

## UNCG CENTENARY PROJECT ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Gertrude Sprague Carraway

INTERVIEWER: Richard Bardolph

DATE: July 8, 1980

RB: This is tape two in a series that may be extended over several years and it's being recorded on July 8, 1980. I'm Richard Bardolph of the history department [at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG)], and we're in the 19<sup>th</sup> century home on Broad Street in New Bern [North Carolina] in which Miss Gertrude Carraway with whom we're talking today was born and where she has made all of her life. And I hardly need to say that Miss Carraway is by any test a very distinguished citizen of North Carolina and an outstanding graduate of the university. She is, in fact, one of the few holders of an honorary degree from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Miss Carraway was a member of the class of 1915, and if you look at her sketch in *Who's Who in America* you will discover that she has made an impressive career in journalism, in local history, in historical preservation. She has been the National President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Before that she was the State Regent of the North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution. She was the first director of the restoration of Tryon Palace. She is the author of numerous pamphlets on the history of her community and of her state, and since 1942 has been a member of the North Carolina Historical Commission to which she was appointed by thirteen governors of North Carolina.

And with that introduction, I'm going to ask Mrs. Carraway if you might like to begin with a statement of your own before I begin with questions, which will deal largely with your career in the college since that's the historical record we're now trying to reconstruct.

GC: Thank you, Dr. Bardolph, very much for that flattering introduction. There's just perhaps one thing that I might emphasize, that of the many lessons that I learned during my three years, 1912-1915, at the North Carolina State Normal [and Industrial College, now The University of North Carolina at Greensboro], as it was called then. The courses I took there somehow have helped me later in every phase of my professional duties as well as in my personal interests. Now at the time, I did not know they would, I did not select them for that reason. But sometimes I wonder if perhaps they did not cause me to choose my lines of work and activities. But at any rate, I'm very grateful, the older I get, as time passes, for the wonderful well-rounded education that I receive at the old college in Greensboro.

RB: I'm just delighted to have that statement for the historical record. And I must say that it was entirely unprompted. [chuckles] Suppose we begin in a light vein and ask whether you can recall what it was that led you to choose, I'm going to call it UNCG, of course,

you will understand I'm talking about the North Carolina Industrial—Normal, Normal School as it was called in your day. What led you to choose that campus in the first place?

GC: Well, as a matter of fact, as a life-long Episcopalian, I had expected to go to Saint Mary's School in Raleigh, [North Carolina] and I'd even planned to whom I was going to be with in a room at—there, a local friend at the school, a local friend—cut all that. [laughs] Got mixed up. As a life-long Episcopalian, I'd expected to go to Saint Mary's School in Raleigh and had even planned to room there with a local friend. An older friend—also an Episcopalian, incidentally—Bonnie Broadfoot Claypool, a 1911 Normal graduate, persuaded me to go to her alma mater, because it was a four-year college and she thought it had more serious studies than Saint Mary's School. I've always appreciated her advice and I've never regretted changing my mind.

RB: Did you have any very specific goals in mind when you entered college, I mean vocational goals or otherwise, and if you did, did those goals change during the course of your career at the school?

GC: No, I didn't have any goals in mind when I entered college, and actually I've somehow never had any specific goals. My childhood training taught me to try to take advantage of every worthwhile opportunity which presented itself and to do the very best I could at all times with the task before me. Fortunately, especially through friendships, I think I've been very lucky in having been offered outstanding opportunities for what I regard as important vocations and avocations, in keeping with the college motto of service, which was indelibly impressed on our minds by Dr. Julius [Isaac] Foust, our college president when I was there.

RB: My recollection is that I heard somewhere that you were extremely young when you entered the college and still very young when you finished. Did you feel that the preliminary education you'd had to prepare you for college had been adequate? It must have, have a very firm background.

GC: I have high praise for our New Bern schools.

RB: They were the public schools.

GC: I went to kindergarten here and skipped what they called the advanced first grade, so I was with older students all the way through and I was just fifteen when I finished the tenth grade. Now, yes, my education, I think, was adequate for entering college. In fact, Miss Claypool suggested that I ought to try to enter the sophomore class at the Normal by passing off the freshman work: history, mathematics, English, Latin, and French. During the summer, I brushed up on those subjects and I received permission to take advanced examinations on them.

Fortunately, all my life up to that time I'd been healthy and strong and had a perfect attendance record at school except when my sister had diphtheria and we were quarantined for three or four weeks. But the summer week that I was supposed to go to

Greenville—Greensboro for the examinations, I came down with malarial fever and the doctor wouldn't let me go. I arrived late, but they were kind to allow me to take two of the examinations the week that school opened.

I took those two and passed them, but I am delighted that I did not have time to take the English examination, because I had to take freshman and sophomore English there and they did me a world of good in my teaching of English and in my newspaper work later. The first year, the freshman year, for instance, was of English grammar, and I wouldn't take anything for having learned so much of English grammar, sentence construction, things of that sort.

But I had to take Latin the fourth year, really it was the second year that I took during a summer session. They had summer sessions in those days and I stayed to take Latin. I couldn't take two years of Latin in one year. And that was a wonderful advantage, too, because Miss [Viola] Boddie [Latin faculty] made us study. I'd been lucky all my life, I didn't have to study very much on certain, most of the subjects. But I had to study Latin and she taught me how to study. It was a great lesson that I learned at the college.

RB: I think there's an interesting paradox here. In your earlier years in school you were always young—older and in your college years younger than all the other students you were working with. It didn't seem to have seriously disturbed you. Were you reasonably well-satisfied with the—I think you've, in a sense, answered this question—with the academic side of the program at the college in your years there?

GC: Yes indeed.

RB: It was all that you had hoped it would be.

GC: I think the courses were truly remarkable with excellent teachers. Most of the courses were required and were splendid basics for a well-educated life, with very few electives. Graduates in those days were well educated.

RB: I think I hear an editorial opinion there. You think we ought to go back to something like that?

GC: I don't know. Sometimes I wonder.

RB: I'm going to confess that I do, too.

GC: Well, a student doesn't always know what she would like and sometimes they take the easier approach.

RB: Or what is less work. Or the most attractive instructor, perhaps.

GC: Or that a friend is taking.

RB: Yes. Or that meets at a more convenient hour of the day.

GC: You're right, you're right. [both chuckle]

RB: And that, choices like that are made with little regard to what would benefit them more thirty years from now, right. What about the contribution that extra-classroom activities made to your education, experiences other than those in the classroom. What did they do for your intellectual and emotional development?

GC: Well, I think they were truly valuable contributions. I attended the church mission, I played hockey—

RB: Off campus?

GC: Off campus, a little Episcopal mission. Participated in--

RB: Would that be the same thing we have now, St. Mary's House, do you suppose?

GC: St. Mary's is the one.

RB: Is that so? Its history goes that—

GC: They were very kind to us. They had parties. I went to service there almost every Sunday. They had dramas and debates in which I participated. I attended concerts, went to YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] meetings, and had very enjoyable contacts with students and some of the faculty.

RB: Did you feel at the time that an all-girl campus had more advantages to offer than disadvantages?

GC: Well, at the time I felt, and still feel, that an all-girl campus then had far more advantages than disadvantages. I was in one of the very first coeducational classes at Greensboro. During the summer session that I studied Latin we had a young Greensboro—

RB: We had summer sessions as long ago as that?

GC: Right. A young Greensboro boy or young man who took the course of Latin at the time I did.

RB: Is that so? That suggests another side of college life. Did you feel that the social rules were very confining, too restrictive perhaps? I think there were curfews, weren't there?

GC: They were very, very strict. And maybe at the time I might have thought they were too restrictive, but now I believe they were wise and helpful.

RB: Wasn't there even a rule that you had to do a certain amount of walking every afternoon? It seems to me, somebody at one time told me about—and if I remember this correctly—she called it the walking rule or something.

GC: I don't remember that.

RB: You don't recall? Let me check this out. In the walking requirement, every afternoon students were required to stroll a certain distance. This may have been before or after your time.

GC: I don't remember that rule, but—

RB: The fact that an administration would dare to intrude as deeply as that into the lifestyle of students would, of course, be most astonishing in our own time. But you didn't feel that the rules were irritating?

GC: Oh no. No, I didn't think they were too strict at the time, although as I said, we might have complained a little bit. But I believe that discipline is very important and that it has permanent benefits. Discipline doesn't hurt anybody.

RB: It's often said these days that college students don't have any heroes anymore. In fact, even their literary tastes run—their movie, tastes in movies run to themes involving anti-heroes. In your college days did heroes and heroines play an important part in your education? Did they mean something to you? Were there models on whom you patterned yourself, for instance?

GC: Well, yes and no. I believe heroes and heroines are paramount influences throughout life, not merely during school days. But somehow I never have had any special ones upon whom I attempted to pattern myself in general, although, of course, I admired and tried to emulate some of their best traits and ideals.

RB: I believe it is fair to say that our college came early to the use of forms of student government, self-government by students. And if I'm not mistaken, that tradition had already begun to emerge in your time as a student. Do you have some recollections of the beginnings of student government?

GC: Right, it was at that time, right, in 1914 we began—we didn't begin but we really studied. It had been planned for some time. But in 1914 they planned—

RB: Did you get this idea from other campuses? I doubt that it was very widely—

GC: I don't know how Dr. Foust got the idea but it was a long time a-coming, as they used to say there. And in 1915 it was started. They called it Self Government. Fifteen students were on the initial board of the Self Government Association, including a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and class representatives. The main purpose was that, quote "Through governing herself, every student might," quote "grasp not only a sense of her own responsibility but also a sense of her responsibility toward the fellow citizens in her community." They thought it would do you more good when you go home later than even when you are in college.

Now this new honor system, approved by the students and the faculty, began auspiciously and it met with early success as evidenced in the response by Miss Laura Coit, College Secretary, to a students' toast to the college at a literary society banquet during the late fall of 1914. She said, "The sense of our greatest pride in you within recent months is the spirit in which you have assumed the duties and responsibilities of self government. You have made a success of this. You are self governing now, henceforth, and forever." And that's what they meant by being a good citizen later in life, if you were a good student in college.

Now they had had a student council before. It was organized during the fall of 1910. There were thirteen members on that, three from each class except the senior class, which had four members. And that was the chief marshal and council president. Elected by the literary societies was the fourth one.

RB: What you've been saying suggests that the college was making a special effort even in those early days to foster certain ideals and values and principles of social responsibility and a certain conception of what the good life consists in. Is this a fair inference?

GC: Indeed it is.

RB: This was part of what the college considered its mission.

GC: Oh yes. I think that Dr. Foust and the teachers emphasized so much and so often in the college programs that we had every day almost, I think, maybe once a week, in the auditorium—service, public service.

RB: Where was the auditorium, by the way?

GC: It was in what we call the Students' Building, in the middle of the campus, had a big auditorium.

RB: That survived until the fifties, I believe, as late as that, and it's since made way for another building.

GC: In that they had the literary society offices and then on the second floor a large auditorium.

RB: There were four literary societies, now unhappily disbanded. But every student, I believe, belonged to one or another.

GC: Right, and the faculty members were divided up, they had two [later expanded to four]. And as I've been told, the powers that be in each would take choice one by one of a student. And you never knew how high up you were chosen or how low down you were chosen. But they had one in each and a comparable one, as they thought, in the other one.

RB: Was the term "literary society" an accurate designation or was it the lack of a better term?

- GC: Yes, it was social, though, too. It was literary. We had literary programs, good programs. I think each one tried to do better than the other one. And they tried to foster certain ideals and values in the students, and especially responsibilities and your principles for life. Chapel exercises were held and the inspirational programs were given there as well as in the literary societies. This so-called good life was envisioned as possible for Americans who contributed their part. But an easy life was never promised. Enrichment and happiness was said to come usually for those involved helpfully in service for others.
- RB: Once out in the world, did you feel that you were on even plane with your peers even though, in those days, people in the North, for instance, thought of the Deep South as a rural and somewhat bucolic atmosphere? Was that ever a problem with you as you were coming up after college, that you'd been handicapped by being in a small rural state?
- GC: No. When I went to Columbia University, I—
- RB: You suffered no disadvantages at that point?
- GC: Not at all. I was on the news board—
- RB: And this was in New York City, the largest city in the United States.
- GC: Yes. I was on the news board of the *Columbia Spectator*, it was published three times a week. That was during the summer session in 1924 when I went there. I wrote some of the articles for the paper, interviewed some prominent personages for it, and for two weeks afterward, substituted for one of my professors as an assistant to the two major editors of the *New York Times*, which was a wonderful experience. Then I returned to my own job in New Bern.
- RB: That probably had something to do with the fact that you later became a practicing journalist, probably had a great deal to do with it.
- GC: Maybe. But I was a lot younger than any of the men that were—or women on the *Spectator*. In fact, most all were men.
- RB: Now, when you went off to Greensboro you came from a city at least as sophisticated as the city in which the college—perhaps even more so—where the college is located. A lot of girls, however, came from the hillsides and tobacco farms and so on. Were you conscious of any social distance that separated the urban girls from rural people?
- GC: So far as I know, there was never any difference evident between girls from rural towns or small towns and those from larger cities. I guess perhaps some of the former might have had early difficulty about so-called fitting in certain places in the student body during our college days. But it was never noticeable, to me at least.
- RB: What would be your assessment about the degree of educational opportunity that was available to the mass of our people in North Carolina?

GC: Well, in those days, there was—

RB: You know, a very small percentage went to college.

GC: Right.

RB: Was that larger number who did not excluded because of economic disadvantage, anything of the sort?

GC: Well, in those days, there was a great lack of educational opportunity for girls to go to college as well as the lack of financial resources. So the proportion of young women in colleges was small. But so far as I know, anybody that really wanted to go could go. They waited on tables; they worked during the summers to get money, very often, to attend college if they really wanted to go. I remember in high school one of our subjects for debate was, “Is college necessary for girls?” And there was a negative side argued as well as affirmative.

RB: And plausibly presented I suppose. [laughs]

GC: Governor [Charles B.] Aycock had a convincing affirmative answer for that question: When you educate a woman, you educate a family.

RB: Did you think that—or do you think that now students have more advanced social philosophies than they had in those—no, let me put it the other way around. Would you say that the typical student on our campus at Greensboro was ahead of her generation in social sensitivity, in, you know, in their social values, in their commitment to democratic ideals, for instance?

GC: Well, that I don’t know. I don’t think they showed it if they felt it. I don’t think they ever felt superior, if that’s what you mean, to non-college girls.

RB: I don’t mean it that way. I’m not saying this right. Would you say that a student at the college would be more likely than another eighteen- or nineteen-year-old girl who was not a college student to be concerned about public questions, like social injustices, and economic inequalities and so on?

GC: Those things didn’t worry any of us much in those days, college or non-college, did they?

RB: It may be that those things didn’t press themselves as immediately upon the daily lives of most of our people. I have heard the suggestion, though, that there were some deliberate efforts on the part of some of our instructors to awaken a social conscience in students to public questions. When I was talking to your classmate—incidentally, I think I told you earlier that I had talked to your classmate, Edith Haight in Asheville, [North Carolina] about a month ago. She remembered, she thought, that Miss [Harriet] Elliott [history and political science faculty, dean of women, and member of several national committees] who was then a very, very young instructor was an example of a newer breed of college



professors, if that isn't too pretentious a term, who felt that the educated elite has a social responsibility. And she took them to slum areas, to mill towns, to give them an experience of social problems that might not otherwise come to their attention.

GC: She may have done that later. She did not do it while I studied under her. I was in her first class, economics, and in those days, students were supposed to speak when they were spoken to only, or to answer questions that were asked directly to them, not to anybody else. Miss Elliott tried her best to prod us to question her or to say something about her ideas. She says that I was the—[telephone ringing] Rose'll get it—she says I was the first person—let it ring—she said I was the first person to speak without being spoken to, on class. She got me involved in an argument on socialism. Of course, she won, even though I never did agree. [laughs] But yes, she, she didn't take us to places. She may have done that later.

RB: I must say that I remember Edith saying that it wasn't an organized sort of thing, she would not take a class.

GC: No, no.

RB: But when she was herself going out, she would take a few students with her, probably some who had in private conversation—

GC: Not the first year, no. It took her a little while. She stayed there a long time, you know.

RB: Yes indeed, she was still there—

GC: But I was in her first class and she couldn't get the dumbbells, as she called them, do anything but sit there. And she tried her best, she would almost punch them to say something. And once when she said something about socialism, I said, "I'm not a socialist." Well, she got in an argument about it, "Do you believe in the government running the railroads, this and that?" [RB chuckles] And she did stir up a lot of conversation then. From then on, all the girls spoke up. It's what she wanted.

RB: Incidentally, did it take the girls a long time to get accustomed to being in school away from home? Was it a painful transition? Was there a lot of homesickness in freshman year?

GC: For some of them but not too much, because they wanted an education, I think, in those days. They kept busy.

RB: And they could not have, as the contemporary generation of students do, go home on the slightest impulse, because they physically couldn't have got there. How did people come to campus?

GC: Well, the girls I know from Swan Quarter [North Carolina], for instance, had to come partway by boat. And the dirt roads in some parts of the state were, of course, almost impassable.

RB: It must have been a whole day's journey for some of them.

GC: Indeed it was, it would be an overnight trip from far east and even from far west, too. But when they got there, I think most of the girls got along pretty well. They were optimistic, they were anxious to get an education. And I think almost all of them wanted to pass, wanted to do what she was supposed to do. And they were happy, as far as I know, in almost every case.

RB: Are there some campus personalities that stand out more vividly in your recollection than others?

GC: Yes indeed. I've told you about Dr. [Walter Clinton] Jackson [history faculty, department head, and chancellor], haven't I?

RB: Yes. Well, that's not on the record so I'd appreciate it if you'd say it again.

GC: Well, Dr. Jackson was one of the finest teachers that I ever knew anywhere. He taught me to like history, to love history, and to realize that there are two sides to everything and every question, to put yourself in another person's place before judging him or her, judging by standards of their time rather than by modern standards. The old Indians had a prayer for it—to walk a mile in the other fellow's moccasins.

And Miss Elliott was very helpful, too, besides trying to get me to think about certain things that I'd never thought about before. She convinced me to try to get a Bachelor of Arts degree instead of a Bachelor of Pedagogy, because pedagogy was taught, then, for those who expected to teach the first five grades and I expected to teach high school subjects. And she said—

RB: And it wasn't called pedagogy if you were—?

GC: Just the first five grades. And she said, "What good would it do you to go teach history or English when you've studied how to teach a fifth grade? What good would that do you in high school? It's better for you to know the subjects you're going to teach than to know how to teach them." And I think she was right. I wouldn't take anything—she took me off in the park one day and gave me a good lecture, told me exactly what I ought to do. And she was right.

RB: You know, you can still start an argument on the question like that on campuses these days, depending on whom you're talking to. People, certain sectors are much more concerned [with] teaching people how to teach than what to teach them.

GC: You're right. Well, she argued if you don't know what you're going to teach, you can't be a good teacher. But if you know your subject, you can tell others about it. But teaching—how to teach a fifth grade, she said, isn't going to help you teach high school.

RB: Now it was Dr. Foust who was in the saddle in your time. Wasn't he the president?

GC: Yes, oh yes.

RB: Was he accessible to students?

GC: Oh, he was fine, yes. Yes.

RB: And you did—he did have an impact on the students?

GC: A great impact, yes. He was very serious, very solemn, almost sad.

RB: Did he teach any courses?

GC: No, he was the administrator then. He was the president.

RB: Just a full-time administrator.

GC: He would go around speaking—

RB: Did he do chapel talk, chapel talk?

GC: He, yeah, he had charge of the chapel services and he often spoke at other places about the college. I think he was a promoter as well as an administrator. But he kept busy right on the college so far as I know. Another teacher that helped me was Miss [Mary Settle] Sharpe [reading, elocution, history, and physical education faculty]. She taught elocution.

RB: Sharpe?

GC: We called it “expression” in those days. But she tried to get rid of some of my coastal brogue. She even taught me how to pronounce “can't,” C-A-N-T, and “and,” A-N-D. She was a wonderful help, a grand person.

RB: Now, you know, the trend is the other way. We do what we can to foster these idiosyncrasies and to preserve these rich elements of our culture.

GC: Right, yes! Well, you're right. Well, not too much. But anyway she—

RB: Did you know Mr. [Edward Jacob] Forney [commercial department faculty and college treasurer]? Was he—

GC: Yes, but I didn't have any business with him.

RB: He was in the business department.

GC: He was commercial, yeah.

RB: Apparently he was something of a campus character, too. Cora [Cornelia] Strong [mathematics faculty]?

GC: Miss Strong I knew very well. She taught me mathematics. And the first day, as I said, advised me not to try it, that I couldn't possibly pass sophomore mathematics. I had passed the freshman examination and I argued that I would like to try. So I tried and passed. And she was very fine. At the end of the course she invited me to be one of three to take her next year's course in calculus, but I didn't accept that invitation. [laughs] But it was an honor, it was a compliment that I appreciated. She was a very good teacher.

RB: Do you remember whether any considerable number of students had a hard time meeting expenses? Was it a burden?

GC: I'm sure some of them might have. But there were student loans, I think. I'm not sure, but as far as I know they could wait on the table, they could get a little odd job around the campus. And so far as I know nobody was ever turned down for lack of money. It didn't cost very much. And if you promised to teach—

RB: In the state of North Carolina.

GC: —two years, no, one year, you got tuition free two years.

RB: Is that so?

GC: I think that's right. If you taught—If you got free tuition four years, you had to teach two years. But if you got free tuition two years, as I did—my third year I paid and I didn't have to teach but one year—

RB: Now that's not quite the same—

GC: —because I took BA [Bachelor of Arts] instead of BP [Bachelor of Pedagogy].

RB: I wonder if the reverse, I mean the obverse of that is also true, that people who were pledging to teach for a given amount of time were then allowed, were then given financial aid for that reason. You see, when you say that people who had scholarships then had to teach or were in a sense discharging an obligation by teaching, did it work the other way around, too? That a pledge to teach entitled you to some kind of financial aid?

GC: It did, yes. You—well, it worked both ways.

RB: That seems to be a far-sighted policy for a state like North Carolina.

GC: It worked well in those days.

RB: That is interesting. After graduation, did you keep up any contacts with the classmates?

GC: Yes. This Edith Haight [Class of 1905] that you've mentioned is our class president and we have Christmas messages, all kinds of messages and newsletters from her. And she's always been in charge of our reunions. Our last reunion was held in May, last month.

RB: Yes, I was there. And there was a good delegation from your class. We missed you, I think.

GC: I was sorry not to go, but I'd had a longstanding commitment to be the banquet speaker here [New Bern, North Carolina] at the annual meeting of the Historic Preservation Conference of North Carolina.

RB: I think there were something like seven or eight members of the Class of '15.

GC: Yes. They sent me a card saying they missed me. Everyone signed it but one, she'd had to leave.

RB: Have you had nieces or other relatives who have been graduates of the college?

GC: No, not any that I know of.

RB: Your sister, I believe—

GC: My sister took a business course there.

RB: Also at Greensboro.

GC: Yes.

RB: Did she, was she there at the same time you were?

GC: No, afterwards.

RB: Have you visited the campus lately?

GC: I haven't been for years. I'm sorry.

RB: Understandable. You've been busy and—

GC: I was there, of course, when I—well, I was asked back to speak on journalism two or three times.

RB: I believe you were back to take an honorary degree, however, if I may remind you of that.

- GC: I was there to take that honorary degree and when I was on alumnae board I went back. And when I was on the Board of Trustees of the Consolidated University I went back often. I was on the visiting board for Woman's College [of the University of North Carolina, now UNCG] and I think I learned a very important lesson there about appropriations. We had a very smart politician on our visiting committee. And when we went to the college they had this long list of things they wanted. And he said, "Now let's draw them up in a priority range. The thing you want most, we'll put at the top and maybe you'll get it." And we did, we drew them up in a priority list and got the top things. I thought that was smart for a politician to teach us. [laughs]
- RB: Do you keep up with the college's problems? Since you were immersed in them as a visitor—
- GC: No, not so much. I took a trip with them. I went aboard two or three years ago when they had, oh, I don't know, Saint Mary's alumna and they had six colleges from Virginia and they had some federal department group. There was a big crowd of us on the plane but I enjoyed it very much. It was two or three years ago. We went to Germany, Austria, and Hungary.
- RB: We—when I say we, I'm talking about the Alumnae Association. Of course, I'm not a legitimate member of the Alumnae Association. I was on the faculty for thirty-six years, but never for one day a student. But we like to think that careers like yours are at least partly ascribable to the college's influence and particularly its emphasis upon service and the obligation to service that a good citizen has. Is it reasonably fair for us to draw this inference? I believe from what you said originally—
- GC: Absolutely. You can claim me as one of your converts. [laughs]
- RB: We will continue, you may be sure we will continue to do that.
- GC: I'm sure there are many others. But actually, as I said in the beginning, the studies that I took, the lessons that I learned there have been invaluable not only in private life but in public life and in professional life.
- RB: And that's not only the influence in the classroom, but the whole experience—
- GC: The whole experience.
- RB: —living in the college, in the dormitory.
- GC: In those days it was unusual, you know—
- RB: Was dormitory life reasonably comfortable in those days?
- GC: Yes. I didn't have any complaints.

RB: I'm sure students must have complained about food. That's been going on since institutional food was invented.

GC: You wouldn't think they would too much. They were very strict in those days. I remember friends of mine—

RB: Bed check—was there anything like that? Did somebody count to see that everybody was in bed by ten o'clock?

GC: Yes indeed. They were very careful about that. Lights out. But most people were, even before student government, were trustworthy. They were ready to go to bed by ten o'clock [chuckles] or whatever it was, had to get up early. But in those days, times have changed so. A friend of mine who lives here now was a student when I was a student there. And one day she was at this teacher's—I won't mention the teacher's name—table for a meal, and she was telling about something that had happened to someone's leg. And the teacher remonished [sic, admonished?] her, rebuked her sternly, said, "No lady ever mentions that part of the anatomy." [RB laughs] Now in those days, that really was the custom. Today, just think of the different things they discuss. [laughs]

RB: Let us not think about them. Wasn't it true that the faculty members made a practice of eating in the dormitories—?

GC: They were assigned tables.

RB: —each of them would be sitting at a table with a group of students?

GC: Right. And if there weren't enough faculty members to go around, because some didn't live on campus, seniors were assigned the tables, sat at the head of the tables.

RB: Now that must have had some effect on the choice of subject matter at the table and the quality of conversation.

GC: You are right.

RB: And for that matter, it is in itself a form of education in the amenities.

GC: Well, they tried to teach those who needed them table manners without being too obvious about it. And they discussed things that perhaps they thought we ought to know. And they led sometimes in conversations, although it was natural for those at the other end of the table to get in private conversation.

RB: Did you go through a serving line when you ate in the dormitories—I mean in the dining hall or were—

GC: It was brought to us. There were waitresses, paid student waitresses, paid to bring the plates—

RB: Students, I see, that's one of the ways that students could supplement—

GC: —and poured, we poured the water ourselves. But they brought the food and it was all on, sometimes one plate, sometimes you'd pass it around. They'd bring the food and the plates. But they had pretty good food, I never found any fault with it. We were always hungry.

RB: Always a little overweight? [laughs]

GC: Not then, no. [laughs] Not then.

RB: No, people didn't worry about those things in those days. Were the dormitories comfortable, clean enough, warm enough?

GC: I think so. That was up to us, we had to keep them clean, yes. We kept them clean and neat and the beds were made.

RB: Oh, I see, part of your responsibility.

GC: Yes.

RB: Showers?

GC: They had showers, yes, and they had tubs.

[End Tape 1, Side A—Begin Tape 1, Side B]

RB: But hot and cold water, even in—

GC: But not in every room, private baths. There were hall baths.

RB: I understand that, I understand that. And that's what we still have, I believe, though I haven't been in a dormitory, yes. Central heating presumably, radiators and the—

GC: Yes, oh yes, they had radiators. We were lucky, we did have electricity.

RB: Did you go downtown very often?

GC: Yes, especially—seniors had a few, a very few extra privileges. And I went downtown very often during the senior year.

RB: Walking? It is a good mile—

GC: No, streetcar.



RB: Oh, streetcar up Tate Street, turn the corner on Market [Street]. Spring Garden [Street] probably turned the corner at Tate and then up Tate to Market and Market to—

GC: Yeah, that's right. Then sometimes we'd get a ride in a parent's car, go nearby to a close town for, well, maybe after school was over or maybe during the weekend if you were seniors, for a night.

RB: Did you attend church in town?

GC: Well, this little mission I went to chiefly, I did go to Trinity [Holy Trinity Episcopal Church] very often in—

RB: Oh yes, St. Mary's on Walker [Avenue]. They didn't have regular religious services provided by the college itself, right?

GC: They had a YWCA and they had the chapel exercises.

RB: Yes, once a week perhaps.

GC: Yes. But they were nondenominational.

RB: But I suppose most girls kept up their affiliation with their own denomination, kept going to church services at least in their freshman and sophomore years. Then it began to drop off. By the time they were seniors you didn't see them much.

GC: Oh, no. That's about it.

RB: That's the way it was when I came about thirty-six years ago. In fact, you may remember, perhaps this was true in your time, there was an institution called the University Sermon and four times a year there would be a distinguished preacher would be invited from afar. One would be sponsored by the freshman class, one by the sophomores, juniors, seniors. There were four of those. And in time, the attendance dwindled so sadly that the custom had to be discontinued. But in the 1940s, that was still a vigorous, thriving enterprise.

GC: Well, they had concerts, too. Dr. Brown was there while I was there, he was new.

RB: Wade R. Brown.

GC: And they had all kinds of musicals and concerts, operas, soloists, just musical concerts of all kinds. I don't remember, but I don't think there was a charge for some of them.

RB: Were there interscholastic athletic activities?

GC: Oh yes, oh yes. And there were interscholastic entertainments. The sophomores always entertained the freshmen when they got there. And I think the sophomores would

entertain the juniors, or vice versa. And most of them entertained the seniors from time to time.

RB: Now, not far from your campus was Greensboro College, which was also a woman's college. Were there athletic contests—

GC: No, not at that time.

RB: Athletics were likely intramurals.

GC: They were, the sophomores against the juniors and the seniors against the juniors. They were interesting. We played basketball, they played tennis, they played hockey, often.

RB: I don't suppose that a female college, a female seminary as they would have been called, you had a problem like hazing. There were no rough—

GC: Nothing like that. No, the literary societies, as you've said, were expansive. They were very large. Everybody had to belong to one or the other. And the faculty members were divided up, too. They had intersociety debates. But as a rule they were very competitive. They didn't like each other too much. I don't mean individually, but as a whole—

RB: There were institutionalized hostilities.

GC: —you thought your society was far superior. You were supposed to think that.

RB: Were there dances on the college campus?

GC: Oh yes. And our class was about the first to ever have men. The early years I was there—

RB: You don't mean there were dances without men?

GC: First two years there were dances without men, I think. Just the girls.

RB: Is that so? What kind of music would they have? Did they have a little—

GC: Piano, I guess.

RB: Not a travelling group of, it was not a group of trumpeters—

GC: I don't think so. I think it was piano. But then my senior year we had a dance and invited the gentlemen. Strict supervision, strict chaperonage, but it was very nice. And I think—

RB: Yes, I'm sure. Both feet on the floor at all times. [laughs] No radio, of course, right?

GC: No radio, no, no.

RB: That did not become popular—available until the twenties.

GC: Long afterwards.

RB: And motion pictures were in their earliest—

GC: There were very few, if any. Now we had—

RB: So the nearest thing you would have to music that was not supplied by yourselves would be Victrolas. That would be too expensive. I imagine there probably were not very many—

GC: Well, we had good musicians among the students who could play the piano—

RB: That's right, there were courses—a strong department of music.

GC: That's right. And violin. But I don't remember any big orchestra playing there. I may be wrong but I just don't remember one. No, the television and radio days came later.

RB: Those were far ahead, yes, much later.

GC: Although they did have moving pictures.

RB: Yeah, the silent motion pictures, and they were probably short one-reelers and largely given to pie throwing and railway hairbreadth escapes and railway accidents.

GC: Yes. But the college, I suppose, still has its primary work in educating women, especially for North Carolina. But it certainly had a very—

RB: It well may be that it was an advantage not to have those distractions that students have competing for their time now. And you could give yourself more single heartedly to your studies.

GC: Well, now, they had very strict rules and you could have company, gentlemen every now and then if you had a special written request from your parents that went directly to the lady principal. Now the lady principal when I was first there was Miss [May] McClelland. [Editor's Note: Miss McClelland is listed as English instructor in the 1912-1913 Catalog]

RB: There was a single officer called a lady principal?

GC: Yeah, that was her job, that was her title.

RB: She was just sort of overall chaperone for the whole operation, right?

- GC: She ran the women, yes. Everything went through her office, was the front office there. And when she died, Miss [Emma] King became the lady principal. I don't know who they have now. I read somewhere their rules—
- RB: Well, I assure you they don't have anybody in that. [voice in background] Oh, dean of women, but she doesn't have that kind of constabulary function that you're talking about.
- GC: Here it is. I thought I had it. This was a rule and it was in print in one of those annuals.
- RB: Not just a common law, this was enacted law.
- GC: "Shopping, visiting, and receiving friends are not prohibited, but no night may be spent out of the dormitories without a written request from parents or guardians, and even then, permission will not be granted if, in the judgment of the authorities, it would be unwise to do so." "Under proper conditions, visits from gentlemen will be allowed, when written requests for that privilege are made by parent or guardian addressed directly to the Lady Principal."
- Now that was Miss [Sue May] Kirkland [lady principal preceding Emma King]. You see, there were only about six hundred students when I was there, and you'd know almost all of them by name and/or sight. Now you couldn't possibly know all of them.
- RB: Nine thousand odd, some odder than others, but it was close to ten thousand this past year. Our commence[ment]—we graduate two thousand at a time.
- GC: Well, it just shows how it has grown. It wasn't difficult, as I said, to know most all of them.
- RB: Gail, how are we running for time, five minutes? Okay, we can talk for another five minutes. It may be a little hazardous to ask what you think could be improved about the—maybe you don't want to get into that.
- GC: I don't know. I'd be glad to suggest, but I'm not familiar with the way it is now. For the time, I guess it's doing the very best, but it is entirely different, of course, from the way it used to be.
- RB: Yes, it has an entirely different mission. It has graduate units, you know, and vocational sectors that were entirely unthought-of in those days.
- GC: Now Dr. Foust used to emphasize, you know, that we had to render public service, that it was obligatory on our part, because we had been helped by the state. We had been given an education and we had to use it to benefit those that had helped us. And also emphasized all during my days—I felt I would know him if I met him on the street—was Dr. [Charles Duncan] McIver. His words of wisdom were emphasized, especially this, "Live more abundantly through more abundant service, striving hopefully for the larger things of life." As I told you, one of my friends in Rocky Mount [North Carolina] said

she took that advice so literally and did so many odd jobs for other people that she went to bed every night with a hurting back. [laughter]

RB: Tired all the time. While we still have a few minutes, do you think that religion played much of a part in the typical student's life, whether it was formal observance or private commitment?

GC: I think so then more than now.

RB: It was a very high degree of what the sociologists would call homogeneity. They were almost all Protestant, mainline denominations. I should suppose that Episcopalians, the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians would have taken care of 95 percent of the population.

GC: That's right, and they all were active. Those denominations did wonderful work among the girls and the girls went to their churches. There were Catholic students that went religiously to the Catholic church.

RB: I should hope they'd go religiously. [laughs]

GC: They did. And—

RB: Not many Jewish or Oriental or other—

GC: Yes, there were Jewish girls there. I know they were good girls. I don't know about their going to the synagogues, I guess they did. But one of my friends was a Jewish girl, a very fine girl. And I don't know, though, whether she went—I guess she did—to the synagogue. But I know the Episcopal girls went to the mission or to Trinity Church, either.

RB: Where—well, you wouldn't remember the name of the street. I was going to ask where, in your recollection, Trinity Church was in those days. That would be a hard assignment.

GC: I don't know. I was familiar with Spring Garden and the street that ran where the streetcar went.

RB: Yes, that's Tate Street, that's where we live. Tate Street links Spring Garden and Market.

GC: And the streetcar went directly down main street [Market Street] to the drug store where the Jefferson Standard Building is now, and turned right toward the depot. And that's about all I know.

RB: Yes, down Elm. Market then down Elm Street, right.

GC: Now that's the part that's going to be the place nominated for the National Register [of Historic Places]. Trinity Church is on the National Register, or is being nominated this week.

RB: Aycock Auditorium had not yet been constructed.

GC: Yes it had. [Editor's note: Aycock Auditorium was opened in 1927]

RB: Had it?

GC: We had concerts there. It was new. The one on Spring Garden?

RB: Yes, on the corner.

GC: Yeah, it was there when I was there. But it was new. Dr. Brown was new.

RB: Music Building, it's called the Wade, was called the Wade R.—I guess it still is—the Wade R. Brown Music Building. [Editor's note: Brown Music Building opened in 1925]

GC: That's right, yes. Yes, that was built. And they had wonderful concerts and lectures. They had sermons, baccalaureate sermons.

RB: I believe—right. I think we still have an annual series of concerts that is named for Dr. Brown, the Wade R. Brown Music Series.

GC: Oh yes, I'm sure they do. He was very important in those day when he first came and very popular, very fine. They had a chorus, glee club, I think, and—

RB: And he would encourage the girls to go to concerts whenever they were available and then supply them with marginal notes himself, Miss Haight told me. I guess she came under that.

GC: Well, they had a great many dramatics, you know. Miss Sharpe was active in that.

RB: And all the parts were played by girls, right? Even the male parts?

GC: All of them, yes. Yes indeed. And they did very well as men. The voice was hard.

RB: Well, we have to bring some creative imagination to the task of listening to a play to supply that yourself. There were very few male faculty members as yet, I believe.

GC: They had a great many male teachers, yes, [William. C.A.] Hammel [physics and manual arts faculty] and [Eugene] Gudger [biology and geology faculty] and—

RB: Jackson and Forney, Dr. Wade R. Brown.

GC: Yes. Smith, William [Cunningham] Smith [history and English faculty]. He taught me to like poetry. Yes, we had a good many men.

RB: That's true. I guess I'll have to revise that opinion. Well, it was a good school. I'm sure you never regretted having—

GC: I really think that it couldn't have been a better, what you might call advanced education, because, of course, you learn all through your life. But the main parts of education certainly were taught there. It was well rounded. You had to take certain subjects and you had to study them or you had to drop out. And I think the lessons not only of the subjects but of how to study were very valuable. But the side lessons, as you've been mentioning all along—the advice, the philosophy, the service—

RB: And the interrelationships.

GC: —were just as important as the mathematics and the history and the physics that you studied in classrooms. You learned a great deal on the outside, not only from the faculty but from the girls themselves.

RB: We're very grateful to have this testimony of yours. And I promise you to send a transcript of how this came out so you will know exactly what it is that is forever in our records.

GC: Well, good luck to you. I think it's fine that you're doing this.

RB: You've been very helpful.

GC: I'm going to look up—what'd you say the lady's name in Wilmington, Hicks?

RB: Hicks, Hicks.

GC: I have that 1913—what year now? She was five years before—

RB: Five—ten years.

GC: They have every list, I just want to look her up. It might not say, though, who she is. It might. You're going there tomorrow?

RB: After tomorrow, I will know all about her.

GC: I know. I can't tell you, I'd like to know before you go. I knew one that went to the Normal from there. She's not living now, and I can't even remember her name, but she was so wonderful. I knew her for years. Do you mind my waiting—don't you have a minute while I go get that big, that annual? Oh yeah, excuse me. That annual I can use. It's got a good hard cover, but it has all the—oh, am I—

[End of Interview]