that Meredith could become involved in with the community. That they have some resources to offer the community. The present Meredith generation, I guess any words of wisdom that I might have would be that the values that seem to have been set through the years as I meet Meredith alumnae from 1900 on seem to have virtually stayed about the same, even though the values of our present generation has changed drastically since the early 1900s. And I guess I would say that the people that have had the happiest lives that I've witnessed have been the people whose values have been what Meredith seems to stress; community work and Christian commitment and very intimate friendships and those kinds of things. And I would, I guess any words of wisdom that I would have would include the fact of staying true to those values. And in turn true to yourself in what you experienced at Meredith and what you really believe. And not being lead by what everybody else wants you to think or feel. I guess if I developed anything at Meredith it was the sense of being able to be true to that commitment to myself.

As far as my personal portrait of life I guess the reason that I've chosen teaching is because of a lot of things which probably were influenced by my background at Meredith have offered me. Which are if I can make life better for any other human being that's probably a good part of my purpose in doing it. And in teaching I feel that I've had a real opportunity to share an awful lot of things. And to be able to share the love that God's given me with other people. I think that that's probably my main purpose in life.

COOPER: The caring and sharing are certainly important, and as I mentioned to you off tape, this being the 24th tape now of how much I have seen that teachers do influence a person's life. And I feel that your opportunity here is just as great as it was when you were teaching kindergarten.

WILLIAMS: Right, right.

COOPER: And that the whole gamut from kindergarten from law school or whatever,

your teaching position is a very important position. A very important profession to pursue because for one who feels that your relationship with others is important, and what you do in your life for others is important. And your being here certainly is strategic.

June turning now to a lighter note, what would you like to tell us about some funny or maybe not so funny, frustrating incident at Meredith?

WILLIAMS: I guess the thing that pops into my mind first and foremost is probably one of the most interesting experiences that I had at Meredith, which was the day of Baccalaureate. We were supposed to arrive at the chapel at least by 9:30. And I went out at quarter till 9:00 to start my car and had a totally dead battery. So had to call a friend and, who taught school at the time, and she had to leave her class and bring me her car. And I had to take her back to school. And she arrived at my house at 9:32, in Garner. So I took her back to school and got to the Meredith campus at three minutes till 10:00. And as you well know, Baccalaureate you either get there and march in with your class or you just don't go. You don't exactly walk in late. So at three minutes till 10:00 I had to park at the end of the Meredith driveway and run all the way down the driveway in three inch heels, trying to pin on my hat. And my class was standing all at the front door waiting for me. Just yelling at me as I'm running up, hoping that I didn't break my neck.

COOPER: Did it help any to be W in the alphabet or did you go...?

WILLIAMS: No that didn't help. Actually I was the last one and made it just barely in time. And that's probably because they stretched it a little bit. I think we should have marched in before that but they knew I would eventually get there, so.

COOPER: Oh me, well cars are wonderful things but sometimes they do let us down.

WILLIAMS: They always know the appropriate point to just malfunction.

COOPER: June, since you were at the sort of end of this phase of the oral history let me share with you my feeling at this point. There is a strong unity, as you have mentioned, with Meredith alumnae from the beginning of the century till now as far as their value system and their philosophy of life. In the midst of much diversity there's a very strong thread there that binds us together it seems. But our diversity can mostly be talked about in terms of how we look. They can tell us by the way we talk about Meredith and about life in general, I think many times. But they certainly can't tell that we're from Meredith by the way we look. And as I have known you for these four years now I think I've always been charmed with your auburn hair and your bright smile and your

attractive clothes. And I'm sure that your personality is what has attracted me to you most. But I do enjoy seeing that smiling face and that bouncy auburn tresses...

WILLIAMS: Well, thank you.

COOPER: ...as you go about your way enthusiastically, be it at Meredith at a Council meeting or here at the law school or in the church. Which are the three places that we've had opportunity to share together. So thank you again for sharing with Meredith in this oral history. And Meredith, you'll be looking at Meredith in the next ten years and we'll also be looking at you because we know that you're just at the threshold now of perhaps great adventures. And we wish you the very best.

WILLIAMS: Well, thank you very much.



ANNE SUGGS
Class of 1985

Today is November 14th, 1988. Anne Suggs, class of '85, is narrating this tape as part of an Oral History of Meredith College Alumnae. The interview is Jean Batten Cooper, class of '54.

COOPER: Anne, thank you for letting me come after a busy day at work for you, to sit in this lovely living room here to reminisce about Meredith. So just start wherever you feel like it.

SUGGS: Well, I'm really pleased to be a part of your history. Meredith is very important to me. Not only for the academics that I received there but because at a particular time in my life I needed to have some friends and make a new start and Meredith certainly did provide that opportunity for me. Both in my career and my personal life.

COOPER: Great. You were there too, in a sort of a different capacity than so many others, in that you had supposedly gotten your specialty and did your core work so much of it there. So can you sort of tell us how this happened?

SUGGS: Yes, I always seem to be going backwards to do things and this was just another example in my life of how I did the last thing first. I had been going to school at Duke and North Carolina State University and UNC Chapel Hill for six years, working on an undergraduate degree. During that time I had taken the upper level courses that I wanted in business and management and political communications. So when I quit working and was planning to go to school full time I reconsidered where I might want to go and decided I'd like to go to Meredith. Well, I knew Anne Dahl and I knew that she was working with the re-entry students there so I went to her at the last minute before the fall semester and said, 'Can you please get me in?' And she did. So you're right, I was taking the freshman and sophomore courses when I was there. English 101 and British Authors and Western Civ and all those kinds of things.

COOPER: And that's the thing that Meredith was sort of famous for is their core courses.

SUGGS: So maybe I got the best part of Meredith. And the good parts from the other schools and put them all together. Because I seem to have a pretty wide academic standards here.

COOPER: And I understand that you actually had gone to Meredith for a continuing

education course earlier though, so it was not all new to you.

SUGGS: No, it wasn't. I had started taking some continuing education courses there I guess when the department first started going. There were very few of us and I remember Anne Dahl would schlep over at night and take out money as we appeared for our first class. And in particular I remember one life drawing class that I had. We met in a big, big room with lots of loose furniture around, in Johnson Hall. And one particular night we had a nude model. And the Board of Trustees was meeting right underneath our classroom. And so we had to tiptoe around that night. We did not dare move all this furniture around as we usually did, for fear somebody would want to investigate what class is going on up there. But that was sort of a fun time. It made it very exciting, you know like kids trying to get away with stuff. And that was nice.

COOPER: Oh well that's great.

SUGGS: But I had enjoyed being in some of the seminar classes and some other things before I actually went to Meredith as an undergraduate student.

COOPER: In your work at State and Duke and Chapel Hill, tell us what your field was there, what you were working at when you, in these other institutions.

SUGGS: Well, when I first started taking college courses, I believe in 1973, in the fall of '73, no it was the fall of '76 that's what it was, I didn't have much choice. Because I was working full time and I had a very demanding job. Chapel Hill had just started an undergraduate degree program in the evening. So it was a matter of taking what was available and I think I started with Psych 101 and Sociology and Drama and things, they just did not have a variety of courses to choose from. So after commuting for a year I was very happy that State had developed an evening degree program. So that's when I started going to North Carolina State University. And there I was taking communications courses and business courses, business management courses. I obtained a certificate in Organizational Communications from North Carolina State University, which was a part of the courses that I transferred to Meredith. And I was very pleased when they evaluated all of my credits and my course work that I didn't lose a single credit. Meredith found a place for them and I didn't even have to repeat anything at all. I even got credit for a certificate program that I'd done at Duke in health care administration. During the time that I was going to school all those years I was director of public relations for the Wake County hospital system. So I was doing certificate work and degree work all at the same time, as well as working full time.

COOPER: You were a busy woman.

SUGGS: Those were busy years. Well, you can understand that after six years of doing that I was ready to either quit going to school or quit work and go to school, and just sort of get my life in order. And I did decide that since I wanted to change careers as well as just get a degree I did make the decision to leave work and go to school full time. And then get back into the work force. And so I took three semesters and a summer and headed back for the work force.

COOPER: And I believe you ended up with a double major?

SUGGS: Well, I'm not sure there's the designation of a double major but I had like 136 hours in business and communications and political studies. Political studies is my major but I guess I have a minor in business management.

COOPER: You did go back to work and we'll talk about that a little later but even when you started this certificate course and did this at Duke, that was not the beginning of your work toward higher education and enrichment. Because you started at a very early age and it seems that you continued all along the way. Tell us about some of those other little piecemeal things you did.

SUGGS: Oh, okay. Well, I graduated from high school in Irwin, North Carolina. After three years in high school I'd completed all the courses that I needed for a diploma, with the exception of the fourth senior English class. So, we were next door to Campbell, Buies Creek and Campbell, which at that time was a junior college and a prep school, so I completed my high school diploma work at Campbell and went one semester at Campbell. Then I got married and moved to Washington, DC. And wanting to continue my courses in business I went to [S_____] Business College in Washington, DC. I had taken shorthand and bookkeeping and typing and you know those kinds of things, in high school as well as at Campbell. So during you know the several years after that I took a number of odds and ends kinds of courses. I took, I had four semesters in business law. Which were audit courses at State. And I discovered I was wasting my time. I was learning a lot but with nothing to show for it that was ever going to count to a degree. So at that point I decided if I was going to put in my time I'd go ahead and take the test and get the credit for it.

COOPER: Well, continuing education certainly seems to be your bit. I know right now even though you're working full time you still feel like you're being educated by your job, I'm sure.

SUGGS: When I finished my undergraduate degree at Meredith I went into the M.B.A. program there. And so, I interrupted that with a relocation to, from Raleigh to Winston-Salem. And I certainly plan to pick that up again if I should move back to Raleigh. I shall go back and say, 'Let me back into Meredith again.'

COOPER: Well, I'm sure they will.

SUGGS: In the meantime I've been working on a certification program for financial planning. And I have a couple more units of that to finish.

COOPER: And you're doing this through...?

SUGGS: It's through the College of Financial Planning in Denver, Colorado. It's a self study program with national standard exams given three times a year.

COOPER: Goodness. It was something your work provides for you?

SUGGS: No.

COOPER: Or are you doing that independent?

SUGGS: No, I do it on my own.

COOPER: Okay.

SUGGS: I have a lot of training courses provided from my employer, which is NCNB. And I'm probably next year going to go to the Credit School, which is a nine month full time school study courses with NCNB.

COOPER: And where will you be for that?

SUGGS: I'm not sure yet.

COOPER: Well, we're glad that you came to Winston-Salem for a short time, to be a part of the Meredith alumnae group here. And you've been very loyal in coming to our meetings, both our spring meeting and our fall meeting this year. And we're, we just are so happy that you participated with us here and look forward to having you as long as you are in Winston-Salem.

SUGGS: Wherever I go I continue to meet Meredith women. Last Saturday I went to a special choir rehearsal where we're working on our Christmas cantata. And I wore my wings sweatshirt, never thinking that people would even notice it. You know, you just wear sweatshirts and don't really think about what's on them. As it turned out there were five other people in my choir at Knollwood who were Meredith people. And so we had fun.

COOPER: Well, in this area yes, you'll find Meredith graduates.

SUGGS: And actually the first person who mentioned my shirt was one of the men in the choir, mentioned to me that his daughter is also an Angel. So it's, everybody recognizes Meredith.

COOPER: Well, yes these fathers do recognize us, the Meredith daughters. They're some of the most loyal supporters, husbands and fathers. Okay, let's go back to Meredith just a little and tell us about life at Meredith. And what it was for you as an older student, as a re-entry student, and as a day student. What are some of the perspectives?

SUGGS: My first semester there I was just in a blur. I hardly knew that was happening. I had taken on a really heavy load of 18 hours. And so I worked. I had classes from like 8:00 till 5:30 in the afternoon with hardly any time in between. The only time I didn't have a class I guess is when on Wednesday when we had chapel. And they wouldn't let me in the library. They'd make me leave you know, from studying. But I did have a really heavy load so I was working very hard. But I made a lot of new friends at Meredith, among the faculty as well as the students. I believe that year, I tend to remember something under 100 re-entry students. And of course now four years later they have over 400 re-entry students.

Most of the re-entry students "hung around" I guess is the word to say, kept converging upon the Cate Center because that was really the only place we had to go to get something to eat or just to visit. Or there were study rooms there we could use. The counselor was there to help us with our mental attitude. And the hamburgers were good in the snack shop. So I tended to congregate there with a lot of other re-entry students. You would often, pretty much anytime you walked in, you would see undergraduates, traditional undergraduates assisting us older undergraduates with our math classes and things like that. They were very, the younger students were very accepting of the re-entry students. And I made friends that I will always keep, among not only the young people but the re-entry students as well.

Once you're there and you get into it you just don't think about age differences. The faculty, without exception, makes no exception for the re-entry students. You certainly don't have a lighter load. Maybe more is expected of you because you by now should have learned to organize your life. The traditional students I think may have been intimidated by us sometimes. It's hard to get away from an older woman, and the mother association. So I think maybe sometimes they had to get to know us a little bit before they felt real comfortable with just being a 20 year-old or an 18 year-old or whatever. They thought we made better grades than they did and that's not true at all.

I remember one incident in the class where a girl came up, it was in my math class, and she came up to me after class one day and she said, "Your clothes are so bad." And then she, this awful look came on her face. She thought that I wouldn't understand that she meant, "Bad meant good," she liked my clothes. And I remember corduroy skirts and boots and things like that. But then this awful look came on her face and she said, "Oh I meant I like your clothes. I don't guess you know what that means." I said, 'Well, as a matter of fact I do know what that means. And I really appreciate the compliment.' So it was just little incidents like that brought you closer to them, to the traditional age undergraduates. And it just, it just eliminated that distance that could have been there. And of course we had projects with them. And many marketing, well I was the only older student in most of my classes and particularly in marketing classes. We had fun doing projects together. And I really enjoyed being with them.

Since I had done all of the, most of the, re-entry students had done their first couple of years in college. Either when they were younger or over the years or something. So most of the re-entry students that I met were finishing up, when I had all of the freshman and sophomore classes to do. So I had a lot more contact with the younger students than I did the older students in school. One of the things that I really enjoyed so much was, were the English classes. And chorus. I was in Miss Haessler's chorus for two semesters and thoroughly enjoyed that.

COOPER: Wonderful.

SUGGS: And those were the only music classes that I took while I was there. And would loved to have taken photography and all sorts of things but just didn't have the time for it. Cause I needed to get back into the work force. I couldn't take anymore time off. I'm built to work.

COOPER: Oh well you mentioned the chorus. And I know that means that you sang for some of the events on campus then.

SUGGS: Yes we did. We sang in the chapel for the chapel services a number of times. We did special concerts at Christmas with the chorale. And that was a lot of fun. We enjoyed doing that. You know, a combination of those different music groups. One Sunday we were singing for parent's weekend and there was a special worship service in the chapel that Sunday morning. And we were doing some music that's not traditionally music. It is spiritual but not things you normally sing in church. And one of the doctors was there that I'd known from the hospital. And they came up to me afterwards and said, "Am I seeing who I think I'm seeing?" I said, 'Yes, I'm here. I'm an undergraduate and I'm singing in the chorus.' It was fun to see people like

that.

COOPER: Oh I'm sure it was.

SUGGS: And surprise them a little bit.

COOPER: Well, I think that was fun.

SUGGS: I particularly liked the English courses where I was learning to write. That's something I'd really like to pursue sometime.

COOPER: And I believe you also did engage in some of the other extra-curricular activities on campus, like the plays.

SUGGS: Yes. I was not personally in the plays, except when the chorus was doing some things that helped out with those kinds of activities. But I always enjoyed going to the plays and the convocations. I particularly enjoyed *Alice in Wonderland*. That was a lot of fun. And that...

COOPER: You mentioned that as really interesting because almost every person from the past years, many years in the past decade you know, mentioned *Alice in Wonderland*.

SUGGS: Well, it's good that everybody gets to see that once at least, while they're on campus. How else can you just laugh at your teachers and not get punished for it? They do a terrific job. That is quite a production. And I enjoyed the little side plays, the little tricks they play on each other and tell you about it later.

COOPER: Great. You mentioned about spending a lot of time at CateCate Center. I believe you also in turn made a contribution to Cate Center. Tell us about this.

SUGGS: Well, Cate Center had been under the, it was under contract with one food service group and it seemed to be sort of going down hill. The food was not that good and it was just sort of very slow. You couldn't get a sandwich in under half an hour. And it was just sort of getting to be a real thorn. And so I was asked by Dr. Thomas to, Dr. Sandra Thomas, to be on a committee to just sort of look at the Cate Center snack shop and see what we wanted to do with it. And helped to organize that. So I did. I was on a committee with maybe six or eight other people, including the new food service director who they had just hired for the cafeteria. And they were also going to be managing the snack shop in Cate Center. And I was very pleased to be able to do that. I felt that I needed to make some kind of contribution and that seemed to be

something I could do. So we decorated and rearranged and made it look like a little outdoor café. And we arranged to have some performances during the long lunch period, several times a month. Some small singing groups and little acts and things like that. And it was fun. I haven't been there in the last year. I was there about a year and a half ago and it still looked the same. I know that some people were really pleased to have it look a little warmer. It was just one of the, a cold, it looked rather stark place. So we enjoyed putting a little color there.

COOPER: I'm sure Sandra enjoyed having some of you who had had experiences with decorating and that sort of thing on the agenda, on the agenda, to be on the committee.

SUGGS: Well, I enjoyed doing that. It was very nice to have an association with her as well as make a little bit of a contribution.

COOPER: Well, I know that continuing education has been your thing. And I believe that maybe there's a person in your life who sort of inspired you at a very early age to continue aspiring to new learnings and new wisdom. Would you like to relate to

SUGGS: I must have mentioned my mother. Well, it was just sort of an attitude. It wasn't exactly what my Mom, what she said. It was just sort of an ongoing thing that no matter how big a dream we had it just didn't matter. If it was, if I said I wanted to be the president of the United States she's day, "Oh fine Anne. That's just really great. This is how you might start doing that." And it was an attitude of parents. I guess I talked to my Mom more about it than I did my father. But my father was as supportive as she was. And it was just sort of a matter of, "You're going to do things, then do what you want to do." It was, I you know would never have thought about it at the time as I was growing up. But it certainly did instill in me and my brothers and sisters the confidence that we needed to just go ahead and do something. I don't think any of us ever stopped to think, "Well, gee maybe I can't do that." Or, "No I can't do that." That was just never an attitude. It was always, "If you want to do it- do it. Just do what it takes to do it." But she had some real nice words of wisdom.

I used to say that I was going to be a brain surgeon. And I said that for years. And I don't know if I've given up on that yet or not. Well, anyway, she would say, "Oh that's really fine. I know you can do that. And a good way to start might be by becoming a nurse." And I know that my Mom wanted me to be a nurse. And I was all set to go into nursing school when I got out of high school. And I fell in love. And during those days you were not allowed to be married in nursing school. You had to be single. Or if they found out

you had gotten married secretly they just plainly kicked you right out. So I knew that I was not going to wait three years to get married so I didn't go to nursing school. But I've never regretted it. I would not have made a good nurse. And I made the right decision. And it's nice to be able to say that. But I might not just want to admit it if I felt like I made a mistake. Cause I'm not easy, it's not easy for me to admit failure anyway.

COOPER: Well, you've been so successful in your other areas that perhaps that is true.

SUGGS: Well, I knew very well when I was working in hospitals and got to know nurses and their jobs and know of the dedication that they really have to have that I would not have been a good nurse. And so it really supported the fact that I felt that I had not made a mistake by deciding not to do that.

COOPER: And having been in the health related field you can say that intelligently, having been on the scene.

SUGGS: Yes. I can make an intelligent evaluation of my decision years and years ago. I really admire nurses a great deal. I would like to think that I would have those qualities. But, I have some others, but not those.

COOPER: Well, being in the public relations aspect of the hospital was very important when you were there. That's certainly, you were a support for the nurses.

SUGGS: Yeah.

COOPER: Well, I know that you have an unusual perspective of Meredith because you have attended actually four other institutions, five counting your S_____ College and then this. So I think you have perhaps such a wide range of experience that you might give us a little bit about how you see Meredith in relation to these other institutions, all of which you have attended seem to be strong institutions, but just to give us a little, how Meredith differs from some of these others.

SUGGS: Well, the big difference, the thing that immediately comes to mind, is size of course. All the other places, well the major universities are very very large. You're just simply another person, another fish in the school of fish. There are just so many people there. Meredith has a much more personal attitude toward the students. Which I, of course, enjoy. And I can't imagine why anybody wouldn't enjoy that, the personal attention that you get from your teachers. And you can always find them, you can always see them when you need to. It was very difficult to get an appointment with a professor at any of the other places. Because they had so many classes. And they are into consulting and publishing and things like that. And that's all well and good

but it does leave students sort of hanging out there sometimes without assistance that they need. And I don't really need a lot of personal attention because I'm, I've always been one to go ahead and do what I need to do and work on my own. Sometimes I don't do the best work I can do because I work on my own, and maybe not get the guidance that I needed. And I really felt that I did better in my classes because teachers are there and they see you whether you want to see them or not. They give you the guidance whether you feel that you need it or not. And then after a while you realize, 'Gee it's nice to have them giving me some suggestions or advice about this or that. And helping me get, do a better project, or get to the end of this project with a better quality project.' And I really learned to appreciate that much more than I would have had it not been the occasion for me. So the size is one of the major differences. And the availability of the faculty for the students is a benefit, another major difference.

COOPER: You can't get to the end of the course and find out that you're in trouble.

SUGGS: That's right. You find it out real quickly at Meredith. Not only because the faculty and the teachers were there to tell you that you need to go in another direction, or you need to do more than you're doing. Or maybe you're doing too much even. But the fact that you have more of a personal relationship with the other students. You also measure yourself against what they're doing. And that just happens as a matter of association. Whereas in the other universities if you're a day student you go to your class and you leave. And of course at that time I was taking night classes too. And nobody hangs around to talk after, you know, after 10:00 at night. You get home. So you don't really have that interaction with the other students either. And I really enjoyed the interaction with the students. I guess those are the major differences. Of course it's so much easier to get around campus. There's a place to park. And you can walk to your classes without taking an additional hour off work in order to get to your classes. And there are a number of people who go to Meredith during the day, people who work. And they take day classes there. So they can drive up and park and go into their class and then finish it and get back to work in an hour-and-a-half instead of two-and-a-half hours. So that makes a lot of difference.

COOPER: Well, it surely does.

SUGGS: Another major difference between Meredith and the other institutions, for me, was the fact that I had female professors for a change. I can only remember two female professors at all of the other places. But at Meredith I probably had more female than male. But it was a good mixture. I had, in each semester I would have several male and female professors. The quality of the faculty at Meredith was just outstanding. There's no doubt about that. And

one thing that I was so impressed with was their, their focus was on students. Their focus is not on their own outside work or publishing or whatever else professors need to do to advance themselves professionally. And I know that they need to do that. But I was just very much impressed with the amount of time they were willing to give students. And the amount that you needed. And just to be a friend too. Just to have a friendly chat, as well as a business chat.

COOPER: Well, that's good.

SUGGS: One difference that certainly doesn't compare with parking and faculty things like that, but having the chapel on campus was very meaningful to me. I'm not a very religious person but I really enjoyed the chapel services. I hardly ever missed them, because I just enjoy singing and we sang during those. But that was, there were several times that I just went to the chapel all alone and just sat there. Just to collect myself and... [end side one]

COOPER: ...class of '85, as a part of an oral history of Meredith College alumnae. Anne, we just gave you a moment to get your breath while we were turning the tape over. Let's leave Meredith for just a moment and tell us a little bit about yourself today now, about your family. If you'd like to share with us about what makes up the rest of your family.

SUGGS: I have a son and a daughter. My daughter is married. She lives in Hamden, Connecticut. Almost at Hartford, cause that's where I fly into when I go to see her. But she lives in Hamden, which is next door to New Haven and Yale and she likes that community very much. She has four children, ranging from ages 15 to 4. And I enjoy seeing them. I also have a son who lives in Raleigh. He's engaged to be married in April and I'm really looking forward to that. I like his fiancée very much. She's a very nice young woman.

COOPER: That gives you an excuse to go back to Raleigh, even though you're based here now, doesn't it?

SUGGS: Yes it does. And I do see them very often. Of course most of my family lives near Raleigh, in a small town called Angier. Which is 20 miles south of Raleigh. So I'm down there very often, trying to make the rounds and see everybody. I have a very close family. I have two brothers and two sisters. And one sister who lives in Florida. She's the only one that I don't see really often. But I do see her a couple times a year. Something that I would like to mention, I mentioned on the, earlier in the tape that I had been working full time and going to school part-time and all that. And I, that I had quit work

to go to school full-time to finish my degree. What I'd neglected to mention at that time was shortly after I quit work, in the fall of '82, preparing to go to school in the spring semester of '83, my husband died suddenly of a heart attack. Just a couple days before the spring semester was to begin. And that's been a very difficult adjustment for me to make. We were married for 32 years. And it's been really hard to live without him.

COOPER: But you had some exciting times together, as he served in the...

SUGGS: He was in the Air Force. He was in the Air Force when we lived in Washington, D.C. for sixteen years. And that was a greater place to live. I would move back in just a heart beat. I loved it there. And then we left Washington, DC and went to live in the Philippines for a couple of years. Which was an exciting, and very much an adventure for me because I like to travel and I like to meet different people and do things.

COOPER: I can see where you were a good military wife, that you adjusted so well to...

SUGGS: Well, but you see we'd never had the chance to travel like you think of military families moving from one place to another. We only had three different stations in our, his entire military career. DC and the Philippines and then just a few months in Langley, Virginia when we came back from the Philippines. And then he retired. He was 37 when he retired from the military. He had gone into the Air Force right out of high school. So then we both started on new careers. That's when we moved to Raleigh. And we lived in Raleigh 20 years. I moved here two years ago in January of '87. So it's almost two years now. But we did have, we had a very good life. The children enjoyed living in DC. They had many many opportunities there, as anybody who lives there does, to do things that you would not do in a small town like Irwin where I went to High school. So we were, we were very happy living there.

COOPER: Well, I think it's marvelous how even though he died at an early age he did have an opportunity to have two careers.

SUGGS: Yes he did. Of course the second career I believe was a lot more stressful than the first. He was in manufacturing. He was with a company, an English company called Morganite. And the British just don't do business like the Americans do. And it was, he was a manager with the manufacturing company. And that's a very stressful kind of occupation.

COOPER: But I, I certainly gained from your conversation that he was a strong supporter for you. Not only in your career but in your continuing education.

SUGGS: Oh yes. But you see he was always doing the same kind of stuff. He went to school, he went to the University of Maryland while we were living in DC, and got his undergraduate degree there. And then when we moved to Raleigh ten years later he went back and got a degree in accounting. So we're both always doing these kinds of things. And so it was just something that we've always done. It was not, it was supportive because we gave each other that kind of room to do it. And helped with housework and the children and all of those things. But it was not a deliberate support like if, it wasn't contrived at all. Does that make sense?

COOPER: Uh huh, yes.

SUGGS: It was just that you, we expected each other to pitch in and do what needed to be done at home while we went away and did our own things. And it was a very good life. It was a very happy life. And I'm getting over that.

COOPER: Well, I know that it's certainly difficult. But I'm glad that Meredith was there at the right time in your life to maybe give some support that was sort of special at that time. And the individual attention that you could receive at Meredith.

SUGGS: Well, it certainly made my full time college career a much more pleasant place to be than if I would have had to add to the tension and the stress of the studying and the courses and the really heavy load that I took while I was there. If I would have had to add to that the fact I couldn't find a place to park, I had to walk five miles to get to a class. All of those things would certainly have detracted from the good time that I had learning things. And I really did enjoy the courses that I took at Meredith. So it was, the right thing happened once more in your life. You know how you wonder what's the right thing, but the right thing happened again. So, I guess you just have to do the best you can and trust that it's going to work out.

But when I called Anne Dahl and I said, 'Anne,' I hadn't seen her for a while and I was sure that she did not know about my husband. And I said, 'Anne this is what's happened to me in the last few months and this is what my plans were. But can you help me get into Meredith instead of my going to State?' Because of those reasons, the bigness, and those other things. I felt that I needed a cozier place to be. And she was very helpful with that. True to her nature you know. And I really will, I really will always have a very, you know, very soft and big place in my heart for all the Meredith people. And not many of them knew of my personal situation at that time at all. Because I just couldn't talk about it. And I just didn't tell many people what had happened in my life. Those who knew about it didn't make a big deal about it. And that was the thing that I appreciated most of all. I knew they knew that

I was really in a lot of pain, but they let it go. They didn't keep bringing it up and talking about it. Or asking me, you know. And that's the kind of thing that I needed. And I appreciated that very much. Betty Brewer was an especially good friend at that time.

COOPER: Yes well I, as a musician myself and as a church musician, I was so pleased to find that you sang in the chorus at Meredith. But then one of the first things that you did when you came to Winston-Salem was to find a place in a church choir. That's such a good support group.

SUGGS: It really is. And it, Thursday nights you feel good when you come home, you know you've had a bad day and you go sing for two hours and just, it's all gone after that.

COOPER: And Knollwood is a good place to sing. Cause they do very good things in their worship service.

SUGGS: I certainly do enjoy the church. My customers, when I first moved here I started calling on people. And almost like the first week there had been two or three people who said to me during my business meeting with them, I would say that I had recently moved here, and at least three people within the first week or two had mentioned Knollwood as a place they thought I would like to go. And I really do enjoy it.

COOPER: Tell us about some other things that you do around the town. Other nights you go other places.

SUGGS: I really enjoy ballroom dancing. And I do. I dance about three nights a week usually. I assist with teaching classes and I take private lessons as well. And go out dancing every chance I get.

COOPER: Well, that's marvelous. Was your, your husband and you must have enjoyed that through the years a lot.

SUGGS: Yes we did. We didn't dance very much while we lived in Raleigh. That just didn't seem to be happening in the social scene at that time. We'd go out occasionally with friends and, you know where there would be a band and dance. New Year's Eve and things like that, or big parties. But not nearly as much as when we lived in DC. Because we went out several times a month there. And there was generally dancing wherever you went. You know, at dinner dances and things like that.

COOPER: And so this is something that Winston-Salem offers to you that you were able to find and pick up on very quickly.

SUGGS: Yes. I started looking around for dance studios. Actually I looked for Arthur Murray and he wasn't there. The studio that I found, the person who is the head of the studio and who teaches the classes taught for Arthur Murray in Raleigh for about 15 years. I didn't know him there though. So I've made a new friend in that regard here. But I also, I helped to teach some classes. I'm involved with the Newcomers Club in Winston. And so they kept saying, "Oh we'd like to dance too." So we arranged and organized some dance classes for the Newcomer's Club and they come to the studio as a group of Newcomers, you know. And that's a way they get to meet each other and to know, make new friends as well. And I also assist when the dance school has male students who do not have partners. And it's hard to teach a man to dance unless he has a partner. Because you know, teaching a man to lead his partner is very important. So I'm the partner for a lot of male students. And right now it's exciting. There's this man who is taking lessons as a surprise for his wife. And he won't let her be his partner. He wants to do this without her knowing about it. And that's fun, to help him learn to dance. And I really wish that I could see him when he takes her dancing for the first time. And she realizes he's learned to dance. I would have thought it would be a nice surprise for the two of them for him to say, "Come on let's go dance." But he's doing this on his own. And he is just like a kid with a, wrapping a gift for somebody you know. He's so excited about the surprise for her.

COOPER: Well, and that's good exercise for you at the end of the day.

SUGGS: Oh it's much more fun than aerobics.

COOPER: Well, I think that's great. And I guess, in thinking back on some of these earlier tapes that I've done with people who talked about when dancing finally came to Meredith and how they worked to get dancing on the campus...

SUGGS: I would loved to have taken some dance classes at Meredith. I was determined to finish and get my degree as quickly as I could. I knew exactly what I had to do. There was no time for fun things. I did 71 hours in three semesters and a summer. At one, during one semester I had 24 hours. So in order not to have to pay the extra tuition my advisor let me register for three, for one of those courses the next semester when I only had 18 hours. Cause you have to pay extra if you take more than 21. And I kept saving that one hour for, I had to do the PE courses as well as religion and English. So I kept trying to save one hour somewhere that I could do chorus. And I was able to do that for two semesters.

COOPER: Yeah. Oh that's marvelous.

SUGGS: And it worked out fine. I did everything that I needed to do and had some really fun things while I was there. I really enjoyed the religion classes. I had Alan Page for both of my religion classes. And wished that I could have taken another one. There was one that I particularly wanted. I liked learning the Bible stories and the Bible without having to think about what it meant. It didn't have a religious...

COOPER: It was not indoctrination.

SUGGS: Right. It was not, did not have a religious perspective from some denomination or somebody's interpretation. You just learned what was there and compared it and thought about it and everybody was able to draw your own conclusions and interpret for yourself. And I really enjoyed the guidance that we got in those classes, to think on your own. And to think about it for yourself and not necessarily just swallow what was fed to you as a child. I remember that there were a number of very young people in the classes who have left the classes crying because of having their illusions blown apart, or...

I remember one young girl kept saying all the time, "But so and so says this." And I finally, one day I asked her who this person was. I can't remember the name she kept saying. Well, this person was her youth director in her church. And she really thought that everything he said was gospel. That's the way she felt about it. And she was getting some different and learning to open up to new ideas. And it was pretty hard for her for a while.

COOPER: But how marvelous it must have been in the end.

SUGGS: I'm sure. Because next semester she and I were in the same class again. And it was, of course, a different topic but she had matured a lot in the semester that we had not been in class together, from one year to the next. She had really matured a lot.

COOPER: Well, that's marvelous. That's what it's all about.

SUGGS: And when I say matured, I think it's maturity when you learn to open up to new ideas and to think about things in a different way. And to draw some conclusions for yourself instead of listening to other people's opinions and conclusions and thinking that that's it.

I remember one day Dr. Page showed us a picture. It was a drawing of a man with long scraggly hair. He had on, it was head and shoulders and really all you could see was just something draped around his shoulders. And he was, looked like to be a very stocky person. Maybe not fat but certainly heavy. He was laughing. His face was all screwed up with laughter. And these, you

know cheeks all pushed out,. You know when you're laughing real big your eyes scrunch up. And he passed this picture around and then he said to take a look at it, really look at it so you have a mental image of this picture. And then when he got the picture back up to the front he said, "What would you say if I told you that's what Jesus looked like? He looked like this man." Well, the mental picture that comes to your mind when you say Jesus is a tall, slender, very slender man with long blond hair and light skin and probably blue eyes. And that was disturbing to people. They had to stop to think, 'Well, he was Jewish. He was from the Middle East. And he probably looked like this.'

But some illustrations like that were a very visual way of making a strong impact on us. Shaking us out of this complacency we've always had about the pictures that you saw on the Sunday School leaflets, you know, and the pictures that you see in offices, in church offices and things like that, of Jesus with the long blond hair.

COOPER: Well, I'm glad that you had that opportunity with Dr. Page and the, the English and religion and history courses, those basic courses are the ones that Meredith I think is probably most famous for in the past. And to find that those were courses that were meaningful to you.

SUGGS: They really were. I had worked at education before that. I mean my courses had always applied to my job, what I was doing. I was learning through formal college courses to do my job and do what I was doing. Applying the management skills that I'd learned, and the theories that I'd learned in classes. So you see this was sort of a different experience. I wasn't going right back to work and trying to put religion into practice. Or going back to where, I mean in my work I had done a lot of writing. And I was writing newspaper style, employee newsletters, and news releases and things like that. Booklets on what it means to be a patient who's coming for surgery, those kinds of things. So learning to write essays was something I thoroughly enjoyed. Had I had one more semester at Meredith I probably would have taken three writing courses if I could have. Or English and Writing. So those were the, I really enjoyed the core courses, the have-tos.

COOPER: Well, that's a wonderful...

SUGGS: And I had two semesters of Spanish. But I had to go over to State that summer between my semesters to take those. I thoroughly enjoyed learning a foreign language. All of those things were very enjoyable to me. Although I was working so hard with 18, 21 hours per semester that I didn't have time to enjoy the social aspect. You know, I didn't see people other than in the classes. There could have, there were many things that I might have enjoyed

on campus, outside classes, had I had some time to do that. But at that time in my life I was not inclined to be open or be around people that much. I was pretty much burying myself in work at that particular time. Which worked out fine because I got through it. Otherwise I may have been too distracted.

COOPER: Well, I can't imagine that you buried yourself but I know what you mean.

SUGGS: Well, I wanted to bury myself. But at least I did enjoy, I can't, the only thing that I cannot say, that I have to say that I did not enjoy and though that as far as I was concerned for my own benefit, learning lines in British Authors was the pits. Gary Walton will just have to remember that. I've told him that before.

COOPER: Oh, well I've heard that one before too. Would you like to quote some?

SUGGS: Thank you no. Although I really did enjoy Westminster Bridge. That was one thing that I chose to memorize.

COOPER: Yeah. Well, that's great. Alright Anne, life back into the real world now. We've finished Meredith and we're back into the real world. Tell us...

SUGGS: Well, as you know my plan when I quit work and went to school full time was to quickly, as quick as I could, finish that and get back in the working world, with a change in a career field. So actually what I wanted to do was be in banking. And I had made up my mind that what I did at Meredith that I could apply toward that effort, to be in a financial situation, was what I would do. So everytime I had an opportunity for an internship or an independent study I connected that with banking in some way. Or the national economy. So I felt that I was keeping up with that field and getting some background in that field to be ready to send my resume to all the local banks when I got out of Meredith. Well, I did that. But I found, I did do some interviewing, but I found that my resume was just sort of getting stuck along with a six inch stack of others. And I didn't really have anything going for me in that regard. So it took me a while to get back into the work force. But in the meantime I went right into the M.B.A. program at Meredith. The M.B.A. program was just getting started. And I believe they were graduating the first two or three students that first summer. I think their first graduating class had five, or something like that. The next one had maybe ten. So it was really just getting started. And during that time they were also talking about allowing male members of the human race into the graduate classes, the M.B.A. classes. Well, let me back up a little bit and get you back to the point where I am now in my thinking and my opinions. When I first started at Meredith I really had expected to see a lot of real preppy young women. I really had preconceived notions about that. But what I found was it was just a very wide variety of

very bright, interesting young women who were not all alike. They didn't dress alike, unless you count sweatpants as being the uniform of the day. But they were very different. They were from all parts of the country. Had many many different kinds of backgrounds. So right away my first notions about the Meredith woman was dispelled. And I began to think, "Well, you've been really narrow minded here." But then moving on into the graduate school I could see that the women were, had been out in the working world. They either were wanting to make changes in their work, their career fields, or somehow they thought an M.B.A. would help them in their work if they were in the kind of institution they wanted to be in. So it was two different kinds of women in the undergraduate and the graduate. Although there were a lot of people coming right out of undergraduate management and business into the M.B.A. program. So we still had a big broad scope of interests and backgrounds and activities going on.

Well, during my three semesters at Meredith I began to see how it was really an opportunity for young women to learn to be leaders, as undergraduates. They took on big big responsibilities as class president and other kinds of jobs on the student council and all those kinds of things. Where their opportunities would have been at least cut in half had it been a co-ed institution. So I could see that women there, even in the short time I was there, I could see their maturity. I could see how they could stand up in front of the chapel full of people and make a very nice talk. I could see them doing all sorts of leadership and public speaking things, that they had learned those skills at Meredith. Well, I was really happy to see that that opportunity was afforded to them. And I could readily understand how when they finished those four years they're going to be able to go right into lots of very important kinds of jobs.

But I think the opposite expectation should be made in the graduate school. A lot of the women, most of the women in the classes, had been out working in many different kinds of professions for a few years by the time they came back to Meredith for an M.B.A.. They had had opportunities to see how it is to work in a co-educational business environment. Probably one of the strongest motivating factors for women who come out of the business world, or who in addition to their work schedule everyday decide to get an M.B.A., is a very strong motivation to be on an equal footing with the men where they work. And a lot of us feel that that other degree will help put us there. Of course the males may only have an undergraduate degree, or no degree, or maybe a military degree or something. But I believe that that's a very strong motivation for many of us to go to graduate school.

But the young women who come right out of undergraduate school into the M.B.A. program still at Meredith have no opportunity to see how it is to have

to get along with men who expect to take the leadership role in the classes. They expect to take the leadership role in the corporate aspect of the school. So somewhere in this period of time women need to learn how to be strong and how to be forceful, how to be assertive, how to be, how to expect. I don't mean just to go get it, but I mean how to expect that the same opportunities are going to be afforded to them as there are afforded to men, in the business world. And for those reasons I would like very much to see the M.B.A. program open to men. Probably it'll never happen. But I think it would be a very good experience and a very good opportunity for women to have those kinds of associations in a classroom with men who are also trying to move ahead in their companies and get promotions and learn to be the best that they can be. And that would give us chance to see them, how they have to work hard for that too. And I really hope that someday Meredith will see that that will serve the women at Meredith very well.

COOPER: Well, I think that certainly you've given us a very mature perspective on that, both from your experience in the working world and your experience in other institutions, in co-educational institutions. And to be able to have this wide base from which you could say that I think that certainly, those who listen and consider the future for Meredith have to take that perspective in a very serious manner. Thank you so very much for sharing with us Anne. And we hope that we will have many more opportunities with Meredith alumnae along the road, both in Raleigh and wherever you happen to be in your workaday world, in your social life. And wear your Wings t-shirt around so the fathers and other alumnae will know that you have something in common with them to share the tradition with Meredith.

SUGGS: I really like the Wings sweatshirt because it causes people to ask questions, you know, "What is this? What does this mean?" And it gives me a chance to talk about it. And I like that. I really have enjoyed being a part of this. I've enjoyed talking with you and knowing that we were being recorded for posterity. And I'm sure it's a unique perspective of Meredith. And I think when all is said and done we all have the same affection and the same very strong feelings for Meredith, no matter what perspective we came at it, from which we came at it. But it was a good experience for me and I certainly look forward to going back to Meredith every opportunity that I get. And wherever I go I'll certainly look up the local chapter of the Association so that I can continue to meet and enjoy Meredith people.

COOPER: We wish you well in the years ahead.


SUGGS: Thank you.



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