

UNCG CENTENARY PROJECT ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Ethel Harris Kirby

INTERVIEWER: Richard Bardolph

DATE: April 19, 1982

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs. Kirby's nieces Rosalie Powell and Rosalie Figge

RB: Now to identify this tape first so that people will know what it is that we are doing, I am going to make a few introductory observations myself, all right? Just to say that as in the past, this is Richard Bardolph with the Alumni Association of The University [of North Carolina Greensboro]. And we are conducting today another in that series of interviews that we are holding with senior graduates of the college. And today we are in Henderson, North Carolina, on the edge of Henderson at the Holiday Inn there. And our star performer today is going to be Mrs. Ethel Harris Kirby. And with her is her daughter Rosalie Pow[ell]—

RP: [I am Mrs. Kirby's] niece [Rosalie Powell].

RB: Niece, niece, I am sorry, niece Rosalie Powell who is a graduate of our Class of 1944. Also a friend, to get the record complete—

RF: Another niece.

RB: Another niece named—

RP: Rosalie Figge, F-I-G-G-E.

RB: Rosalie Figge. And the four of us together are going to have an informal—

RF: I graduated from Goucher fifty years ago.

RB: She regrets to say that—Miss Figge regrets to say that she is a graduate of Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, but had she been confronted with the opportunity would have been a UNCG graduate. [RF chuckles] All right. And let me begin by saying, Miss Kirby, that I have met two other members of your class and we had splendid conversations. In fact, it is literally true that they are the two best interviews I have had, because their recollections were so clear and so full. I do not mean to intimidate you or frighten you with that kind of competition, but that's to reassure you that we are interested in the class of 1905, they are special favorites of ours.

And our method will simply be to raise questions randomly and one thing will suggest another as the conversation proceeds. And if at any time something occurs to you

that you feel is not being elicited because I am not asking the right questions, don't hesitate to intrude and suggest another line of discussion if you choose. And the same thing is true for you, Miss Powell. Please, honestly, feel free to get into this thing at any point and add or subtract or seek clarification where you think it will promote the objects of this conversation.

I should tell you one other thing, and this may be known to you, that we're approaching the college's hundredth anniversary. We will be a hundred years old in 18—In 1992. That gives us ten years to assemble historical data and archival material, letters and interviews and photographs. And we are hard at work doing that. And it is my responsibility to direct that enterprise at the college. And the principle source we are using to collect the information about the way it was at the college is to talk to our senior graduates. And we've now had discussions I think with about twenty or twenty-four of them and there will be scores more as we go along.

Now, let us just begin by asking where it was that you were born?

EHK: Right here in Henderson.

RB: In Henderson, all right. Did you live in Henderson much of your life thereafter?

EHK: I hardly—doesn't seem like I have. I lived in Philadelphia for, let's see, from 1918 till I came back here to live. How long ago was that?

NIECE: Nineteen fifty-something, was it not, when you came back here?

EHK: I think so, 1952 or [195]3, I believe.

RB: Yes. When you married, for instance, is that when you left this area?

EHK: When I was married?

RB: Yes, is it then you went to Philadelphia?

EHK: No, I went to Charlotte first and lived a short time, very short time, and then went to Philadelphia.

RB: I see. And you were not at any time a school teacher?

EHK: Oh, much of the time I was.

RB: Most of the time, perhaps.

EHK: I taught from the time I graduated, was graduated, until 1917 or '18, I think. And then I went to Gastonia and was supervisor of music in Gastonia for one year.

RB: Music was your preoccupation also in college?

EHK: Oh yes. I was graduated in voice and gave the graduating—

RB: As early as 1905 it was possible to get an education whose principle focus was on music, is that right? You may not have been aware that at that time there were people who criticized the college on the grounds that it was straying from its original purpose, that its purpose was to crank out teachers for their common schools, and we must not have such frills as music and literature and the arts and so on, because that was adequately taken care of by other colleges. We were strictly a training school and did not even become called—known as a college until, oh, the first twenty years had gone by. We were a normal and industrial institute.

EHK: They did not call it that, not when I was there.

RB: They called it the Normal—

EHK: The Normal College.

RB: —the Normal until—the Normal, right.

EHK: That's what's on my yearbook.

RB: Yes. The word college creeps into our vocabulary about 1900 when you entered the college, a year or so before you entered.

EHK: Nineteen [oh] two. I was present for three years.

RB: And then thereafter for a long time it was the North Carolina College for Women with a strong liberal arts preoccupation. Did you have sisters?

EHK: What?

RB: Did you have sisters?

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: Did they go to—

EHK: Five sisters and three brothers.

RB: Did any of the other sisters attend school at Greensboro?

EHK: The sister [Olive "Ollie" Perle] just older than I went with me.

RB: Entered at the same time?

EHK: Yes.

RB: Was it your and your parents' intention that you become teachers? Is that why they sent you?

EHK: Oh no, no, we had no idea that I would become a teacher. But in the spring of my senior year they had what they called, what did they call it? I think they called it an institute. Anyhow, all the seniors were allowed to take the, take some courses that would help them in teaching. And I decided to do that in case I taught. I said, "I do not know that I am going to teach but I might."

RB: It interests me that you, and I take it your sister, too, when you entered the college really didn't have any thought of training to be teachers. You came here for a larger education than merely a teacher training program.

EHK: Oh yes, and the reason we went there, my sister, who was not much older than I but she was decidedly my—well, I just looked on her for everything. And when she, when we were , after we had been there for two years my sister decided that she would go to New York and study music and art.

RB: Oh, she did not finish, then, at the college, she did not finish her four year course at the college?

EHK: No.

RB: But you did?

EHK: I did.

RB: Did you seriously consider any other place before coming to the Normal College?

EHK: Oh, we considered everything. My father selected seven colleges. He said, "Now you may select any one of those that you want to. They are all good colleges and you may take your choice." And Ollie, my sister, says, "Well, I'm going to state—the college in North Carolina." My sister—

RB: Were the other six colleges not in North Carolina?

EHK: Oh no. I don't think any of them were, any of them was. The others had, our older sisters had gone to Western Maryland College [now McDaniel College] where my father graduated years before that. And they never saw any of their schoolmates unless they went directly to visit them.

RB: Yes, I have heard the same thing from others. They were—parents were influenced in the choice of—or tried to influence their daughter's choice in favor of UNC, because they missed the close friendships that were really not available to them because they were—went to college in Virginia or Maryland.

RP: Now my dad, he was on the Board of Trustees at Western Maryland, was he not?

EHK: Yes, for years.

RB: Did all the brothers go to college too?

EHK: Oh yes.

RP: No, Uncle Sam did not.

EHK: No, no he did not.

RB: Was it a major sacrifice for your parents to send you to school?

EHK: I do not think so.

RB: It was not a hardship on them. And you did not—

EHK: They always knew they were going to do it, because my father had a good education. He was a college graduate from Western Maryland.

RB: Was he a professional man?

EHK: Oh no, he just went to school and he learned what he learned. He could read Latin as well as—when I was in college—as I could when I was right there fresh with it. In other words, he was a scholar.

RB: We need more of a return to that sort of thing. Right. Then you didn't need the kind of financial assistance that the state gave to students. You may remember that there was a time at first, and for a long time, when your tuition charges were, you were exempt from them if you promised to teach school. You didn't know that you were interested in teaching school in the freshman or sophomore years, and besides didn't need that assistance. Did you work at any kind of a self-help job at college?

EHK: Never.

RB: No. A very large proportion did, you may recall, because so many of the students—and President [Charles D.] McIver was very proud of that—came from homes of very modest economic backgrounds, 80 percent of them from farm homes.

RP: That had changed[?] when I went.

RB: And he would even exhibit those figures very proudly in his annual reports. He would list the occupations of fathers and a very large proportion of them were ordinary, very ordinary blue-collar folk. He was very proud of that. Did you enjoy the college years?

EHK: Oh yes, I loved it.

RB: You did? You never thought of going home, you never thought of dropping out?

EHK: Oh my land, no.

RB: Is it your impression that most of the girls who came with you in that initial class stayed on for the full four years?

EHK: Oh, I don't think so.

RB: You don't think so? I think you had about thirty graduates in 1905 when—

EHK: I think it was thirty-nine.

RB: That does sound closer than thirty to me. I have pictures of all of them. [chuckles] And perhaps you do too. Did you ever keep up any kind of connections with these classmates in subsequent years?

EHK: No, we did not have a chain letter[?], which I wish we had had. And of course, I went back to commencement as often as I could.

RB: Oh you did go reasonably frequently to commencement?

EHK: Oh yes, oh yes. In fact I was there for years. I stayed right there on the campus and taught at a training school. I was—

RB: Was on our faculty.

EHK: —what they called—

RP: Supervisor.

EHK: No, not supervisor.

RB: Yes, yes now that you—

EHK: The first year I was—

RB: Now that you say that, I remember looking up the catalogs for several years and your name is listed as an assistant or a sometime kind of—you helped in the instruction in music for several years.

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: Yes, I did see that.

EHK: And I was demonstrating teaching the seventh grade in the training school [Curry School] the first year I was there. The next year I was critic teacher in the sixth grade and I did that for two or three years.

RB: Was that for music alone?

EHK: Oh no.

RB: Oh, you were a regular critic teacher, I see, for students who were getting the teaching certificate.

EHK: Yes.

RP: Supervising teacher in the training school.

RB: Yes.

EHK: What is that on there?

RP: You were supervising teacher in the training school.

RB: Yes, that is all documented in the catalogs of those early years. And the, let us see, you were in one of the last classes to have been on campus during the reign of Dr. McIver. He was still living when you graduated.

EHK: He died the first year I was there.

RB: I think you must be mistaken. He died in 1906 and you graduated in 1905. He may have died the first year you were on the staff, on the teaching staff. But as long as you were a student he was the president. He died in 1906, in September, very suddenly. He was still a young man. Another classmate of yours was his daughter, Annie McIver.

EHK: Annie McIver.

RB: Yes. And she later, when she married, moved into the house that I now live in. We have that connection with the McIver family. Did you ever meet her again subsequent—after your college years did you keep up any connection with Annie McIver?

EHK: No, except when I went back to commencement.

RB: When you met her at commencement, right.

RP: Who was your roommate? Who was your roommate in college? Was Aunt Ollie?

EHK: Well, Ollie was there for two years, and after that—

RB: Ollie being her sister?

RP: Yes.

EHK: Ollie's my sister. When she went to New York to study music and art I was left without a roommate. I did not know that till late in the fall. So I was just absolutely high and dry as far as roommates are concerned. So Miss [Sue] Kirkland was the lady principal and I told her that I did not have any roommate and I did not know what to do about it. She said, well, she would find me a nice girl.

RB: That is the only kind we had.

EHK: Well, she did. She found, she told me about this girl that was there in the house. She said, "Go out there and look at that girl, see what you think of her," as if I could tell by looking at her. [laughs]

RB: Well, there are some gross characteristics that you could determine.

EHK: Anyhow, she said it had been her uncle, I think it had been, was the governor of the state at one time, [Curtis Hooks] Brogden.

RB: [J. Melville] Broughton. No, that would have been after her time. That was much later, much later.

EHK: And we roomed together—

RB: Did students generally have something to say about who their roommates would be?

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: You did have some, you took part in that selection process in some way. I see.

EHK: Oh yes. I did not do much that year because I did not know anybody.

RP: So did you have this woman for your roommate? Was this person—did you pick her for your roommate, did you take her?

EHK: Yes.

RP: What was her name, do you remember?

EHK: Nettie Brogden [Class of 1908].

RP: Oh, Brogden.

RB: Brodgen, I will have to look that up. Did you sleep in your rooms in those days or was there a separate dormitory space, room? Did all the rooms have beds in them?

EHK: Yes.

RP: Were you in Kirkland, were you in Kirkland Hall?

EHK: I was in charge of Kirkland Hall after I went there to teach.

RP: No, I mean when you were—

RB: When she was a student Kirkland was not yet built.

EHK: Kirkland was not built then.

RB: In fact, the dormitory that housed everybody burned down in your time, didn't it, in 1904?

EHK: Oh yes. I lived in what they called Midway Dormitory

RB: Yes. That was—

EHK: A wooden building.

RB: Yes, it was actually Guilford [Dormitory], but that was the time of the Chicago World's Fair and that was known as the Midway Fair because it was on the midway of Chicago. And they called that long, low building, which was immediately next to the president's house, was it not, the president's house and—

EHK: And the infirmary.

RB: And the little infirmary that later came to be called Little Guilford. And that was still there when I came out there in 1944—and it was there in your time, too. It had [Director of Public Relations] Charlie Phillips' office and the news bureau. It was a little brick, red brick building. And just beyond that was the Students' Building, which was established and it came to be used during your senior year in 1904—

RP: Is that where the post office was later?

RB: For a while, yes. A lot of student activities were housed there.

RP: Then she was on that side of the campus, then, [unclear].

RB: Yes, it was outside the city limits of Greensboro, hard as that is to believe.

EHK: The Spencer [Dormitory] building was built, was opened in the fall of my senior year.

RB: Which was 1904, right? And it was very new—well, of course, it was brand new and did not yet have the south wing. A south wing was added a little later on. And I wonder if you were aware that the reason they changed the plans of Spencer and made it a long, low building was because of the fright that they had suffered from that fire in 1904. They decided to have a building that would be as nearly fireproof as possible. And it also has a number of fire breaks in it there, iron curtains that descend in certain places of that building.

RP: Yeah, our daughter was in Spencer when she was there.

RB: Yeah. Do you remember the [Brick Dormitory] fire [of 1904]?

EHK: Oh boy, do I!

RB: It would, I suppose, be one of the most vivid memories in a person's life. And nobody was hurt, right?

EHK: Not a soul.

RB: Do you remember what floor you were on?

EHK: I was in Midway then.

RB: Oh, you were in Midway by that time, I see.

EHK: I never was in what they called the Brick Dormitory.

RB: Brick had three hundred and fifty students in it, but by that last year of its service the population had grown big enough to require one or two other dormitories, that's right. And you were in that new, the Guilford Dormitory, I see.

EHK: I went into Spencer building the year it was built.

RB: And Miss [Sue May] Kirkland [lady principal] had an office there.

EHK: Who?

RB: Miss Kirkland had an apartment—

EHK: Oh yeah.

RB: —where she could watch, keep students under her, well, let us say benevolent rule. Do you remember any examples of Miss Kirkland's rigorous rules of conduct?

EHK: One thing I remember, somebody—and I have forgotten who the girl was that was with me—and I were going downtown. And of course, I, I felt like a child but I was a grown girl.

RB: Sure.

EHK: And I did not have on any gloves. Miss Kirkland said, I think she called me Miss Harris, “Miss Harris, where are your gloves?” I said, “They are in my room.” “Well, go get them, put them on.”

RB: Yes, that—

EHK: That was—

RB: —rule is richly documented. I have heard—

EHK: [unclear]. I did not know.

RB: Did you think of those rules as being too rigid in your time—when you were there, did you think that they were a little too extreme?

EHK: I do not think.

RB: You do not think the students generally resented that kind of manipulating in their lives?

EHK: I do not think so, I did not.

RB: That was, of course, more graciously accepted than they would be now. In fact, they would not be accepted.

RP: They would not do it now.

RB: No, would not begin to. Do you remember whether you had chapel in your time?

EHK: Oh yes. Dr. McIver conducted chapel very often, read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians.

RB: There was a religious component in the chapel services, right?

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: They were religiously oriented.

EHK: Oh yes, always read the Bible.

RP: Where did you have chapel? Where was it, where did you go? They did not have a chapel on campus, did they?

RB: It was in Students' Building.

EHK: There was an auditorium on the second floor of the—

RB: First, in Administration [Building]. And then after 1904 it went over to the Students' Building. And even the commencements were at those same two places that she mentioned, first in the auditorium in the Main Building [Foust Administration Building] and then in the Students'—

RP: Did you have to go every day to chapel?

EHK: Oh yes.

RP: It was required?

EHK: Yes.

RB: And they took attendance?

EHK: Yes.

RB: Any penalties for being absent?

EHK: That part I do not remember, because I never wanted to be absent.

RB: You never wanted or you did not dare to be?

EHK: I never wanted to be absent.

RB: You did not want to be absent. You felt that they were a real contribution to student life.

EHK: Yes, I felt like I had missed something if I did not go. I reckon I did, because I never considered not going.

RB: Were there guest speakers?

EHK: Oh yes. But often they had dear Miss [Gertrude] Mendenhall [mathematics faculty]. She was a Quaker, Friend, and she often read, always read something from the Bible. And very often she would have us sing this beautiful hymn, "*My Jesus, As Thou Wilt*" [by Benjamin Schmolck].

RB: I can sing it for you now. I will not do it; I don't want to embarrass these people. It's a tune that comes from [Carl Maria] von Weber. [sings tune]

EHK: That is it.

RB: Yes. And it did have—you know, that would be considered illegal now—It had a Protestant, Christian bias in chapel that must have been a little incongruous, because we had Jewish students, you know, at that time. In fact, it is interesting to show how totally innocent the campus was of any prejudice, because these girls got the best offices. You know, Laura Weill [Cone] from Wilmington, Class of 1910, I think, she was class president and the editor of both of the literary productions and—

RP: Well, the Cones gave heavily to the school. She was in [unclear].

RB: Not at that time. It was not something that they were rewarding her for, you know. No, it was, she was just that good and that well-liked. And there are several other instances of the same thing.

RP: I think there is not that much prejudice in the South—

RB: Well, and that school has always been remarkable for its democratic atmosphere. In fact, there are parents of affluent students who sent them there because of that absence of class distinction. I've picked that up several times since. Do you remember what kind of recreational program was available to you when you were a student?

EHK: Well, so far as I recall, the most of anything was that every girl was required to go out of the dormitory and walk for forty-five minutes, from four o'clock to four forty-five. Everybody had to get out.

RB: While your dormitory room windows were open?

EHK: What?

RB: And the dormitory room windows had to be open during that time—

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: —to change the air. And they were all sent out, they were all sent out. And that would be a great social occasion, too, because you would walk with some particular friend. And then as you moved about the campus you met others, you know. It was a really a nice—

EHK: Was that not required when you were there?

RP: We did not have anything required when I was there.

RB: [laughs] You had to have two years of language.

RP: Yeah, and you had to be in at such-and-such a time.

RB: That was even[tually], that was dropped, unfortunately, quite early. But were there physical education courses like—

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: —calisthenics? Do you remember where they were held?

EHK: Well, I—

RB: Would the basement of Spencer sound familiar to you?

EHK: No.

RB: Because there was a time when that is, when that was where the so-called gymnastics went forward.

EHK: The only thing I had that I recall is Miss [Mary Settle] Sharpe's class, she had, always had physical exercise.

RB: Yes, and elocution, she had two fields in which she professed.

EHK: She was a lovely, lovely person, Miss Sharpe was. And I loved Miss Mendenhall.

RB: Everybody agrees to that, too, and it was not because she was soft, either, or indulgent. She exacted very severe standards, both of intellectual performance and of conduct, as I remember. In fact, people would go trembling to the board when she asked them to make a mathematical demonstration. She was in math.

RP: Did you have a house mother, each dorm have a house mother?

EHK: We had—Miss Mendenhall and Miss [Laura] Coit [college secretary] lived together in a room next to me.

RP: Oh boy, that kept you straight.

EHK: And Mrs. [Lula Martin] McIver [wife of President Charles D. McIver] often sent them something good to eat. And they had the, pulley—pulled the [unclear] apparatus—

RB: And you were willing to assist them by eating some of their surplus goodies. We appreciate that.

RP: How was the food there in that time?

RB: Yeah, what do you remember that about the eating facilities?

EHK: We had wonderful food.

RB: You cannot get students to say that now.

EHK: And we would go back, we were allowed to go back and get dishes replenished.

RB: You did not go through a cafeteria line, did you?

EHK: No.

RB: No, served family style.

RP: Even breakfast, even breakfast was around the table?

EHK: Yes.

RP: Were you assigned a table or did you sit—

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: Typically there was at least one senior at each table as a sort of a presiding presence. And in fact, they started out with a faculty list of people who ate there and they had each a table. And when they ran out of faculty, it was seniors. And they would set the tone, conversation and little introduction to the mystery of table manners. And some student would go to get refills on the potatoes—if the potatoes had disappeared before the meal was over, there was one girl whose responsibility it was to keep going back to get refills. But you remember distinctly that you liked the fare.

EHK: Oh, very much.

RP: I remember we used to go in and if we would see mint jelly on the table we would say, “Goat meat.” And everybody would go down to The Corner [Editor’s Note: a multi-purpose business at the corner of Walker Avenue and Tate Street] and eat dinner.

RB: Because it went with mutton, I suppose.

RP: Mutton, it was definitely mutton.

RB: I’d walk ten miles to get me a good dish of mutton. I have—

RP: I like lamb, but.

RB: Well, that is just little young mutton. [laughs] Didn’t leave the campus very much, did you?

EHK: Very little.

RP: How often did you get home? Christmas?

EHK: Christmas, yes.

RP: Spring, did you have a spring break or a—

EHK: I do not think we did in those days.

RB: How would you travel to Henderson, how would you travel?

EHK: How would I travel?

RB: Yes, between Henderson and—

EHK: I would go from Oxford to Durham—

RB: By what kind of conveyance?

EHK: Southern train.

RB: Southern Railway.

EHK: And then from Durham to Greensboro.

RP: You had to change in Durham?

RB: Change trains at Durham, at Durham's Station. It was called that before it was called Durham, North Carolina. But that was only about once a year during the school year, at Christmas time.

EHK: Christmas.

RP: You would take your trunks and everything would go with you on the train? You would ship them ahead, I guess.

EHK: I imagine they went along with me.

RB: Yes, and you had to park them in the basement of your dormitory and keep them there.

RP: Yeah, we did that in my day. But you did not, your dad did not take you the first time or anything? How would you get there? Did you go together just the two of you together, all by yourselves?

EHK: I think so. I do not remember, though.

RB: Were you met at the station by anybody?

EHK: Oh yes. They sent—

RB: Zeke? [Editor's note: Ezekiel Robinson was the college driver, porter, valet, and factotum for over fifty years]

EHK: I believe they sent Zeke.

RB: Yes, wagons to move them.

RP: There were not cars then? No cars at that point?

RB: Automobiles? They are just barely beginning. A couple of lawyers and two or three doctors would have them. They were for their wives, the electric cars. Yes, it was horses and carriage.

RP: If you wanted to date somebody, how would you go about—were you allowed to have dates or did you have to—

RB: Dances?

EHK: Well, I did not dance, we were not allowed—my father [unclear] dance. And we did not go to dances.

RP: If you wanted to have a boy visit you, could he come visit you?

EHK: I did not even think of such a thing.

RP: [laughs] I think you are forgetting a lot of things.

RB: Selective memory.

EHK: You see, we lived ourselves outside of town, and—

RB: Did you live on a farm?

RP: No.

EHK: Well, it was a farm but—

RB: You did not farm it.

EHK: We had fruit trees, apple trees and a peach tree, a pear tree—

RP: Grape vines.

EHK: And a great, great big scuppernong grape vine. People all over town would come up to see us during scuppernong grape time.

RP: Tennis courts. One tennis court or two? How many tennis courts, one or two?

EHK: One.

RB: Was the scuppernong for wine?

EHK: Oh, they were great for it but we did not ever use it for that.

RB: Oh you did not. Were you of the Baptist persuasion?

EHK: Oh no.

RB: No?

EHK: Methodist Protestant.

RB: Yes, well, they shared some of those enthusiasms with the Baptists. And you would not get home more than just at Christmas time. Do you remember whether at the end of the school year you stayed on through commencement? Of course, in your senior year you did, because you were in the commencement exercises yourself.

EHK: I think I did.

RB: I am beginning to have the impression that in those days it was custom not dismiss the students until commencement was over, that the younger class, the freshmen and sophomores had to help out with the daisy chain and, well, the general logistics of commencement.

EHK: I think that was it.

RB: Do you remember your commencement address? Do not worry if you do not remember—nobody ever does.

RP: I do not. [laughs]

EHK: Well, I should, it was Dr. Thomas Hamilton Lewis—

RB: James Hamilton Lewis?

EHK: —who was president of—

RB: Oh, Thomas Hamilton—

EHK: Western Maryland College.

RB: Oh, I see.

RP: And did you start teaching there right after you graduated?

EHK: Yes.

RP: You just stayed on there until—

EHK: Yes.

RP: —until what, 1911, and then went to Gastonia after that or Charlotte?

EHK: I stayed there until 1918.

RP: At the college?

EHK: Yes.

RB: My goodness. And you arrived there in 1901, so you were there for a seventeen year span. That—

EHK: Nineteen-oh-two—

RB: Nineteen-oh-two.

EHK: —because I graduated in three years.

RB: Yes, so you were there three years as a student and then stayed on another thirteen years as a staff member. You saw the first, whole first generation of the founders, the initial faculty, and watched the early development of the school. That is quite a long stretch.

EHK: We were not allowed to walk on the grass. That was just terrible to me.

RP: You could not sit on it either?

EHK: No. [unclear] grass policy said neither sit on or walk on the grass.

RB: Was the prohibition for just a short time?

EHK: Yes.

RB: Now students will not walk anywhere except on the grass. [chuckles]

EHK: And I remember very well they had just put out some green trees down College Avenue.

RB: Yes, those little saplings.

EHK: And Mr. [W.C.A.] Hammel was the, in charge of buildings and grounds. Anyhow he had charge of those trees. And he called the [unclear]

RB: Foust?

EHK: I do not know if it was Dr. [Julius Isaac] Foust or Dr. McIver was still living. But anyhow, he came in, "Look at the vista."

RP: Oh, vista, vista.

RB: Oh, I see. Well, it's close. Do you remember Dr. Foust at all?

EHK: Oh, very well.

RB: It was while you were a supervisor that he was president.

EHK: And he said that—I remember one time he gave me a very nice compliment. He said he'd never seen anybody change for the best, for the better, like this one boy did. He had the meanest face, and I was just determined that I was going to get next to that boy. And I did. And he just turned over a new leaf and was really fine.

RB: So you worked wonders with the boy.

EHK: I did. That is what Dr. Foust said, too.

RB: Well, coming from that source it must have been very gratifying to you, because that was his field, too, pedagogy.

EHK: Oh yeah. Dr. Foust—

RB: You know, he's one of the few who were self-consciously trained and interested in teaching people how to teach. As a general thing, that was not a big element of the school.

RP: They still do not teach us how to teach.

RB: No, they mis-teach, they mis-direct them. So—well, you know, your classmate, Miss Annie [Lee] Shuford [Class of 1905], also stayed on after she graduated, for about six years and she was with the Registrar's Office. That must have been quite a class—

EHK: Oh, it was.

RB: —to keep you people there.

RP: You must have had a brainy class there.

EHK: We had a fine class.

RB: Did they have to work hard? I mean, did it take up pretty much all of your time and did it require sustained and energetic efforts in order to keep up in class?

EHK: You mean so far as studying is concerned?

RB: Yes. Or was there a lot of time left over when you could just play bridge and—

EHK: I didn't even know how to play bridge in those days.

RP: That is right; you all were not allowed to play cards, either, were you? You were not allowed to play cards either?

EHK: No, we were not allowed to play cards either.

RF: You played rook.

RB: What is that?

RF: Did you play rook? [unclear]

RB: Rook, I see. Well, I am wondering whether—see, the reason I raised that question is whether the academic program, the classroom work was a heavy-enough schedule to occupy you fully, and if you were determined to do a thoroughly good job, it did absorb your principle energies. Would that be a fair statement? It was not an easy and light schedule of activities and requirements.

EHK: Well, not exactly. But I was very much interested in music. I majored in voice and I had to give a graduating recital.

RB: I remember your senior thesis was on a music subject. I came across—

EHK: *The Development of Polyphonic Music and Its Influence on the Music of the Day.*

RB: That is it. That is forever in the records, I saw it.

RP: Well, with music, too, you have more practicing to do than if you were, say, a primary ed[ucation] or something like that, that would take up more time, I would think, like having a lab course or whatever.

RB: Do you remember some of the music teachers?

EHK: Oh, we did not have but one.

RB: Was Mr. [Charles J.] Brockmann [music faculty] there in your time?

EHK: Oh yes, he was the violin teacher. And his sister was the piano teacher.

RB: Oh, was it his sister? I see. I see there are two Brockmanns in the yearbook but I assumed that that was Mrs. Brockmann. That was his sister [Laura Brockmann, music faculty]. And were they foreigners? Were they from Germany or somewhere?

EHK: I expect they were but I do not know.

RB: You do not remember whether he had a strange accent?

EHK: Not that I recall.

RB: People who didn't have a foreign accent were suspect if they claimed to be music teachers in those days.

RP: So who was your voice teacher?

EHK: Mr. Clarence [R.] Brown [music faculty].

RB: Brown, Clarence Brown, I see.

EHK: Clarence Brown, not Wade R. [Brown].

RB: Was Wade R. there in your time?

EHK: Well, he was there after I began to teach there.

RB: Yes, then he was, in a sense, your supervisor, wasn't he, because he was the head of that school. Did you ever go with his, with the groups that he took to Washington [DC] to hear concerts? He would sometimes organize student tours during the holidays.

EHK: I do not think I did.

RB: That was probably only open to students. Where were the music classes held? The music building was not created yet.

EHK: Well, the voice class was held up in the, way up in the second—third floor, I think.

RB: Of Main [Building]?

EHK: Yes.

RB: There is a skylight, I think, up there, gives it sort of a studio-like aura.

EHK: [unclear] couldn't be heard in the halls.

RB: Oh, I see, it was to confine the sound in that one area.

RP: Where was your concert when you had your concert?

EHK: The Main Building.

RP: Did your parents come?

EHK: No, Myrtle came, one of my sisters.

RB: Do you feel that there was any—it is hard to make clear what I have in mind here. If I'm not making it clear just let me know. I wonder whether it was difficult for girls who had come, let us say, from the hills, from Bryson City, from way out in the, what we would call the sticks in our time, and they came to Greensboro, here were girls from larger towns and from families where there was a background of education and of school teachers and so on. Do you think there was a problem of assimilating these people who came from such modest backgrounds? Was there a social distance between the more affluent students and those—

EHK: I don't think so.

RB: You were not aware that your, the stratum from which you came started with advantages that some of these girls would take a year or two at college to catch up with?

EHK: I probably did not know better, but I did not, I wasn't the least bit stuck up.

RB: And would you say that was characteristic of the campus, that it was fairly innocent of any of that kind of social stratification?

EHK: I think there was very little of it.

RB: I keep hearing that.

RP: That changed, though.

RB: Oh yeah. Every society, any society as it matures finds artificial ways of distinguishing. It's remarkable how in the first fifty years of that school there was very little of that. I heard recently from a student who lived in Greensboro and whose father had a grocery store just near the edge of campus, it was on Mendenhall [Street]. And her first contact with students was years before she became a student herself, because she was a little five- or six-year-old girl waiting on the trade in that grocery store. And the college girls would come in, especially during that walking period. And she—and she swears this is true—that some of those girls who came out of the country districts would come in there and rather sheepishly ask for snuff or chewing tobacco. And it took them the first several months at UNCG to drop some of those old habits. You don't remember any of that do you?

EHK: No.

RB: It is inevitable that there would be some, you know, rough edges that would distinguish some people from others, that they would quickly see the wisdom of smoothing those things off. She said—and they were obviously as[shamed], they were obviously embarrassed when they would be asking for the, you know, they try to give the impression they were buying it for somebody else, somebody else. I'm sure Miss Kirkland would not have approved of that, either. Were there telephones on, were there telephones on the campus? Could you, if you had to get in touch with somebody here in Henderson have got a message across?

EHK: I do not think so, but I do not really recall.

RB: I wish I could date the time when telephones—I believe they were with us from the beginning but probably two or three on the campus, one in Dr. McIver's office. Probably had two digits in the number, probably phone number twelve in Greensboro.

RP: When you started teaching, how much did you make? You remember your first year's salary or month's salary?

EHK: No, very little, I do not remember how much it was, though.

RB: Did you think it was little at the time?

EHK: I don't think I did. I reckon I thought I was rich.

RB: Everybody was poor. Everybody was poor and if you had anything at all, any cash coming in at all—

RP: But you lived on campus even when you taught? You say you supervised some—were you a house mother or something when you, while you were teaching?

EHK: Not at first. I did at—

RB: Oh, in the time after your graduation and when you were a supervising teacher, you were still living on the campus?

EHK: Yes.

RB: In one of the dormitories?

EHK: Yes. In fact, I was in charge of Kirkland Hall, had a beautiful sitting room.

RB: Was Kirkland built at the same time as Woman's [Dormitory]?

EHK: No.

RB: There were two, they are relatively smaller, they were smaller. You may remember that Woman's was strange, well, not strange, but unique in that it housed the, what we in the North call the BWOCs—the "Big Women on Campus." They were class presidents, and the editors of the yearbook and the paper, and student government.

RP: Kirkland just had the fun people, we just kind of played around.

RB: Oh, was that just a random selection who were in Kirkland? I mean, they were not there by any kind of selective process?

RP: No, you still had to go—got up at 5:30 in the morning and stood in line to sign up.

RB: You asked for it. And it was the place where it was at, in your time.

RP: Yeah, Kirkland was the fun place.

RB: Now could you get to stay there the whole time, four years?

RP: Well, now see, it was the freshman dorm, and then after that—

RB: Oh, it was only the freshman dorm.

RP: When I was there. There was the Quadrangle. I was in Cotten [Dormitory]—no I was not in Cotten, I was in Bailey [Dormitory]. And then we would sleep on the porch at Kirkland. My mother made little nightcaps for us. We moved our beds outside—

RB: It was believed in those days it was so good for you.

RP: And then we would have the rooms, it'd be like the living room or whatever. Our beds were outside—

RB: Oh, I see, that was to make—the reason for that was to make the living room so much better.

EHK: When I was a member of the faculty I slept on the porch upstairs. [unclear]

RB: In what building?

EHK: Kirkland.

RB: In Kirkland?

EHK: Kirkland Hall. And one night I woke up and the snow was just coming into my face. But I slept on, I went back to sleep.

RB: Probably good for you.

EHK: It was good.

RP: Now when you went, had to go somewhere, did you have to sign out and do all that? Or could you, did you have to have somebody with you? If you wanted to go uptown—or did you go uptown? What'd you do when you weren't studying or singing or whatever?

RB: Or a Saturday afternoon, would you go downtown?

EHK: I do not remember doing it. Well, I do remember once going downtown with my friend Ruth Fitzgerald [Class of 1905]—

RB: I knew her.

EHK: —we were classmates—

RB: I knew her.

EHK: —and she hated for children to call her out, you know, on the street. She did not want anybody to know she was a school teacher. I said, “Well, I do not care what they know about me. If they want to know I am a school teacher, help themselves.” But it just made her some mad when they called, “Hello, Miss Fitzgerald.” One day they even called her Miss Fitzy; well, that made her furious.

RP: Fitzy?

EHK: Miss Fitzy. Well, I was fortunate that I did not have a name of, that could be made into something that you would not like.

RP: Well, why did you have the transition between music and secretary?

EHK: What?

RP: You were teaching music and then you became a secretary. Why did you choose being a secretary?

EHK: Well, when I went to Philadelphia to live, I was not sure I would like the man who was in charge of the music in the schools. So I decided I would just get an entirely different job.

RB: Did you have some of your secretarial training at the Normal school?

EHK: No, I did not.

RB: Oh, you did not work under Mr. [Edward J.] Forney [commercial department faculty and college treasurer]?

EHK: No.

RB: And Miss Clara Booth Byrd [Class of 1913 and alumnae secretary] who was with the commercial department?

EHK: I remember her very well.

RB: She is still very much alive.

EHK: [unclear]

RB: She was for several years. She came to campus in 1909 and never left. She is now living in a home right outside the city, it is Friends Home [retirement facility] where Miss Gunter [Class of 1914]—did you know Miss Gunter, Miss Ruth Gunter?

EHK: Ruth Gunter, yes. I remember her.

RB: Of course, these people are youngsters to her. I'm talking about people who are only in their middle eighties now. She was a third grade teacher, one of the finest in the state.

EHK: She was what?

RB: Third grade teacher, one of the very best.

RP: Did you have to take a language?

EHK: I did take Latin.

RB: With Miss [Viola] Boddie [Latin faculty]?

EHK: Oh yes. I was very fond of Miss Boddie.

RB: You were?

EHK: And she liked me, too.

RB: You know her reputation was for being so severe.

EHK: She was. She was severe because she meant for you to learn.

RB: Oh yes, she had very high standards. She is the only one of a few, I think, of the first faculty for whom there is not a building named yet.

EHK: What is that?

RB: There is no building, there is no building named for Miss Boddie yet. I think she deserves one. She was one of the real builders of the college.

EHK: Absolutely.

RB: But the girls were in terror of her if they were not hardworking students.

EHK: Did you ever hear the word “saw”?

RB: No, in this connection—

EHK: Well, she would saw your head off if you didn’t answer her questions right. Boy oh boy, could she do it. She did not get after me much, because I studied my Latin and learned it. My father made me learn it before I went to college, even. Now, I entered junior Latin by examination.

RP: But you did not take French or anything like that?

EHK: No, I didn’t, I didn’t take French.

RB: Do you remember any contacts between our college and Greensboro College?

EHK: No.

RB: There was no significant relationship there? And whether—do you recall whether it was the feeling of our students that they were students of a very great college?

EHK: Yes.

RB: They were not apologetic about its newness, the fact that it had been launched primarily as a training center rather than a higher educational center. There was no sense of that kind of apology?

EHK: No.

RB: I am quite convinced of that, what I hear.

RP: Oh, I was always proud of where I went.

RB: Of course, by your time—

RP: It was NCCW [North Carolina College for Women, now UNCG] when I went.

RB: It was—your time it was a Phi Beta Kappa—

RP: UNCG, that, I have always resented that.

RB: I have never liked that either. I liked Woman’s College [of the University of North Carolina].

RP: WCUNC, yes, see, that is what I went to.

RB: See in your time, it had achieved enough distinction to have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. The outside world does not realize what a mark of excellence that is, Phi Beta Kappa.

EHK: They have that?

RB: Yeah, oh yeah, since 1935.

RP: Yeah, they had that—

RB: And there were only two others in Greens[boro]—in North Carolina at the time, there was Duke [University, Durham, North Carolina] and Chapel Hill [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill]. Well, maybe Wake Forest [University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina] had just recently got it, too. And it's pretty well stopped there. There still are not any other schools that meet those requisites. Davidson [College, Davidson, North Carolina] has since acquired it. That is about it, you know. It was—at a remarkably early age it was recognized as a first-rate college.

EHK: [unclear]

RB: Let us see what else we might probe her recollections on.

RP: Well, was Dr. [Walter Clinton] Jackson there when you were there?

EHK: Oh yes.

RP: Was he the president?

EHK: He became president.

RP: He was president when I was there.

RB: In about '32, I think [Editor's note: Dr. Jackson became dean of administration in 1934 and chancellor in 1945].

RP: What was he, just a teacher when you were there?

EHK: Yes, in the economics department.

RB: History, history, he was head of the history department.

EHK: Economics.

RB: No. I got his job later. He was head of the history department. Well, I will tell you, your right in that he was the head of a whole cluster of things.

EHK: Social sciences.

RB: Yes, that is it. It was history and economics and sociology, what little of it we had. That is right, and he was called head of the social sciences division, something of the sort. But his field was history, his specific field. And the—before he became, at the time he became the chancellor, or the dean of the college, his immediately preceding title was head of the department of history. I am proud of that, because I inherited his desk and his swivel chair and so on [laughing]. And even some of his notes. Dr. Foust did not teach, did he, to your recoll[ection]—

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: Oh he also taught?

EHK: He taught pedagogy.

RB: I know he did that before he became the president, but if you say that he was also teaching in your time that means that he was also teaching—

RP: Who was your favorite teacher?

EHK: My favorite teacher? I think Miss Boddie.

RP: The harder they are the better you like them.

RB: That speaks well for her, you know. That speaks well for you, because I know she was a hard taskmaster.

EHK: She was.

RB: Yes. She—

EHK: And we became the best of friends.

RB: Did she finish her entire career here at the college, she stayed on till retirement?

EHK: Yes, and she was awfully upset when they insisted upon her retirement. But she had reached her retirement age and it was the law, so she had to retire. But she did not like it one little bit. She said she—

RB: We still have people who develop that symptom. There are some exceptions, present company included. There is an increasing number who now want to retire early.

RP: Oh yeah, my husband retired at fifty-seven.

RB: So you enjoyed the college experience?

EHK: Oh, I enjoyed it, yes.

RP: Did you plan to major in music when you left home? Was that your idea or what?

EHK: I do not think so.

RP: Aunt Ollie always liked to paint and you were the musician, right? And Aunt Mable was the musician.

EHK: I do not think I ever thought about it.

RP: You were just going to college because everybody goes.

EHK: Yes.

RB: Do you remember whether you could go to the movies in the town when you were a student? The movies were just coming into being around—

EHK: I do not think so.

RB: You do not remember any—

EHK: I do not remember ever going.

RB: The only evidence I have on this point is that when the first movies were available in downtown Greensboro, our girls were forbidden to go there. And instead, they were encouraged to pool their resources and buy a phonograph. If they wanted some of that kind of worldly amusement, they could get that by phonograph. Didn't go home for Thanksgiving?

EHK: No.

RP: It was just a hundred miles.

RB: Have a big Thanksgiving dinner?

EHK: I think we did but I don't remember.

RB: Your things—your mind was on the things of the mind. [laughs] Would you recall some pageants that Miss Sharpe directed?

EHK: Very, very well. I trained all the music.

RB: Bless you.

EHK: We had a lot of singing, folk songs. I was not employed by the college that year at all; I was in the city schools.

RB: What years were those, would you remember roughly?

EHK: No. The years of the pageant. [Editor's note: Mary Settle Sharpe was in charge of the very elaborate 1912 and 1916 Olde English May Day pageants]

RB: Was it about 1912?

EHK: I want to say it was 1910 but maybe—

RB: There were two, four years apart.

EHK: Well, Miss Sharpe said she always wanted to be doing the four years of every student, one—

RB: Yes, that is true, they were four years apart. And they were major productions.

EHK: Oh my, they were.

RB: And the credit is nearly all due to her for putting those together, is it not?

EHK: Oh absolutely.

RB: And she mobilized even these school kids from Curry School, a practice school, to participate in that.

EHK: Yes, I remember very well Mrs. [Elizabeth McIver] Weatherspoon was the art teacher.

RB: Yes, that was the president's sister.

EHK: And she painted—

RB: That was a more important credential than her skill as a teacher.

EHK: What is that?

RB: I think she was a teacher because she was the sister of the president more than because she was the best art teacher in the world.

EHK: I think she was good, though. She became good.

RB: Our art gallery is named for her now, you know, Weatherspoon Gallery.

EHK: And she painted butterflies, she had, I do not know how many butterfly wings, prettiest things you ever saw.

RB: Psychiatrists would make a lot out of that now. [laughs]

RP: Were the pageants certain themes or—

RB: Olde English, was it not? They had an Olde English focus.

EHK: Yes. They had a May Pole dance.

RP: You would have the country garden music type thing or whatever. What kind of music?

EHK: Folk dan[ces]—folk songs.

RB: Folk dances, yeah. It was—one of the yearbooks, it may be the one from 1912, have lots of pictures of that. You ought to get to see that somehow.

EHK: What'd you say about me?

RB: I said I must see to it that you get to see a yearbook from, I think it was 1912. It's just full of pictures from those pageants, especially since you had so much to do with the music. You would particularly enjoy seeing those pictures.

EHK: I would.

RB: I am going to see if I cannot get them down here some way. Is there a public library in Henderson? Maybe interlibrary loan or something. I do not know what inspired those people, but they lavished a whole section of that *Pine Needles* [yearbook], page after page of those things she is talking about. You would not remember very much, I am sure, about the student aid funds, because you did not need them.

EHK: Excuse me?

RB: About the funds you could borrow when you were—you did not need any of that. That is quite a story.

EHK: [unclear]

RB: [laughs] I must tell you, in those days when students borrowed money they paid it back, it's not like today. The collection record was almost a hundred percent, partly because especially in the latter years, Mrs. [Kathleen Pettit] Hawkins [Class of 1923 and student aid officer], whom you will remember, was so skillful at this collecting business. If somebody fell in arrears, she would start up a correspondence with these people and not even mention the loans. She would just say she was happy to hear they had another child,

and that they were doing so well in Charlotte and that would almost always get results.
[laughs]

RP: Probably better than [unclear]

RB: Yeah, the next payment would be forthcoming. Let us see if we can find some of these highways and byways here. You would not remember hearing any of those student debates, would you? I think at around Thanksgiving time, the literary societies would each put up their champions and the students' minds were taken off the fact that they were not going home for Thanksgiving. They would have those student debates around Thanksgiving time. Has that faded from your memory?

EHK: I am afraid it has.

RB: I think it is remembered only by those who took part in them.

RP: Which society were you in?

EHK: Cornelian.

RB: Well, that is one of, a later addition. I think at first we had only the two, were not they-- what were the first two?

EHK: They only have two, they have only two, because—and then one, a girl who could sing was pitted against another girl who could sing. In fact, my sister Ollie had a beautiful voice too, and I had a nice voice. And so she was put in Adelphian and I in the Cornelian Literary Society. So we never could be in the same society.

RB: Let me understand this. The singing thing is they wanted to be sure that there was—for every good singer that went into Cornelian there would also be a good singer going into Adelphian?

EHK: Absolutely.

RB: And they, when they would test these voices, they would see to it that two equally good ones would go into each society.

EHK: That is right.

RB: Later on there were four of these societies when the student body became so much larger, you know, and then there was the Dikean—

RP: Yeah, I was Dikean.

RB: And Alethian, was it not there? So that is the first time I heard that. Who did this choosing as to where a student—were you assigned to your literary club?

EHK: I think we were.

RB: You could not choose just because you had a friend—

EHK: Oh no. No, you had to go where you were put.

RP: Now did you have hazing of some sort when you first went into the society?

RB: Hazing?

EHK: No.

RP: Like you would have to write letters to somebody's brother? We had hazing.

RB: Oh no. But it was probably fairly restrained by modern standards. It rarely resulted in death.

RP: I would have girls write love letters to [unclear].

RB: Yeah. Well, the word hazing came to have far more sinister overtones later.

RP: [unclear]

RB: No, you are right. It was kind of a mental harassment, mental harassment. You did not keep one of those little memory books, did you? We have several of those in the archives now. Some girls threw nothing away. They would have a book about that thick, every little invitation they got, the wrapper of a mint that they got from a boy who asked for the third dance. Again, something that is forever gone with the wind, because that's too sentimental for our time. Let us see, did we talk about the "lights out" rule?

RP: No.

RB: Was that—

EHK: What?

RB: The lights, was there a rule against having lights on in the dormitories after a certain hour?

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: Was it always obeyed?

EHK: No. [laughs]

RB: How could you get around it, because lights are, by their very nature, are easily seen.

EHK: A lot of people just go in the bathroom.

RB: I see. That is three tricks I have heard of then. You go in the bathroom to read or cram up for your exam, or you take a flashlight under the bedcovers, or you sit by the window if there is a streetlight out in front of your room.

RP: Did you have certain hours you had to study? Like you could not do anything else but stay in your room during those hours?

EHK: Yes.

RP: But you—could you sneak out? I guess you were a better, you were more scholarly probably than I was. I seemed to try to bend the rules instead of stick with them.

RB: That is what they are for. [laughs]

RP: Right.

RP: Did you have to get up at a certain time in the morning?

EHK: Oh yes, if you wanted breakfast you had to.

RP: But if you did not want breakfast you did not have to go?

EHK: No.

RP: But it was a certain time. It was not like a quarter—seven to nine, it was just seven o'clock. What time did you have to get up, do you remember?

EHK: I think I got up at seven o'clock.

RP: How about going to bed, what time did the lights go out?

EHK: Ten o'clock.

RP: Oh wow. Saturday nights were later though, right?

EHK: Right.

RP: You had electricity?

EHK: Oh yes.

RP: And bathrooms?

RB: Showers, did you have showers? Or bath tubs?

EHK: Showers? I do not think so.

RP: Must have been tubs. Kirkland, I do not think, even had a shower.

RB: She is remembering. You say no showers. That's a modern—

RP: I do not think Kirkland—I think they just had tubs when I was there. I'm sure there weren't showers?

RB: You know, in her time they had double beds, too.

RP: Oh did they? Double beds?

RB: Do you remember if you had double beds?

RF: Did you sleep with Aunt Ollie?

EHK: They did not have them after we went in the Spencer building in my senior year.

RB: Then you did or did not have them?

EHK: Did not have them.

RB: The reason I have asked this is that in the earliest catalogs where they give a list of expenses, they explain that for an extra four dollars a semester you get a single bed. And I have also heard from the, again, from eyewitnesses that the double bed thing continued until the 1920s. And by that time there's, you know, that was an index of hick, lack of sophistication. [chuckles] [Editor's note: double beds were eliminated after typhoid epidemic of 1899]

RP: Well, did you do your own cleaning in your room or did you have maids?

RB: Laundry? Oh yeah, how about keeping your room tidy, was that your job?

EHK: I think we did, I do not remember.

RB: You do not remember any regular maid service?

EHK: No.

RB: She is right about not remembering any maids because—you probably did not have any either.

RF: I did.

RB: You did? Well, Goucher's one of these purse-proud, affluent schools. No?

RP: We did have the laundry, it came with our [unclear].

RF: [unclear] every week.

RB: Is that so?

RP: How about your laundry?

RF: They did the laundry, too.

EHK: We did not have much laundry.

RP: But suppose your hand laundry, what did you do on that? Did you do your hand laundry yourself or did you send everything out?

EHK: I sent everything out.

RB: And it came back dried?

EHK: Oh yes, dried and starched.

RP: And starched stiff as a board, right? Socks were even starched.

RB: So you could stand them up at the corner.

EHK: I remember once we had consternation on the hall. Miss Annie Wiley [campus librarian and first trained librarian in North Carolina] was a member of the faculty, she taught supervising training school. And her brother came to see her real often. And one day he brought her a bunch of bananas and he took it up to her room. Well, her room was on, like that hall right there is her room, right across there is my room. Well, that bunch of bananas had a tarantula in it and she saw it. Of course, she was scared but she did not do like I would have done, I would not have dared go in there. But she finally got hold of the colored man, William, and got him to kill it. And he killed it. But I was so afraid that he—that thing would bite that boy.

RB: Were you ever sick enough to need medical attention in the infirmary?

EHK: Yes. The morning I was ready, all dressed and ready to go home, I had a sore throat and I looked in it and it was almost as white as your shirt. I said, "Well, I cannot go home." I had sisters, little sisters and brothers, and all the folks who would be on the—travelling, I just thought "I just can't do it." So I went over to the infirmary and told Miss McAdams about it—

RB: McAdams?

EHK: Yes, she was a nurse.

RB: Could you have got to see Dr. [Anna] Gove [faculty and campus physician]?

EHK: She took me over to Dr. Gove. She said, “Well, Miss”—Dr. Gove told her to take me back to the infirmary and put me in a, what do you call, it—

RP: Bed?

EHK: Where I was by myself.

RP: Isolation.

RB: Isolation ward.

EHK: Isolation.

RB: Yeah. They built one of those after our typhoid [epidemic of 1899].

EHK: They had them when I was—and to take a culture.

RB: A what?

EHK: A culture of my throat.

RB: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

EHK: And they did, and they found out I did not have diphtheria. They had had diphtheria in the fall, and I had been with a girl who had been with a girl who had it. So I was just sure I had it, but I did not, thank goodness.

RP: And how long did you stay in the infirmary? How long did you have to stay there?

EHK: About a week—about a day.

RP: And then they let you go home?

EHK: Yes.

RB: That must have been around Christmas time, because otherwise you would not have been going home.

EHK: It was Christmas.

RP: You were, you thought a lot of that doctor, did you not, Dr. Gove?

EHK: Oh, she was one of my best friends.

RB: Yeah, she was a great person. She was still there when I—when you graduated. She was no longer active as the physician. She lived right there on Highland Avenue.

EHK: She is living now, is she not?

RB: No, she is in heaven now.

RP: There was a female doctor, though, when I was there.

RB: Dr. [Ruth] Collings [campus physician]. She is still living.

RP: I only went to the infirmary once and that was [unclear].

RB: That was a mistake, that was a mistake. [laughs]

RP: [laughs] I learned how to see the signs. Was that the only time you were in the infirmary?

EHK: I believe it was, I do not remember.

RP: Were people ever expelled from college that you remember? Anybody you knew?

RB: What is the worst misconduct you remember in any student that had to be punished by the college?

EHK: They would cheat on an examination.

RB: Cheating in an examination.

RP: So what did they do? They did not have an honor system then, did they?

RB: Do not have anymore—

EHK: No, Miss Boddie was a, Miss Boddie was a—

RB: Proctor?

EHK: She was the proctor for this examination, and she saw this girl cheating. And she went and took her book away from her and told her she could not finish. I will never forget that as long as I live.

RB: Did they throw her out of school?

EHK: Oh yes.

RP: Oh, out of the college right there.

RB: She became a nun, she probably became a nun. [laughs]

RP: Whatever happened to the girl? Did you know the girl?

EHK: Yes, and she afterwards became a member of the Delta Kappa Gamma.

RB: Which is the teaching honorary, isn't it?

EHK: Yes. And I was so ashamed. I thought, well, if they ever knew that happened they never would have put her in that.

RP: She must have gone somewhere else to go to college, then.

EHK: She probably did.

RB: When you say that with such conviction, that invites me to conclude that it would be very, very rare, not many people would fall to that depth, is that right?

EHK: That is the only one I ever heard of.

RB: You heard of no other cases?

RP: Well, there was not much when I went, either. We had the honor system, you would tap on your desk and that—

RB: Yeah, that is what my wife did at Rockford College [Rockford, Illinois], just tap.

RP: Then I went to Wake Forest [University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina] and cheating was so rampant. I decided I could never go to a—

RB: At Wake Forest?

RP: It was summer school. All these people were going to be doctors and they were just cheating like crazy.

RB: They wanted to serve mankind. You see, they—

RP: [unclear]. I just was horrified. I have not felt the same about a Wake Forest doctor since.

RB: Yeah, I never could look tolerantly on cheating, either. I would remember it about a student forever after. That's probably not fair, because we all stumble sometimes. But that's just too bad. Remember anything else that called for college discipline, some student misconduct? Do you know of people for instance who stayed out all night?

EHK: No.

RB: That was just unthinkable. Nothing like that ever happened.

RP: What was the most fun you ever had there?

EHK: The what?

RP: The most fun, the thing that was the most enjoyable. What occasion, a birthday—no, you would not have had a birthday there. You would have been home by then. Did you have parties and things like that?

EHK: Not much.

RP: It was just kind of work and—

RB: No play.

RP: What did you do, what did you do for fun?

EHK: I do not think I did much for fun.

RB: But the work itself was interesting enough to keep you—

EHK: Yes.

RP: Your walks in the afternoon, I guess, to get your air.

EHK: Oh yes, walked for forty-five minutes every day.

RB: Did you ever have a phonograph in your room?

EHK: No.

[End CD 1—Begin CD 2]

RB: And of course, no radios.

EHK: No.

RB: Did you get to see a newspaper at any, with any frequency?

EHK: No.

RB: Didn't miss it? Probably did not read a newspaper when you were home, either, because it was not that much of a habit. And you did not have the daily—nightly news with

[Walter] Cronkite [broadcast journalist and anchorman for the *CBS Evening News*] or anything like that.

RP: Did you read a lot, novels and things like that in college or were you too busy doing other things?

EHK: I imagine I was too busy, I do not know.

RB: And of course, when you were in college it was still a long way off before women would have the vote, right? And I suppose it was still considered unladylike to interest oneself in public questions. Would it, well, I shouldn't put words in your mouth. Do you remember whether students were concerned about what we would now call social issues? You know, like racial justice or racial injustice. Were they concerned about the poor and whether they were getting an adequate opportunity to make their way, and were social issues a matter of lively concern?

EHK: Not so much. But one of the girls who wrote the graduating thesis, which was accepted as the best one of all, wrote on that subject.

RB: Yes, I remember when I first learned about you, I looked up your class and I saw the, I had the titles of all the theses and I remember that the winner's was a very modern sounding subject.

EHK: Mary Jarman [Class of 1905].

RB: What was her name?

EHK: Her name was Mary Jarman, I think.

RB: That I don't recall.

EHK: She was a fine girl.

RB: Were—do you remember any discussion among students about whether women were given their proper place in American life?

EHK: I do not know if it even occurred to us.

RB: And that does not surprise me. You know, for a while, in the early days of the feminist movement, you were considered a kind of a freak if you showed unhealthy interest in that kind of thing. But the fact that they invited Anna Howard Shaw [woman's Suffrage leader] down for a commencement address and were so impressed by her general persona that they promptly named a building—at student demand, named a building for her suggests that there was a somewhat untapped reservoir there of resentment about feminine exclusion.

RP: Well, I would think they would be a forerunner at that school.

RB: And I would expect our graduates to be somewhat in advance, say, of GC [Greensboro College] in having—

RP: Oh yeah. We looked down on GC, we looked down our noses. They probably did the same thing.

RB: In fact, I remember one letter I have from an old graduate who was a so[ciology]—taking what was then called, I do not know, a course called, like what we would now call sociology. And she visited some of these mill villages and tried to talk family limitation to some of those mothers who had four, six or eight kids clustering around them, you know, and was practically thrown out, because a woman had no sense of grievance at all even though she was chained to the sink and pregnant all the time. She did not think of herself as used. The feminist movement was very, very late getting underway.

RP: Now you, from home, you were not expected to necessarily to work, you worked from choice, did not you?

EHK: What?

RP: After you graduated you worked from choice, not because you did not—you could have gone home and just stayed home and done nothing.

EHK: In fact, when the position was offered me I said, “Well, would you mind if I write to my parents and see if it is all right.” He said, “No, of course not.” So I wrote to them and nobody in the family had ever worked, any of the girls. And my father—

RB: Not for pay. They had worked. [chuckles]

EHK: So my father said to do as I—If I wanted to do it, to do it, and he could take care of me as long as he lived. But that if I did not want to do it, not to do it. And I thought it’d be nice to do it, so I did, and worked all my life till I received retirement.

RB: There were still, in those days, relatively few employments that would have been regarded as suitable for a lady of refinement and gentle sensibilities to be involved in, weren’t there. I noticed, for instance, that almost no married women were teachers.

RP: You were not allowed to teach if you were married. You—

RB: Was there even a law against it, is that so?

RP: It used to be when I was growing up—

RB: And your classmate, May Williams [Class of 1905], was a teacher, third grade teacher until she married, and that was soon after she had begun teaching. She had taught only

about third—three or four years. She was a very good teacher. Her husband died at a relatively early age but it was unthinkable for her, she said, to go back—In fact, she didn't resent it, she would not have thought of it herself as being an appropriate thing for a lady to do. But she took in boarders. Somehow that has a different set of—

RP: That seems worse to me.

RB: I would think so, yeah. But it was just so unthinkable that it was—you know, the question did not even come up.

RP: And if you wanted to be a nurse, your parents would have had a fit over that, would they not?

EHK: Oh I did, I wanted to be a nurse [in] the worst way.

RP: And they would not let you, right?

EHK: No, could not even think about it.

RB: Did your parents object to that?

EHK: Oh, they very decidedly.

RB: So much so that it was not even worth arguing the point, I suppose. You didn't even discuss it at great length. You just knew you were encountering a brick wall on that. Is that so? Nursing.

RP: Oh, even in my day. I don't know, there must have been some family quirk about it. It was just a, more like a subservient role.

RB: Well, that's, of course, related to the same reluctance that women have to go to male physicians, I suppose. You know, hospitals and examining rooms are very unusual—

RP: And then they would have their babies at home. Well, did—how about when you decided you wanted to become a secretary, that was all right with them? Or at that point you did what you wanted to do anyway?

EHK: I did not even ask them. [laughs] You see, that was after I was gone to Philadelphia to live.

RP: Oh, that is true.

RB: Did you operate a typewriter then?

EHK: Yes, but I learned on the stenotype machine. You know what that is?

RB: Was it a kind of a forerunner of the typewriter?

EHK: It was called a machine way of shorthand.

RB: Oh, I see, instead of the characters, yeah, I see.

EHK: And it is much easier—

RB: Court reporters used to use those.

EHK: Yes, Miss [unclear] wanted me to be a court reporter the worst in the world. I could do a hundred and seventy-five words a minute, and such speeches as [President] Woodrow Wilson's speeches, and you know what good words, big words he used.

RB: Yes, he had the largest vocabulary in the history of the presidency. Do you remember when you were a secretary whether there were males using typewriters?

EHK: Any what?

RB: Any men whose function it was to do a considerable amount of typing. I think right from the start that was thought of as appropriate woman's—partly the legend that their fingers are more nimble. It suddenly opened up opportunities for female employment that weren't out there before.

EHK: There was one boy who took stenotype, stenotyping.

RB: I think it was useful as a way into Western Union and things like that and railway telegraphy. But as a general thing, offices—once typewriters became a useable instrument—opened up for the first time large opportunities of employment for women.

EHK: I remember one time I was sitting at my desk in the dean's office, Teacher's College [in Temple University], and I was his secretary. And the dean of the medical school came to see me. He was a bachelor, and a very much sought after bachelor. Not by me, I did not—

RB: You did not seek out very much. [laughs]

EHK: He wanted me to take my stenotyping, stenotype machine and go to the medical school and take down the minutes of a medical meeting. I said, "No, I cannot do it—

RB: Unfamiliar vocabulary.

EHK: —I do not have the time. I can't leave my office." Well, I probably could have if I had wanted to, but I thought, good heavens, how do I know I could do this?

RP: Whole different vocabulary, too.

EHK: Yes, [unclear]. Of course, I knew a lot of them. But I did not do it. But he was all [unclear] because he was fairly sure that I could [unclear].

RB: In your time, there was not yet a system of student government. As I remember, it first became a structured thing in 1915. When there were matters involving student conduct and infraction of rules, did the matter ever come up as students talked about the lack of any democratically operated system of meting out justice?

EHK: I do not remember that it ever did.

RB: No dissatisfaction with the existing device of faculty adjudication? Were you ever called before Dr. Foust? To explain yourself?

EHK: No.

RP: I think you must have been a good person.

RB: Yes, she was a good girl.

EHK: He told me one time, though, he was never so thrilled in his life as when he saw me conducting a chorus of about a thousand voices. All the students in the college and all the children in the training school got together and sang.

RB: What was the occasion for that?

EHK: That was at the end of the pageant.

RB: Oh, see, back to the pageant. That was a big deal.

EHK: Were you there then?

RB: Oh no, no, no. [laughs]

EHK: Well, that was a wonderful day.

RB: Great.

EHK: They had beautiful costumes, beautiful—

RB: And was not there even a parade that left campus and went down to the courthouse square with the woman living in the shoe, you know, they had a shoe, a horse-drawn carriage.

RP: Where was the pageant, inside or outside? Was the pageant indoors or out of doors?

EHK: Outdoors, always.

RB: Outdoors, in what is now Peabody Park.

EHK: With the May Pole here, dancing over here. I think at night they had the Ben Greek players.

RP: That really was something, was not it.

RB: And when the parade moved downtown, the parade formed by the bridge over Walker Avenue, moved up Tate Street to Market [Street] and Market to Courthouse Square.

EKH: I do not remember that part of it.

RB: I have pictures to prove it. [laughs] A&T College [now North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University] was there then, was it not, the black school?

EHK: Yes, that was for Negroes.

RB: Yeah. I suppose they might as well have been five hundred miles distant, there was absolutely no interchange, I expect.

EHK: Not in those days.

RB: Did you ever see, for instance, at a concert on our campus, was there ever a single black face in the audience?

EHK: Not in those days.

RB: That barrier was absolute until the fifties. I came upon some interesting illustrations of that problem. They would get requests—did you know who Charlotte Hawkins Brown was? She was the black educator—

EHK: Oh yeah, she lived down at—

RB: Sedalia.

EHK: That little place not far from—

RB: Yes, where Palmer Memorial Institute is. [Editor's note: it was a school for upper class African Americans founded in 1902 by Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown at Sedalia, North Carolina near Greensboro]

EHK: Oh yeah.

RB: Okay. Well, she would ask whether she could get a block of tickets to bring her kids to hear—it might even be a black singer like Paul Robeson [actor, athlete, lawyer, singer, and social activist]. The answer always had to be no, because state law forbade that. And

the college, you could, I could tell by the minutes of most meetings that I now have, they regretted having to turn back things like that. There were times when the civic music sales, tickets would begin, you know, and some leading black citizens would ask. "Is it not about time that our money is just as good as anybody else's?" They could not do it.

She going to be all right? Are you tiring out now? We probably ought to wrap up this conversation. We have talked for an hour, about an hour and a half, yeah. Well, the university is very grateful to you for sharing your recollection. And I wish if you thought, if you think of some things after you get home again in the next few weeks, of things that we should have talked about, you write me a note.

EHK: I cannot see to write.

RB: Cannot see to write.

EHK: I have got cataracts on both my eyes.

RB: You do not have friends who will take a little dictation from you?

EHK: Oh, I reckon maybe I could get somebody.

RF: I could call her up, and she could tell me.

RB: Do you live down in this area?

RF: I live in Baltimore [Maryland].

RB: I was in Baltimore day before yesterday talking to our alumnae over there.

RF: Really?

RB: Yeah, great girls.

RF: But I think one thing you ought to say, Aunt Ethel, that you ended up as secretary to the dean.

RP: She did.

RB: Of the college?

RF: Of Teachers College at Temple University in Philadelphia [Pennsylvania].

RB: I see. Well, if I missed that, it is now on the tape again for the second time. And did she stay at that for some time?

RF: She stayed at that until she retired.

RB: And no nonsense—

RF: She was practically the dean.

RB: No nonsense about this, no nonsense about this being a Southern girl who will not know which end is up.

EHK: When Dr. Cornell[?] who was dean of the college knew that Dean Walker[?] had employed me, he said, “You better watch that lazy Southerner.” [laughter]

RB: Sure, our girls would go to Columbia [University] in the summer and do as well as anybody. Gertrude Carraway [Class of 1915] got to be one of the editors of the Columbia newspaper.

RP: Oh, I would have thought that that was—

RB: You were handicapped, no.

RP: I know when I came from that little bitty high school, I worked like a dog my first year, it was just terrible.

RB: That reminds me to ask her about something. What kind of schooling did you have before you went to college?

EHK: Well, I went to what they called the Henderson Female College.

RB: And you learned to read at what was called the Henderson Female College?

EHK: Well, I learned to read at home.

RB: But you know, this is not unusual, you had your first grade training in what is called a college. Because we had practically no public school system yet, when she was a little girl.

EHK: I could read when I was four years old.

RB: This was called what, the Henderson—

EHK: Henderson Female College.

RB: Henderson Female College. How old were you when you got in, when you entered that?

EHK: [pause] I don’t know.

RB: Would it have been within the age range of elementary school? Where you there before you were twelve?

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: You see, that is a college, she is in a college before she is twelve. You were taught to read by your parents at home.

EHK: My aunt who lived there, my mother's sister.

RB: Did that kind of home education extend to other things too? Did you do some basic arithmetic?

EHK: Oh yes.

RB: It was the first, the foundations of an elementary school education. Then you went to a private subscription school where tuition was—and only girls attended.

RP: Where is that?

EHK: Henderson School.

RB: It was the Henderson—

EHK: Female College.

RB: —Female College. How far did that carry you?

EHK: Until I went to high school, until the high school was opened.

RB: Now was it called a high school, was it the Henderson High School, or was it some kind of academy?

EHK: It was Henderson High School.

RB: Henderson High School, supported by taxes?

EHK: Yes.

RP: Was that the one on Chestnut Street?

EHK: No, no, it was long before that one. There is a tobacco warehouse on, down there near the cemetery, on that street.

RB: But you did not go to a school until you entered high school, is that right?

RP: You mean a public school?

RB: A public school.

EHK: I think so.

RB: Even any school, because—

RP: Oh, the other's a college.

RB: What about the others who were, other children who were entering that Henderson Female College, had they all been taught at home first?

EHK: I do not know. There was a woman in town who had a—

RB: Who kept a school.

EHK: —who kept a school, Miss Gardner, nice little school. Rozelle, my sister Rozelle went there, and she was as bright as a new dollar.

RB: Would you say flatly that there was no public school first grade, second grade, third grade?

EHK: There wasn't for a long time.

RB: None at all in your time.

RF: Well, did Aunt Maggie and Aunt the other one—

EHK: What?

RF: I thought Aunt Maggie and Aunt Lil were the, served as governesses for you and mother and Aunt Mable at home.

EHK: Aunt Maggie did.

RP: Well, that is where you learned to read [unclear].

RF: And they did not go to school for a long time.

RB: Now you were several years in that Henderson Female College. When you left that, did you have a high school diploma?

EHK: I had two high school diplomas. [laughs] There was another year added after I graduated from the first year.

RB: You would not remember what age you were?

RP: You were sixteen when you went off to college, to the Normal School.

RB: All right, now when you entered the college, is this firm, that you were sixteen when you came to the college?

RP: Well, she was born in [18]86, and she went in 1902. So doesn't that add up to—

RB: Unanswerable logic, yeah, you are absolutely right.

RP: That is what [unclear]

RB: What I am trying to get from her now is whether she was prepared after leaving that "college" to enter as a regular candidate for the four-year teaching certificate. Were you immediately admitted to a class or were you a prep student at first at Greensboro?

EHK: Oh I was, no, no, I was not a prep student.

RB: You were immediately a member of the Class of 1905?

EHK: I did take some prep courses—

RB: To fill in deficiencies.

EHK: —I had to take arithmetic.

RB: You see, it is often forgotten that in the first ten or twenty years, about, oh, about as many as forty percent of the people who came to the college to go to school were not admitted to a class yet. They first had to take things to make up for the deficiencies that they were bringing with them from their inadequate—

EHK: Well, that is what I did, too.

RB: You had to—did you do that in a summer session?

EHK: No, I did it in a regular session

RB: In a regular session. So your first year was in part taken in catching up by filling in—

EHK: Arithmetic—

RB: Latin?

EHK: American history, I think.

RB: Were you able to do that in addition to a full program at the college?

EHK: Yes.

RP: And you still finished in three years? Was it a four-year program you did in three years?

EHK: Three years.

RP: Oh, was it just a three-year program?

EHK: No, it was a four-year program.

RB: Four-year program, because it was a four-year program from the start.

RP: But you finished it in three years?

EHK: Yes. And there were no degrees conferred in that year, not till 1908. [Editor's note: the college conferred the first Bachelor of Arts degrees in 1903]

RB: In other words, she was accelerating a four-year program and filling in deficiencies.

RP: No wonder she didn't have time to play around.

RB: Yeah, becomes a little clearer.

RP: Yeah, it does.

RF: But I think they all were, had a lot of teaching at home, because my mother went to college at sixteen and entered as a sophomore at Western Maryland.

RP: Mother went at fourteen and graduated when she was eighteen.

RF: Mother graduated when she was eighteen. So there was a great deal—

RB: Well, don't feel inferior about that, she did not have as much of an education at eighteen as you had when you got out of there at twenty-one. Twenty.

RF: No, but my grandfather, her father taught me arithmetic. And he could speak Greek as well as Latin.

RB: And there are a lot of homes in which that kind of thing could not be done. She obviously came from an advantaged background. Do you know what her, what their means of livelihood was?

RP: Well, her father was, had a tobacco warehouse.

EHK: What?

RP: Tobacco man, was your dad not a tobacco man?

RB: Did you not grow—

RP: He did not grow it, he sold it. He had a warehouse—

RB: I see.

RF: He and his brothers were one of the first graduates at Western Maryland. There is a plaque there and there are three Harrises, Uncle George and Uncle Andrew—

EHK: No, Uncle Andrew did not go there.

RF: Who was the other one? Uncle George and Frank?

EHK: Uncle Frank, Uncle Frank.

RF: Well, and there is that plaque there and they are—but they were very well educated people.

RP: And then he and—the three brothers had the tobacco business, did not they?

EHK: Yes. No, as [unclear] told me, Uncle George [unclear]

RP: Oh, there was three of them that had the tobacco company down on Ames [?] Street.

RF: Uncle Andrew was a lawyer.

EHK: What?

RB: She would have been an educated person if the college had never been founded.

RF: Right, right.

RB: But we are glad she came there. And it is significant that she would choose that.

RF: Especially since her two older sisters, you see, went to Western Maryland.

RP: My mother went to Western Maryland.

RB: What town is that in?

RF: Westminster, outside of Baltimore.

RB: I must have come by, very close by—

RF: But see, that's coeducational, and that's why my mother had me—

RB: Was even then?

RF: And even then, because she felt the boys did everything.

RB: That is the story now at Greensboro. They have all the offices, I mean, the class president, they edit all the papers and so on.

RF: You see, her father's brother went to Jefferson and graduated too young to be accepted to, you know, for a doctorate. He had to wait, Uncle Fletcher.

EHK: Well, I never heard that before.

RF: Absolutely.

RB: Well, this has been a real pleasure to us and very enlightening, and I repeat, the university thanks you.

EHK: Well, you are very welcome.

RB: And all these words will go in the archives. What we will do, the next thing I do with this tape is also to put it on cassettes. They are easier to use for researchers. Then I have a secretary who is putting all this down with a—and I will send you a copy so that you'll know what it is that we say you said. It's only fair, I think, that people know. Some of them like to be reassured that—and we edit out occasional little slips that obviously do not mean anything. If you take a presidential press transcript and put in every word, they can sound pretty terrible, they have to be—

RP: Well, now will this be written up in the *Alumnae News*?

RB: I—not as a separate story, because we are getting dozens and dozens of them. But bits of it will appear in various places, including a final volume.

EHK: I would be glad to have you have dinner with us, Dr. Bardolph.

RB: No, I appreciate that but I have got to get started back. And also, I just returned from a three day trip for the Alumnae Association during which I ate too much and I had to resolve to skip lunch today. This is one of the most painless ways to do it when I am on the road. I appreciate it, though. Well, it has been a real pleasure. And I appreciate your helping us out.

RF: Well, I did not do much. But Aunt Mable taught before you did, did she, Aunt Ethel? She taught music. She stayed on—

EHK: Oh yes.

RF: I thought you said she was the first one in the family to work? And the oldest one was an organist and voice teacher and piano teacher, stayed at Western Maryland.

RB: Was there music in the family previous generations?

RF: Well, I think so.

RP: Mother used to say she used to, to get through her dinners as fast as she could so she could get one of the two pianos, because I guess they all played and everybody wanted to get to the piano and they had to get there early and maybe not eat as much dinner in order to get there.

RB: Avoid disappointment.

RF: I guess only the two boys were the only ones who did not do something with their musical education. Aunt Mable was piano, voice, and organ; my mother played the violin and the piano; Aunt Ollie was going to study for the opera; and your mother was, she played the organ, did not she?

RP: Church organ. She did not major in music, though.

RF: And Uncle Earl was an organist and a pianist, and he was professor and chairman of the romance language department at the University of Wisconsin, and has written a number of French books which made the news, Harris and Laveck[?], and they're on record.

RB: The high school text I used, Laveck was one of the authors, may even have been a Harris.

RF: This is college.

RB: Well, they tend to write for both levels.

RF: So Aunt Virgie[?] is quite accomplished.

RP: Did she go to college? Did Aunt Virgie go to college?

RF: She went to Western Maryland.

EHK: Oh yes.

RP: Did she graduate?

EHK: No. I know father was terribly upset because when he went up to see if she was graduating, she hadn't taken anything but music.

RP: And Uncle [Will?] went to UNC [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill], right?

EHK: What?

RP: Uncle [Will?] went to UNC.

RF: But he didn't graduate, I don't think.

RP: He went for years and years and years, though.

RF: Yeah, but he went—the war came along and he went off—first war.

RB: Yeah.

RF: I remember when he left.

RP: Where are you from?

RB: Chicago originally, and my parents were born in Holland, they were immigrants.

RF: I thought that name sounded—

RB: [unclear] In fact, I did not speak English my first few years. We lived in a tight little community in Chicago with nothing but Hollanders.

RF: [unclear] Beatrix is coming this weekend.

RB: This is true. I saw an item in the paper. Crusty girl, I gather, from the tone of the newspaper article this morning. Well, I sure enjoyed it. Can you imagine a more fun kind of activity than reminiscing?

RF: You have a nice job, I think. What do you do for the college?

RB: I retired about a year and a half ago. I was the chairman of the history department and I volunteer my service now. I do not need it; I have got it made now. And American social history has always been my field. It's the most natural thing for me now to be interested in.

RP: That gives you time, you can fit your own time into whatever there is.

RB: Nobody to answer to, particularly because I'm a volunteer. Nobody dares ever find fault with my work.

RP: Everything you do is perfect.

RF: I heard you talking about the phone, and I can remember her mother getting on the phone and saying, "I want to speak to Mrs. So-and-So," never told a number.

RB: Oh, I see, to the operator.

RF: And she would say, you know, if we had to catch the train early in the morning to go back up to Philadelphia where my parents lived, and they would tell the operator to call at a certain hour so that—instead of using the clock. And I can remember even at home in the city, you could ask the operator to make a call, or if the line was busy, you could say, “Well, when that number’s free”—

RB: “Remind me at 10:30,” yeah.

RF: “Will you please call me when that line is no longer busy.”

RP: I remember our phone number was 7-4-2, it was three numbers. Do you remember what your phone number was at home?

EHK: No, but I remember what Myrtle’s was, I called her, Alleghany 2-7-7-6.

RB: That’s four, that’s a big one

RF: Oh, it was 8-7-3 was the other number, then they added 0-8-7-3, and then Flanders 0-8-7-3. And the phones were crank phones back then. And you asked about automobiles, my grandfather had one of the first automobiles.

RB: Now this is her picture?

RP: Yes. [unclear]

RB: We have her class picture.

RP: Oh, you have that? That’s maybe what that is.

RB: Do you remember when this was made?

EHK: No. [chuckles]

RB: Looks like—my mother’s hair—picture has her hair exactly the same way.

RP: Mother’s wedding pictures—she was married in 1911—is about like that, so that might have been when this was.

EHK: What?

RP: Mother’s hair was like this in 1911, her wedding pictures look like that.

EHK: My mother had just washed my hair one day and it was getting dry and I was—she had some callers to come and I was sitting in the sun letting it dry, hanging down. And the lady said, “Mrs. Harris, that child’s hair is like spun gold.” [RB laughs]

RP: It was beautiful hair.

RF: She had beautiful, thick, two thick braids, just as gold as could be.

RB: My mother had a lot of hair, too, it hung down to her knees. All right.

[End of Interview]