

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Thomisene Oliver Strickland

INTERVIEWER: Sarah McNulty

DATE: July 18, 2011

SM: Today is July 18, 2011. I am Sarah McNulty, oral history interviewer for [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Memory Collection's] African American Institutional Memory Project. I am in Lumberton, North Carolina, today at the home of—

TS: Thomisene Strickland—

SM: Who graduated from UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro] in 1969.

TS: I was Thomisene Oliver then.

SM: Right. Thomisene Oliver Strickland. Okay. Well, Ms. Strickland, can you tell us a little bit about where you were born, your birth date, things like that?

TS: I was born on the other side of Lumberton outside of Fairmont—there's another town going south—outside of Fairmont at home at my uncle's house by a midwife. And that was December 10, 1947.

SM: And can you tell me a little bit about your family, your structure of your family?

TS: Well, my mother was a beautician at the time, and she also worked in the cafeteria, you know, serving trays, and she was an Avon representative because she was raising three children by herself. And my father was an alcoholic, but he was in the military. So, my sister got a military scholarship, a veteran's scholarship, to go to A&T [North Carolina A&T State University] across town. She was there two years before me, so when I went to Greensboro I had her across town. And also I had two sisters, an older sister and a younger sister. My younger sister was still in high school.

And we moved to Lumberton at a really early age, like, I remember going to Catholic school here at age five so that I could get in because my birthday was late. So I started at five and I went through high school here [Lumberton] and that year, I didn't know it, but our high school closed. We were the last class from it because of integration. And the kids that—well, it wasn't all because of integration because at my junior year I had a chance to go to the white high school but I just said I didn't want to go. And then they gave us the chance the next year. I said, "No, I like my high school, I like my teachers, I like my classes and I know everybody." And I'm the kind of person who likes

peace. I don't like to be in an uproar and all. I like calm so I just said, "No, I won't do that. I think the future belongs to integration so I will find an integrated college when I go to college." That's what I said I would do. And so when I got to be, you know, the time to graduate, I told the guidance counselor that I wanted to be a doctor. I didn't really want to be a doctor but we had such a great doctor here—a black doctor, Dr. Roberson—and they named a clinic for him here since then.

SM: Dr. Roberson?

TS: Yes, A.J. Roberson, Arthur James Roberson. But anyway, he was such a good doctor and he was so friendly. He started a golf course there and he was just trying to encourage people to do stuff. And he was trying to tell all the good students: "Be a doctor. Be a doctor." Well, when I got to college I didn't even like sciences and they made me stop taking home economics here in high school so I could get chemistry or something. I didn't even like chemistry and I liked home ec [economics]. I should have majored in home ec at UNCG but I thought home was boring. But I did projects in the home ec department. Decorating my bedroom: my mother took a wall out and we expanded it and I made, you know, dust ruffles, and curtains. I enjoyed that. I enjoyed stuff like that but I didn't want to do that because I just felt like, I don't know, I didn't want to be at home. So anyway—

SM: And what was the name of your high school?

TS: It was called J.H. Hayswood High School.

SM: Hayswood. And what was the other high school?

TS: The other school was Lumberton Senior High School. And that was about—Let's see, I graduated in 1965, so about '64 they invited us, you know, if you wanted to go, you could. I didn't want to. And neither did the top student [unclear]. We were the top students in the class. In fact none of our kids decided to go over there but we just stayed where we were. I just don't want to be in an uproar. I said, "I didn't want to be where, you know, nobody really wanted me or where everybody didn't want me. I didn't want to be where there were people that were, you know, who are just going to be hassling." I heard that kids who went over there had a time.

One boy was really smart, his family was, like, all geniuses but they did have one kid that was special ed. [education]. But my point there was that they said he qualified for valedictorian but they wouldn't have him because he was black and they didn't want to recognize that. But this year they had the youngest valedictorian—I think they said she was fourteen-years-old or fifteen-years-old—and she was black. Youngest in the state.

SM: And this was at Lumberton Senior?

TS: At Lumberton Senior.

SM: Wow.

TS: And there was a story about that in the paper. I didn't go see it, but you know—and I actually was working there last year. I worked there the last three years. But anyway, when I was at UNCG I figured I would, you know—would meet enough people, and, you know, understand integration and so on. And I felt like university people would be more intelligent-acting because I've learned in time, you know, everybody—It doesn't matter what color your skin is; it's like Martin Luther King, Jr. said, [unclear] People want to be valued by the quality of their character, or "content of their character," I think his words were. But anyway, that was good and so when I went to UNCG, I found that the work was really hard and I was salutatorian of my class. There was, like, six tenths of a difference between their score and my score. And I was head of the student government in high school. And I only took one part of the SAT, the verbal part. Anyway, they accepted me. That's the only school I applied to. Well, it met my—Well, the other qualification was that it had to be a school that was mostly girls. I said, "All girls," and the guidance counselor said, "Well, this is the school for you." So that's the only one I applied to.

SM: Why did you want an all-girls school?

TS: Well, I wanted to get—See, my mother has such a hard time because she was raising children, so I said, "I don't want to fall in love before I get my degree" because my family teaches you to get on your feet on your own; be able to take care of yourself. So I said, "Well, I don't want to be around a bunch of boys because I could fall in love and I wouldn't finish my degree, you know." Things happen like that. So that's how I got to UNCG.

SM: Wow.

TS: Well, they had Bennett College over there. Bennett College is all black and I said everywhere there's a black, there's a white, you know, whatever it is. [laughter] But anyway, all of the schools were good schools. And anyway, I went to UNCG and I lived in Bailey Dorm. I think the last time I was there they were having some kind of reunion—I forgot which one it was, just a few years ago, maybe three years ago or so. I went by Bailey and they had this little digital dial, you know, to get in so I couldn't—I was going to go look at the hall and stuff and look down the hall where I lived and stuff like that. It didn't happen. But anyway—and it was in front of the tennis courts, and then I heard on the news they're tearing all that stuff down. [laughs] I said, "Those buildings were old but they were old when I was there."

SM: Yes, major renovation of all the old Quad. They were going to tear them down and get rid of them and there was such a backlash about them. Everybody loved them so much that they—

TS: Yes. It was kind of like home.

SM: They're doing a huge project.

TS: At least they're renovating them, not tearing them down, and that's good. And we were overlooking the tennis courts so that was good. But anyway, about my first month there the—You know how they say, "All black people look alike." All white—To black people, they say, "All white people look alike." I said, "I will see if that's true." But when I got there, I didn't find that to be true. I remember I had a dorm president, or something—Anyway she was called Pam something. She had short hair and dark—her hair was dark. And Mrs. Beale—Mrs. Beale was the housemother.

SM: And how, what was her name? Mrs.?—

TS: Beale. B-E-A-L-E. And she was old. I could tell those two apart because I saw them all the time. So it just was a matter of familiarity you know. And I went to classes and stuff and you know—Then the streets were open by the Quad and now when you go through there it's like a big old concrete way to go over to the dining halls and stuff. Anyway that was good and I enjoyed it. And we were, like, three to that room, and there were only three of us—I learned that that's the way they set the dorms up back then. There were three in a room, or two in a room, blacks. And I think we were on the first floor of Bailey. But they said every dorm had that and then we learned each other—The black kids learned each other and then, like, I would go see my sister if I wanted, you know, something to do. So, you know, there you go.

But I had two beautiful roommates: one was Lisa White from Goldsboro—and she was gorgeous—and the other one was Beatrice Heath from Goldsboro—Where was she from? I think it was Goldsboro. No, Lisa was from Goldsboro. The other child was from somewhere near there. I can't remember where it was. But anyway, what I'm trying to say: they both punched out. Lisa went after the first semester. Well, she was so pretty the guys at A&T [North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University]—and then she had a pretty friend over there—I believe it was in Cotten [Residence Hall]. But whatever, it was behind, behind Bailey. She was in that dorm. Her name was Janis Belton. Her daddy was, like—and her mother, I think her mother worked at Johnson C. Smith University. She was short and cute as a button. Boy, that was a pretty girl. She was about four feet nine, four feet ten, you know, somewhere under five [feet]. She was cute and smart as a whip. And she—And then she had a friend over at A&T and that girl was gorgeous, too. I've forgotten her name. I think it was Barbara or something. Those three girls were, like, friends and they would go to the canteen over at A&T when we went out.

And I'd buy cigarettes because when you were away from home you could smoke and stuff. [laughter] My throat—I had sinus trouble—and my throat was so nasty and I would just go out like once a month or so. I'd go out with these girls and they were so gorgeous that when we went to the canteen at A&T, all the boys in the canteen would have turned their chair to look at those three girls. And there I was sitting there—I wasn't all that pretty—but those three girls were gorgeous. And then Barbara made a fourth one and then there were some others; I just don't remember all their names. She and I would be trying to have a cigarette and be cool. [laughter] But I got so I stopped buying them because, I said, "I'd rather be buying soda." because cigarettes were like thirty-five cents a pack and you could get a soda for, like, I guess, twenty-five cents and a Nab for ten cents. So I'd rather spend my money on that because I remember pulling out cigarettes

one time and the tobacco fell out, you know, [because] it was so dry. I had had them so long because I'd only smoke them like that. [sharp inhale] I just quit fooling with them.

But anyway, I noticed the attitude of my children is that they wanted you to come to school and see them often. When we went to school, we didn't want to come home. We didn't come home until vacation time. [both speaking, unclear] But these kids would want you to come and they wanted to come home and they wanted a car. Girl, we didn't do all that stuff. When I went to high school, nobody had a car but this one guy who was really good at fixing radios. He taught our physics class when we were on that unit because he knew more than the teacher. But his boss gave him a Corvette because he had been such a valuable worker. But anyway, but he was the only one that had a car. Everybody's got a car now, if they can get one. But anyway, we didn't have a car at college and we just [unclear] came home on the bus. My daughters won't ride the bus.

SM: Did your sister have a car at A&T?

TS: No.

SM: So you guys would have to take the bus to go see each other?

TS: Oh, how did we get over there? I forget how we got over there now. I was with those girls and I don't think any one of them had a car but I can't remember. But we could have used—there was the city bus. We could have used that. I've forgotten now. That might have been what we did. But we could have gone with friends or whatever but, at any rate, cars weren't in. But my sister was a freshman at A&T when Jesse Jackson was a senior there.

SM: Wow!

TS: But it was right after the sit-in stuff so I didn't have that—I noticed—I said, "Now, good Lord, I couldn't have all that nerve that, you know, the civil rights demonstrators had," and the marching—I said, "I'd be so scared."

SM: Was she involved in that sit-in that took place in 1963—

TS: Not too much. I don't think so. But she became a medical technologist and moved to Washington, but I don't think she was too much into that. But while we were at UNCG we started the Neo-Black Society.

SM: Really.

TS: Yes. A girl named Annie King, I think, was our first president; but I can't remember because when they tried to have that little [unclear]—I might be confusing somebody. But I think they had Ada Makrita Fisher to come back and visit and speak. She might remember, better than I—but she was behind me, a class younger than mine. But what I'm trying to say about that is that when I tell people that we started the Neo-Black

Society, if they went to UNCG, they look at me like, “Oh, you’re a dinosaur.” [laughter] because it was years ago It’s been years ago.

SM: Were you actually involved in the formation of this—

TS: Yes.

SM: So tell me about it. I mean what kind of [both talking at once—unclear]

TS: Well, Martin Luther King, Jr. had, you know, gotten shot and—who else got shot that year—President [John F.] Kennedy’s brother.

SM: Robert.

TS: Yes. Those two had been shot and I think—I don’t know when Malcolm X got shot but anyway, they just felt like there was no black organization there and they thought there should be. But I didn’t find any problems really much with anybody because I was just studying and you know. And then I lost my other roommate because she punched out my freshman year—now she punched out the last semester. She stayed two semesters and she transferred to, I think, a college in—It’s not Goldsboro but whatever that is near Goldsboro. And there is a new name for that school now so I can’t even tell you what it is. But anyway, she was a nursing student and she was just very nervous. She was smart but she was very nervous, so she probably didn’t test well. But she was pretty, too. But now, she would tell the guys, “No,” she did not want to go on a date. But Letha was taking every date coming, you know, right and left. But the curious thing about that was [that] I had a dorm mate across the hall. She was a pretty little girl; she was blonde and wore her hair short, really had a smart cut. And when we got our grades she had all Cs and she said, “I’m not used to making grades like this. I’m leaving.” And I tried to encourage her to stay because I think I might have had a D or two, you know. Anyway, whatever it was, she left. And I graduated.

But now, while I was there, I paid for my first year there because my mother, now, had us working when we were young. In the cotton field and tobacco but I couldn’t do very much in the cotton field because I had these sores; I had impetigo. I’ve got scars on my leg now—But I had impetigo and the doctor said I shouldn’t go in there because the dew would get in. But I saved money. I saved money from that and I sold newspapers, *The Baltimore African-American*, on the weekend. And then, also, I tried to work—have a job at school, you know, after school, at Whitehead and Anderson in one of those tobacco factories. I lasted about three nights because you had to work from four to twelve. I’d get off the bus—the bus would go by the railroad track where the place was—I’d get off the bus and then the bus would go across town and take us home. Well, child, please the people waiting [were] laughing at me, talking. “She’s not going to make it.” I didn’t make it. But now my own daughter—she’s really smart. I was surprised at her. She became a semi-finalist for the Merit Scholarship and two schools gave her a full scholarship.

SM: Wow.

TS: And I went to visit her, she was taking, like, twenty-one hours and she took the AP [Advanced Placement] courses in high school and got credit for three of them at college. You know, stuff like that.

SM: Where did she go?

TS: Well she took one from—took the scholarship from Howard University.

SM: Oh.

TS: She didn't like it, though. She didn't like the university but, you know, she's different—[telephone rings] Excuse me. My husband's sleeping so there's no help here.

[telephone rings again, recording paused]

TS: That's the one I was talking about.

SM: Yes.

TS: She was smart. I declare, I didn't know she was that smart.

SM: So did she last at Howard or did she go somewhere else?

TS: Oh, she graduated Howard and then the other school that was going to give her the full scholarship—she went to [that school] for graduate school. She got a master's in chemistry.

SM: From—?

TS: Florida A&M [Agricultural and Mechanical University].

SM: Okay.

TS: And then I married an African guy first. That's their daddy. His name is Antwi, A-N-T-W-I. His name was Christian Antwi and we divorced though about—we stayed married about ten years. But my children are with him. That's his mother in the picture. She's passed away since then. But anyway my children, in the pink right there, they're all grown now. The other one in the long hair is a lawyer.

SM: Oh, wow.

TS: And she always wanted to go to Duke [University]. She went to Duke for undergraduate and then she went to Carolina [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill] for law school.

SM: Nice.

TS: And the other one is talking about going to medical school but she didn't get in this time. She's thirty-one, getting ready to turn thirty-two. And this one just turned thirty last Thursday but, at any rate, she didn't get in this year so she might go, so she decided that she would work. She didn't want to go right into medical school so she said she would work and then she learned that North Carolina would pay her loans off if she worked five years in a, you know, a poverty area, so this is a poverty area. So she got that advantage. But she doesn't live here with me anymore. And anyway [unclear].

SM: So you have children who are very "sciencey." Two, two out of three—

TS: [both talking at once—unclear] gifted and talented. I didn't realize that they were, you know.

SM: You said you weren't "sciencey." What was your strong suit?

TS: That's the funniest thing because, okay—While I was at UNCG, I had a tough time the first two years and I always set my schedule at twelve hours. I tried fifteen hours but I set my schedule at twelve hours so I could have time to go to the library and read stuff and I—it just worked out better. But see, that is why I'm amazed at this child, because this child was taking, like, nineteen hours and twenty hours and—Good Lord, I wouldn't last. But I think that helped me to do it that way so anything that I needed to study for—But all that time, my first year and second year—In the time that I had, I was not studying French but I was making Bs in French so I said, "Well, if I can do that without studying, what would I do if I study?" That's what my major became as I picked my major.

And I had a good friend there—this is the girl I was going to ask about—and she was white and she was from Raleigh but she was poor, poor, poor. And her name was Pat Emma, Patricia Emma, E-M-M-A, and she married. And in fact, she hosted one of the reunions. She was like the one in charge. But I didn't go that year, but I have visited her. But she was always with me and she nominated me to be head of the French Club. Because after we left Bailey—we went to—what dorm did we go to—we tried to go to Cone [Residence Hall] but we couldn't get in Cone because Cone was being constructed.

SM: I was going to say Cone was probably new or—

TS: It was really before finishing. We were signed up to go to Cone but they didn't finish Cone but they finished this other building. It wasn't quit finished, but we could get in it. It's at Spring Garden on one side. What's on the other side, the border of UNCG?

SM: Market Street?

TS: Okay. Yes, probably it was closest to Market Street. At any rate, it was the first coed dorm at UNCG and it was—they had one side be girls and one side be guys and then the parlor was a common [area]. But child, I went back there in 1980 something, or early '90s, for some kind of conference we had that schools sent us for and I think it was on—I forgot what it was on but it ended up being on homosexuality and dealing with homosexuality in our schools. And I went to see the different places and learned that girls had a key to the dorms, now. When we were there the police had to let us in. We had to get there by eleven o'clock, I think it was, or we'd be locked out and we'd have to get the campus police to let us in. Anyway, they had girls that could come in all kinds of time at night and the guys and the girls were living on the same floors, using the same restrooms. But anyway, I was kind of knocked out to see all this stuff.

SM: When you were interested in French—Did you like French in high school as well? I mean, did you—

TS: Well, I was president of the French—Well, I just liked to—see, my sister, that went to UNCG, I mean that went to A&T, was doing her homework, like, when she was a senior and I heard her say “[phonetically] syo(n), syo(n), ah ta(n) syo(n)” and I always remembered this. I said “Oh, that's pretty. I'm going to take that course next year.” And from then on I have been interested and I took the course and I always made As in high school. And I was head of the French Club—president of the French Club—so that when I got to UNCG I really wasn't thinking about that. But Mr. [Christian] Garaud, was a French teacher that I liked. He was probably my best one. But Claude Chauvigné was there, too. He was—

SM: I'm going to have to ask you to help me spell their names.

TS: Garoud was G-A-R-O-D or O-U-D or something like that. [Editor's note: the correct spelling is Garaud.]

SM: And was this at UNCG or in high school?

TS: UNCG.

SM: Okay.

TS: And Claude Chauvigné was at UNCG. He was one of the professors. I remember those two. I had some others but anyway those were the two most prominent. But Mr. Garaud had a little baby and he wanted me to babysit because he figured I would be learning French and stuff. He was really trying to help me but I had this attitude that I was not going to be anybody's babysitter, especially a white person's babysitter. That was just my attitude because I saw that here in Lumberton and I didn't think that was right, the way they did things. But it was just a custom they were doing because they used to in the neighborhood—See my mother was a beautician so she didn't depend on white people for her money but—And I knew if I went to the high school I wouldn't—wasn't going to have the problems that some other kids might have for repercussions and stuff because

my mother's clientele was black. But my point there was and I said, "No, I'm not doing that." And it would have been a great opportunity for me. You know what I mean?

SM: Right.

TS: Because I would have learned more French and they would have spoken French to me but Pat always—Pat Emma, she was the poor girl from Raleigh but she was smart as a whip. And she noticed me in class and she said, "Tommy, let's go start studying together." Well she was trying to help me, you know. She was just a smart girl and she was probably reaching out like some people do. You just have good people. And so, anyway, she nominated me to be president of the French Club. She knew she—because she should have been the one—but we had a counselor, Michelle Meisart from France, who was a graduate student at UNCG.

SM: How do you spell her last name?

TS: M-E-I-S-A-R-T, I think it was. Michelle Meisart.

SM: Oh, these French names. [laughs]

TS: But anyway, so we had the first one at Cone but the International House moved to Shaw [Residence Hall] in the Quad. So, like, one floor was French and one floor was Spanish and one floor was, I think International or something. They might have had some students over there that just wanted to live over there, so—but all of us had a chance to keep, you know, speaking French all the time. So that was good. Oh, and I had a Dr. [John Philip] Couch. I remember him because he invited us for a "Dégustation de vin et de fromage." He was a French teacher who did one of my literature classes. And that's something that French people do. They have a wine and cheese tasting.

SM: Okay. Is that what that means?

TS: Yes. That's what that is. And at any rate, I remember him because of that. And, oh, we just, sort of, liked looking for experiences. And then I was at—while I was at UNCG, I worked as a—I got like, the work-study—I told you I paid my first year and then next year the Herbert Lehman Foundation out of New York was looking for people who were black and in an integrated university and all we had to do was just to maintain the ability to return. [laughs]

SM: Wow.

TS: And they paid my sophomore, junior and senior year.

SM: Wow.

TS: So I lucked up but I still needed a little spending money because I didn't want to—you know. My mother was sending my other sisters to school and then she had to send the

other one after me and so she kind of lucked up. The first one got a [unclear] scholarship and then I sort of paid my way and then—I also worked at a camp in the summer time and while I was in high school in Connecticut.

SM: Wow.

TS: And so I saved money from that. And she would always let us save our money and stuff. But anyway, what I'm trying to get to is—I can't get my leg up because I'm getting old; let me do it this way. And so I saved like three hundred dollars a summer. Tuition was, like, a thousand dollars so I was able to pay that the first year. And then the second and third year there was a man here who was sort of scouting out black students and he sent my name in for Herbert Lehman and that's how I got that. So that worked out really well. I also had like a work-study job and I think one of the jobs was a—Oh, yes. I worked in the Weatherspoon Art Gallery as an art monitor. I loved that and kind of got an appreciation of art.

I remember there was a girl from—can't remember her name now—but she and her sister had gone to UNCG, too. She was black but she was an art student and she had one of these Gauguin prints among the things that she was showing or something, I don't know. Somehow I remember that and associating it with her. And I remember buying a couple of Gauguin prints from the bookstore or somewhere. But, I just got an appreciation of, you know, other artists while I was there. But while—I said this is a good job but since I'm going to be a foreign language teacher I'd better try to get in the language lab. And so I would know how to operate a language lab for school. So I did that and I spent a lot of time on the tapes. That really helped my ear. Because when nobody was there I'd just be listening to tapes. And I think that improved my French a lot. But I should have taken that job with Mr. Garaud and I didn't.

But anyway, Pat had then had this idea—was that when we were juniors or seniors—I forgot. We must have been sophomore. This is her first idea. “Okay, let's go to Canada,” because she wanted to go see the world's fair [Expo 67] and it was going to be at Montreal. And she said, “Let's just go to Canada and study French and then go to the World's Fair and then come on back home.” So we did that. [laughter] I said, “Okay.” So we spent, I guess, a month or six weeks at the Université Laval in Quebec City. Then we came—She checked it all out. I'm just following. “Okay, okay, okay.” So she said, “Well, let's go.” She was thumbing her way back but I had—how did I get back—I paid my ticket. I had a round-trip ticket.

SM: Okay.

TS: I think, but I can't remember—

SM: She hitchhiked back?

TS: She hitchhiked back. Well, she was so smart and see—in Canada, hitchhiking was really different from here. People hitchhike here but it wasn't at the degree it is now when you would dare not pick up a hitchhiker now. But back then, you used to could hitchhike here but in Canada, everybody was just so nice. They didn't mind giving you a ride.

Everything was so clean. And anyway, we went to a convent. She figured this out. We could spend five dollars a night. You know, we were there two or three nights to see the fair and that was the first time I ever heard of a world's fair that I remember and, anyway, we saw all the fair. So girlfriend wants to go to the US [United States] Pavilion. And we get to the US Pavilion and she gets sick. And here's this black marine and I hadn't seen any black people hardly except just a few foreigners. But this was a black American, on duty at the US Pavilion. Girlfriend gets sick and he gives her so much attention. He paid me none. [laughter] So anyway, I'm just preceding a story. So anyway we leave Montreal. We had a good time. We saw a lot of good stuff. And, we came through New Jersey.

SM: Was this on a train or bus or plane?

TS: I forgot how we got there but we came together from there. I don't know what—I can't remember what exactly happened but she hitchhiked and I think I flew because my ticket was doing that. And then, for some reason we came—I don't know why we came, I don't know how we came, I don't remember—from Montreal to New Jersey because my uncle was there. Because she gave me that, "Oh, let's go see New York before we go back." She was really a genius and she had gotten that—What is that scholarship that they get? Can you remember the major scholarships that they give out to the kids? Some kind—If you named it, I could get it. But anyway, I can't remember it. But anyway, she's just really smart so she planned it. I said "Okay, we can live with my uncle in New Jersey." So we came to New Jersey and stayed overnight there and then we took the train to New York. I said, "I know New York" because my aunt had sent me to art school up there one summer because I used to like to draw. It was like a little kiddy class. And she was just trying to help my mother out because my mother had, like, twelve, you know, there were eleven brothers and sisters and those who could would help the others, you know. So she said, "Let Tommy come on up and I'll send her to art school." Well, so I went and they did collages and that ended my—I did not like collages. And I didn't pick the materials, you know. I just liked to sketch. We never did any of that but it was at the Museum of Modern Art and I got a chance to see, you know, New York a little bit more. I'd been up there a couple of times with my grandmother or somebody. I'd been up—

But anyway, what I'm trying to say there is Pat took me to places—See, I didn't go anywhere while I was there except art classes. When Pat went: "Let's go. We've got to go see this; we've got to go see that." So she showed me how to go through a museum and see everything and don't spend a lot of time. So we went to the—I think we went to the Museum of—what do they call that? Natural History Museum on Central Park there? Central Park West? And we went in and she just "Keep walking, keep walking. If you see something you like, look at it. But don't spend any time if you don't like it. Just keep on walking." So we walked on through and everybody—I remember people talking about some Hope diamond, I don't remember if it was at the Smithsonian or at this place, but I wasn't that interested. I'm just not interested in stuff like that because when we were little my mother bought us some earrings when we got our ears pierced. And then about five—She got them for Christmas—and about five months later nobody could find them. They were in the cracks in the floor in that same room I decorated. Boy, she tore some tails up. She had spent about ten dollars on each pair, you see, and back then that was a lot of

money. So I said, "I'm going to buy cheap jewelry from here on out" and I just wasn't—I have never been interested in having anything real much, you know, for that reason. I said I will put a dollar in it and if it breaks or bends or what, who cares? If it gets lost, well, nobody is going to care. I did one of those numbers with the cubic zirconium [unclear] some of my kids at school and I had this kid at school, really rich kid, and I was telling them—He was talking about his parents had ten thousand dollars' worth of jewelry. I said, "Don't you tell another soul that because people will mark you and they'll go to your house and steal your stuff, you know, if you tell it around the wrong people." That's why I told him that. But anyway, I said, "I don't care." I said, "Now you see these little studs I have. I think they're pretty enough." I said, "If I lose one, then that will be okay." So one day I lost one and he said, "You're missing one." I said, "Oh, well, I'll go find another one." [laughter] But I'm just saying that's things that make your mind do like that. So girlfriend—We came back through and I don't know if we went through Washington the same way—I forgot now because I know I went to the Smithsonian with somebody. I learned how to go through museums like that so all this is building—

So anyway, when we got back to school, French classes were better. We enjoyed that and we had the distinction that we had travelled a little bit. So then, she had this [unclear] something United Nations organization or United States of America, some group like that, she found out about them and they were going to the UN [United Nations]. "Come on, let's go." "Okay." So we go and we get the tour and everything.

SM: This was up in New York.

TS: In New York, yes. And this was, like, after the junior or senior year and when we go up there, I decided—since we had that episode at the US Pavilion at the World's Fair—I decided I would leave her home. But always from then, I started finding people that spoke French and so, I had dated a guy from Cameroon, and so while we were at the UN, they had this book with all these places, the offices of the different places, so I said, "I'm going to go over there and practice some French." So I went over but I left Pat at home because, I said, "She'll get all the attention." So I went over there and I was just picking up some French and I said, "I want to speak to somebody from your country who speaks French and tell me, you know,"—And they said, "Well, let us take you to the—and they took me to the under-ambassador, the second to the ambassador, and his name was Paul Ingold. And I was just speaking up some French and he said, "You speak French well enough. You ought to come up here and try for the UN tour guides." He said, "My friend is in charge of that," And so I applied and—I'd come back home after we graduated. I had come back home by then and was working at a school. I got a job late. School started at the beginning of September or the end of August but I got this job like the end of September. The lady that was doing French at that high school got a job at the Community College here and so she had the job vacant there.

[telephone rings, recording paused]

TS: And so, she left that job and that's what made me get the job so I was in French and I had French one and two and world history and US history and I left that job—Well, I left that job in the fall when you had to go interview for UN tour guide and I took a train from Fayetteville's railroad station up to New York and came back, it was like for a few days and then I had to start work in March. I got the job, I guess, because this guy knew the guy and, you know, he had approved me. But I learned later that you could become a tour guide even if you didn't speak another language because we had about five girls—But I wouldn't have thought of that; I just wouldn't have thought of that. But I was glad he told me that and so I've got pictures up here of when we had our guiding classes, stuff like that. And I've got a picture of U Thant, who was Secretary-General of the UN at the time and, at any rate, that was a great experience because not only then had I integrated black and white, but I had also gotten an international kind of perspective, And, I was actually the representative of the guides on the staff council at the UN because they like me—little southern Tommy—and they called me Tommy. Everybody that knows me real well calls me Tommy, not Thomisine. [laughter] I've got a nephew that calls me "Aunt Thomisene." I can't stand that. Aunt Tommy is better. But anyway—But I think all that helped, you know.

SM: How long did you work there?

TS: Well, tour guides were only supposed to work twenty-seven months. But the year that we left, they didn't hire a class at the right time—I think it was, I don't know what it was—but anyway, they hired a class late and so they needed help. So I went back and worked after our class finished. I worked maybe another month or two because they had a rush time in the spring-time, that time. But when we went in March, that's their time, they're trying to get ready to take care of that rush because most of the schools would have people coming on tour then. But when I went back in 1995, they had all this security and you know you had—In that area, the receiving area at the front of the delegates' building, they had in the lobby area where the guides would come together and the kids would come together—They had all this security stuff, one of those belts that passes you—It was a long one, longer than usual, and you just couldn't come in there, you really couldn't collect the people and I think they said the tourists had just been reduced greatly.

But at the time that I started, there were only girls and thirty-one languages were represented in our group. But I learned, you know, that there were about five girls and one girl was from Texas, I remember, Julie. She didn't speak any other language. And there was one Jewish girl from New York area who became a teacher after we finished and I have this curious feeling that there was some girl—I forgot where she was from. She was a dark-haired—beautiful eyes, and very, kind of, white skin. But she had a fur for every day of the week and a big piece of jewelry on her finger for every day of the week. I said "Why are you working?" She said, "I just have to have something to do." Well, I understand that now because I am retired and I really have to have something to do so I've been subbing and stuff. But my point there is that I learned a lot of stuff about a lot of things. And we had a girl there [unclear] this Sikkim has a new name now; I've forgotten what it's changed to. But she said that she was from there and the Indian girls from India complained about her feet. They said her feet had calluses on them and people in their culture did not let their feet get like that. And they investigated and found that she

had committed somewhat of a fraud to get the job because, really, she could have gotten a job without speaking another language. But what had happened was her father was a doctor and he had actually lived with his family in Sikkim and she used that to say that she was from a different culture and that's the reason they picked her. Because they could have picked her without that. But anyway, that's how she got found out. But she gave me some little bells—I used to keep them up there—the ankle bells that—I might have moved them now. But she had, you know, like you dance with and—Anyway, I met girls from Nigeria and South Africa and there was one girl, white, from South Africa—and this was during apartheid—and one black from South Africa, Dora Boorman. And she sang back-up with Miriam Makebe who was a famous singer at the time, and she actually married Stokely Carmichael. They were—You know, he was a famous black panther, I think, at the time. But this was later on, this is all after—But Dora told us that she and her sister—her sister was lighter-skinned—and she told us that she and her sister could not live in South Africa in the same area because her sister was light-skinned and she was dark-skinned and so they had to live in different townships. I thought that was interesting.

And then I heard all this stuff about Nelson Mandela and actually the girls from Nigeria were actually former stewardesses, and they probably were going to go back and be stewardesses on Air Nigeria And they said when South Africans got on the plane, the white ones—they would be so rude to them because they were [unclear]. I said you know you just live and learn stuff. And then one of the girls, a beautiful black girl—she was really Caribbean looking, Marie Parts—was an airline stewardess with American Airlines and she had had Bill Cosby on one of her flights and he had invited her to one of their parties. It was, like, exciting and while I was there the King of Mauritania's wife wanted to go on a French tour and so I took her on a French tour and—what's his name. Look at that; my mind is getting so slow—Duke Ellington was guest at the Human Rights Day. My birthday is exactly the same as Human Rights but the Human Rights Day is—was 1948—when they put it in the Declaration of Human Rights—and I was a 1947 baby. But they had this concert and he was the guest and so my—the head of our group, and that did the scheduling, asked me to work with her. I'm talking too much, aren't I?

SM: No. You're fine.

TS: Anyway. So I got to be with him and there was another guide assigned—two of us—assigned to work with him. And he kissed me on the cheek that night. He gave a concert in honor of human rights that Human Rights Day and I told him it was my birthday and that's why he kissed me on the cheek. So I got to meet him like that.

And then another time they had Pablo Casals [Spanish cellist and conductor, born in Catalonia, Spain]—and I forgot what the occasion was—but he was supposed to be the world's most renowned cellist. And there was a girl on the staff, Rosario Diaz, who was from El Salvador. And he was from El Salvador and I think they were from the capital, San Salvador. But anyway, I never knew even what a cello was, you know what I mean? I'd been seeing them and didn't know what to call them and so we got to work with him. Well they let me do that that time because, you know. My girlfriend was telling me to take Spanish and when I got ready to graduate—My mother had always told me to take a teacher's certificate because that would be a good backup. Because I had said I will never teach. Well anyway, I told them late at UNCG that I wanted to get the teacher's

certificate—so it might have my junior year or senior year—and my advisor apologized, “I’m just so sorry. We can’t get it all in but what we’ll do is—You’ve had this and this and this. This will work.” And I needed two more courses and she said, “Our department recommends that you take another language.” So I said, “Okay. I’ll finally take some Spanish.” So I graduated but I still had to take two courses in Spanish in order to finish my teaching certificate, which I did immediately after there and went back to Carolina. I went to Carolina three times, three summers.

SM: For summer school?

TS: After my first year—Yes. Because to get my grades up, you know, and so my schedule would be easier and I’d be moving on along. And I took two classes.

SM: A couple of other people have said that. Why do people go to Carolina for summer school?

TS: Because that was the—that was the—that’s the brother school. We said it was sister school and brother school. We had [sings] “I am from UNC, so pity me. There’s not a boy in the vicinity and every night at four they shut the door. I don’t know what the heck I ever came here for. I’m going to pack my bags, Carolina bound. I’m going to turn that whole town upside down. I’m going to smoke, drink, [unclear] and what the heck, what the heck, I’m from UNC.” That was cute.

SM: So you went, I guess, just to get a little bit more, you know, college—

TS: Well, I was just trying to get my—you know, keep things going. because that’s what I did.

SM: Did UNCG offer summer school?

TS: Yes, they did but we were just doing something different and I had a—There was Alice McCallum from Durham—She was another smart black girl; she’s a judge now, she might be retired now. I think she was up in the Ohio area when we left. But anyway her father was a math professor at NCC [NCCU, North Carolina Central University] in Durham and her mother was, like, a home-extension agent or something. They were very well-educated. In my case, my daddy was a barber and an alcoholic and my mother was [unclear].

But we were from different circumstances but anyway she had a friend named Raye Heritage who was from Tillery, North Carolina and Raye—Raye didn’t stay long. She was the daughter of a principal of a school, a high school in—And I forgot what her mother did, she might have been a teacher or something. And she was an only child and she was spoiled to death. Raye would buy underwear for every day of the week and use them one time and throw them away. She was real light-skinned, though. The people from Tillery are really, really light. And, but she was fun and she liked to play cards and she just sort of played her cards right on out of school. I think she didn’t graduate with us.

I don't know what she did. I shouldn't be naming these names because you all are going to be seeing—hearing [unclear].

SM: No, we want to hear the names.

TS: I know, but they might not want to hear about themselves. But anyway—but I heard from her because somebody went up to that area and was telling us—Wilson, [North Carolina] that's where they were from. Beatrice was from Wilson and she went back when she left.

SM: Beatrice was your first, one of your first roommates?

TS: Yes, one of my first roommates. Yes.

SM: Beatrice, yes.

TS: And she married an Episcopalian priest and he eventually turned out to be gay but they had two daughters before that. And she went with the military overseas to teach school and stuff. But anyway, he had that church on Ramsay Street, an Episcopal church in Fayetteville, [North Carolina]. Anyway, life has just gone different directions but—

SM: You said earlier that you went to UNC [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill] to get your grades up.

TS: Well, you know, just to take courses and keep, you know, you have to have so many courses to go to the next level. And so—

SM: What did you think of college, academically? Did you think it was hard? Did you think it was easy?

TS: Which one? Both of them? Any of them?

SM: Well, just what did you think about college academically?

TS: Well, I just felt like—because there were quite a few kids in our class that made perfect scores on the SAT—which I think was 1600 or something—Until we decided that, well, if they're the ones who made 1600, they're the ones that are going to make the As, you know. And I only took one part of the SAT. I know I'd do all right but I wasn't going to make those As. And I had this Dr. Beal—Good Lord—I think that was his name, but—I think it was. I think it was Dr. Beal. But they had five professors on the history staff that were members of the Royal Historical Society and that was an international group and they were very rare and very good. And this guy would ask you to draw a map of the world or Europe in 1800s or 1500s—Who studies like that? So anyway, I failed his class. That was the only class I failed my freshman year. And I'm not used to failure.

SM: Do you remember what class it was?

TS: It was History 101. Whatever the—

SM: World history?

TS: Yes. And so anyway the kids said, “You just lucked down because when you signed up all the classes were gone.” And the kids had already gotten a spiel on which ones to take.” And so they said, “Now don’t take him again, now. You ask them—they will give you what you ask for.” They said “Take an easier teacher.” I made a C next time around because he’s just very exacting. So I said, “Lord, don’t let me get any more teachers like this. So I think I failed chemistry that next semester; first semester.” That’s why I told that girl across the hall, “Don’t leave.” Because I did qualify to go back. Anyway, and then from then on that’s why I started just taking care, you know, that I could get my class work done. And so. And then I spent time in the library and all that stuff because I felt like everybody knew more than I did. And we were coming from different environments so it was okay. So anyway, that worked out for me.

That’s why I was so amazed at my children but they maybe have gotten better educations, I don’t know. But we had a really good education because, you see kids around here and then, you know, this area has a Native American population. And I really thought Native Americans around here—I was [unclear] We just said they were Indian and I thought they were a mix between white and black. That’s what I thought because I said, “They don’t look like the Indians on television.” But eventually I was able to see there are some and if you look in our phonebook we’ve got a lot of Locklears and Oxendines—those are typical names—Dial. There are some more, Jones, but there are black Joneses and I haven’t really met any white Joneses. But my point there is that I didn’t really realize there was a difference but then my mother, selling Avon, would go out to many of those homes and they would call everybody by their first name, like Miss Mary, Miss Jane, Miss so and so. I didn’t realize that was cultural, something cultural, from this area. And if you go—my daughters went to a school that was more Indian than anything else and they would call “Miss Theresa.” Well, at other schools they would say “Ms. Thompson” or “Ms. Locklear” or “Ms. James”—whatever your last name was—but I learned that they had to do that because you might have ten Locklears on your faculty. You know, you might say “Mrs. Locklear, come to the office.” And you might have ten people coming, you know. So that’s why they would do the first names thing. That was one thing that was different and then I didn’t realize the last names so I learned that later. And then they have the pow-wows and then some looked more Indian than others.

And then Dr. Illiades at UNCP [University of North Carolina at Pembroke] was a native—He’s not a Native American but there was a Dr. Dial who wrote—He wrote the Native American article part for the World Book Encyclopedia. He’s passed away now but he and Illiades wrote a book about Sir Walter Raleigh’s colony over here in North Carolina and how he had to go back and get supplies. And they couldn’t wait for him because when he went back, there was a war and he couldn’t land and, you know, get in and out. They had to wait two years and in the meantime they had to leave everything that they had and they wandered this way. And the Native Americans took them in so they ended—Some of them, the Lumbees, have the blond hair and the blue eyes and the green eyes, and so the other Indians around say that they are not truly Indians for that reason. But they were doing a good thing; they did a good thing. And so that’s why they

turn up like that but the other Indians did not. That's why they had a hard time. You always hear this about them wanting to get recognition by the Congress. Well, that was part of it. And the reason I know all that and paid attention to that was because I thought that my grandmother had to be Indian. So that was part of why I was researching it. But I learned that my grandmother, that grandmother died before I was born. She died in '45. Her husband and she died in 1945. I learned that she was white because I have some really light-skinned relatives but they're not really because the grandfather was dark-dark and she was white. And they probably grew up on the same plantation, which brings me to this little story. There's a guy from Clinton [North Carolina]. He's a preacher in the Church of Christ and I'm in the Church of Christ. His name is—I can't even think of his name right now because I'm talking and excited. Oliver is his first name. But I grew up in Oliver so I said, "Brother Oliver, I'm going to always remember your name because I grew up in Oliver. Since I wasn't thinking about it, I said, "Where are your people from?" He said, "Down in Bladen County." I said, that's where my daddy was, near there—you know, where—He said Columbus County, because that's where my daddy was from; Evergreen. So anyway, so I said, "You know they might have been on the same plantation because black people got the name of the plantation they were on". So I said, "Now, I'm going to call you 'cuz' from here on out." So when we go down there for a gospel meeting he will say, "My cousin's here." And people will be looking around and they show somebody black and they are just so amazed and then they'll come up here and I'll say, "I'm going to see my cousin." And then they come. When they see me they say, "What's going on?" But it's just a little private joke we have. But it might be true, too, you see, and that's why we laugh so hard. But anyway, we had that little joke out there.

SM: Did you go to high school with any—Were there no Lumbees in your high school?

TS: I was at an all-black high school.

SM: It was all-black?

TS: They're closed now. They stayed in operation two more years as an elementary school but they moved the blacks across town to where I lived.

SM: Well, what school did the Lumbees go to?

TS: Well, they just were in the Pembroke area and I understand that UNCP started out as a normal school or something and that's probably—I didn't realize all of this until I was grown. Okay, and then it eventually evolved to what it is now. But my point there is that the Native Americans here have everything anybody else has. They can be presidents of universities, they had a professional baseball player who came back and was president, you know, just they have everything, beautiful homes—You should see this mansion over here on Deep Branch Road. You should see it. It looks like a castle. But I'm just saying they have everything. And when I learned, when I was studying Native Americans, I learned that because they had this intermixing, they never really lived on a reservation, And so, because they didn't, they mixed in and so they have everything that, you know, anybody else has, and more because they did get some Native American monies. They

just couldn't get, like some other people could have, on reservations. And so, in my research I learned that the other Indians around the nation don't like these Indians because they say they're not pure. And they have—the other ones—have high rates of illiteracy and alcoholism and low self-esteem and casinos and these people down here are trying to get casinos but I don't think that's the way to go. But my point there is, that, you know, for them to be shunned—They should be looked up to because they really had the model that was successful. But then after, you know, after you learn about the Trail of Tears and you know how they were mistreated and all that, you can see how they got into the position they're in. But blacks came here as slaves and we were able to overcome that and, to some degree, and everybody that stuck with education and stuck with trying to do the right thing, stuck with God, those did well. And so you have to, you know, go by that and believe that. But the biggest thing about the Natives—I want to tell you this and then I'm going to be through with them. The KKK [Ku Klux Klan]—and this is documented in their museum over at UNCP—the KKK wanted to teach the Native Americans a lesson because they [the KKK] said that a Native American woman was going with a white person and they didn't want that to happen. I said, "Well, it's a two-way street anyway. How come they say she was going with him? He was going with her. There had to be two of them to go together." I'm telling you all this junk. [laughs] But it's good junk. And so they were going to teach them a lesson—and this is documented in *Life* magazine. They've got the *Life* magazine copy open in a case over in the museum and they have a poem that somebody wrote at the time. And so they were having a meeting and they came with their covered hoods and stuff, went to this field over in Maxton. Well anyway, they said one Indian sharpshooter shot the light out and said the white folks ran and scattered and they were so scared. It's all documented. And said that was the last time the KKK ever did anything in Robeson County to anybody. And they said blacks offered to help the Indians and they [the Indians] said, "No, we've got this." [laughter] But the Indians are kind of different from whites but it took me a while to tell the difference in them and I really can't really tell. Sometimes I just have to listen to the voice. My daughter, when she was going to Duke, there were some kids from the Indian community also with her class that went to Duke. And the kids at Duke, the other kids, thought that the Indians were black people, thought they were just light-skinned black people. I said, "But they don't know." Where are you from?

SM: I'm from Greensboro.

TS: Greensboro. Okay. I want to tell you one more thing about while we were at UNCG. The Neo-Black Society, when they got started, decided to look, for some reason we were going to march from UNCG to Bennett College on Lee Street and they had the police out—I forgot what the occasion was, I—

SM: What were you marching for?

TS: I forgot. [laughter] But I had this little black American—I liked to sew, you know, because I was in home ec—you know I told you that—and I had made this—I was going to make a black-looking, African-looking something. I made this little black dress that had a split up the front and was made out of this leopard skin. [It was] too hot a cloth, but

I'm trying to look all-black, you know but I did not have the backbone that the kids who actually did that demonstration did. And then they had all these white cops, you know, at Lee Street at some intersection to see that we got through, but it made—I was just imagining what it was like during the time that Martin Luther King and the folks [unclear] and the walking and the marching and such and I was like—oh, Lord, it was just—I couldn't have done it. I was just like shaking. It didn't have to be like that, it was just my mind [unclear]. I said, "Well, I was trying to put my feet in their shoes," and I said, "I don't think I could have done it." But I think that God just set it up because He works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. He sent people who were strong enough. There were whites who were on those busses that got killed in the South, you know. He sent many people to take care of that work and it's basically taken care of. We've got other factors going wrong now but I had to tell you that one.

SM: And did the Neo-Black Society form in your senior year?

TS: I think it was in my junior or senior year because I remember—

SM: It says that you were involved in it in your senior year.

TS: It might have been in the senior year but I think we started talking about it in '68. Let's see, '68 would have been my junior year. See, right after Martin Luther King, Jr. died and Bobby Kennedy, that was '68 and I graduated in '69.

SM: Right.

TS: So we might have started talking about it then. You see what I'm saying? But whatever year they say it started, we did it.

SM: And was it just a group kind of just to have a group identity? Or to have a presence?

TS: Well, we just felt like black people should have a voice. That's what some people felt. See, I'm not really that strong-minded. I'm just like "Okay" like my girlfriend [said] "Okay, let's do that." Sounds like a good idea to me. "Okay." That's the way—

SM: There was, one of the questions I was going to ask you. [It] was about the assassination of Martin Luther King and—

TS: I think that's what affected Annie so much—Annie King, that was our first president. She felt like, you know, because that happened that we should just be united and whatever.

SM: Was there any opposition from white people about it?

TS: Not that I noticed.

SM: And did you have any trouble getting, like, an adviser or someone—were there any black professors?

TS: I don't even remember who the adviser was. I don't remember and I don't even remember their goals. I just thought it was a good idea, because we used to go over to—was it Cone [Ballroom] or somewhere where they had the student union? Well, it was okay. I enjoyed the stuff, even—what's that girl's name? Mary Lou something—she was a folk singer and I saw her on the Today show one time. Mary Lou something. But anyway they told us our freshman year that we had a celebrity among us and she gave us a concert. Her hair was long and now it's gray. I forgot her name now. But anyway, she was a country singer. I see her—Isn't that interesting? And we saw Dionne Warwick, they had her down when [both talking at once, unclear]. And I don't know, I just felt like—And I'm not looking at things as so much color, I'm just telling you because color happened to fit in. Because I'm really—whatever—I tell kids at school now “I just wouldn't go to Lumberton High and I taught at Lumberton High for three years.” I said, “I would not come.” I said, “My school is right over there,” I said. The building's still there but they've changed it into a storage center—I said but “We, I would not come because I did not want to be bothered with people's mess. I just wanted to be peaceful and go on and get my education and go on and, you know, that was just me.”

SM: Did most black students join the Neo-Black Society?

TS: I think so. I think so.

SM: And did it kind of coincide with the Black Power movement? I mean, were there people who were more black power oriented? Or were they just like you, that just wanted maybe a—

TS: There were probably some that were, you know, more ardent than I but I didn't see it that way. And I had a roommate named Myrtle Goore whose parents were professors at Winston-Salem State University and she was a medical—She stayed in medicine; she became a doctor. And Ada Markita Fisher—I think she was from Durham, came from—I mean, she became a doctor, too. And I forgot her history but, at any rate, I told you she did go back and speak and all that at UNCG in later years.

SM: Ada Fisher's been interviewed for this project. She was one of the first people a librarian interviewed—

TS: Yes. She was real outspoken and stuff. At any rate, I remember Cathy Hargrove when I was there. Now she was an older student up from the Wilson area. Oh, and what was that other girls name—Beatrice's brother was engaged to this girl. I forgot her name now. But she was a friend of Catherine Hargrove and they're from Wilson area.

SM: And these girls—Beatrice, and the other—had you ever met them before you moved in?

TS: Beatrice Freeman and Letha White, they was my first two.

SM: And what was it like moving in? I mean having, you know, never—

TS: Nothing. There was nothing to it. To me it was like I wasn't expecting anything terrible to happen, you see. That was just my reasoning. I think I was pretty smart to, you know, to figure out I didn't want to bother but I will bother, at the right time, because the future belongs to integration. I really didn't expect any trouble. I didn't see any.

SM: Had you ever visited the campus before?

TS: No.

SM: You had never been up there.

TS: No, and it was fine. And then, actually, when I came back to work and stuff, I went over to—I didn't tell you that—I went over to UNCP and I learned all this Indian history stuff. But at any rate, I found that the classes at UNCP were like classes at UNCG. But at the time it was called Pembroke State University when I went. Okay. And I said, "This is like a miniature UNCG," only in the sense that, see, the classes weren't full but I wasn't there at full time. I was there at summertime so, you know. Probably, you know. Professors were about the same, everything was about the same. I said, "It's just like UNCG, only it's closer to home." I said, "If I had known, I might have come over here," you know. But I didn't know they were over there. I didn't even realize what was going on, to tell you the truth. I really didn't.

SM: Right. You had one vision, knew where you wanted to go and—

TS: Black—But I just knew the blacks and the whites. That's all I knew. And there was—Miss—because we call Miss Doris and Miss Vesta May—

[End CD—Begin CD 2]

SM: New batteries. Let's start there.

TS: Okay. I wanted to tell you that the Yum-Yum [Better Hot Dogs and Ice Cream] was down there. The ice cream was alright but I wasn't that crazy about [unclear].

SM: And was Yum-Yum still in its old location? Had it—

TS: Old location.

SM: Across the street from where it is now?

TS: No. I thought it was down at The Corner. [Editor's note: Yum-Yum was located on the corner of Spring Garden Street and Forest Street.]

SM: Right. Yes. It was [both talking, unclear].

TS: The area called “The Corner.” [Editor’s note: The Corner store was located on the corner of Tate Street and Walker Avenue.] Okay, when we were there it was at The Corner. And I remember, I don’t know when that was, I was down at The Corner and some white guys passed me by and threw some ice out on me. That’s as close as I got to any real hostility.

SM: And were they students? Or do you think they were—outsiders—

TS: Outsiders. I think they were outsiders because they used to drive through there. I didn’t even worry about that. When we were living in Shaw—or Bailey—I’ve forgotten, the churches used to send busses and stuff—but we went to a Baptist church right up the street from Shaw on that street, and they sat us always on a back row. I didn’t really think about it, you know, because they weren’t really pushing integration too much either, but they were allowing it. You know churches are now more—I remember we were in a restaurant here in Lumberton and some guy saw us and he had to come over and talk to us. And I had a chance—I dated a white guy at Carolina—I liked that guy—I forgot his name—but I said “Now listen, he’s going to want me to go out again,” and I said, “No,” I said, “Now, I’ll never marry you and I believe you should date people you’re going to marry.” He said, “Why?” I said, “Well, I just don’t want to go through all that trouble that people go through.” But people had been getting married and going—and if they lived North or something. Some people had good relationships [unclear]. I just said, “I don’t want to go through all that. I’m just not going to do it.” And so we kind of broke off; we dated that one time. And I often think about that; that was just me.

And one of my daughters went—the one that went to Howard and Florida A&M, she was mostly in a black environment but the other one went to Duke and Carolina. She was, like, in an integrated environment and they meant to kind of swap a little bit, you know, a little bit because you could have like a student visitation time. But they never did do that, but they thought about it. And the one that stayed in the black environment, she took Spanish and the one that went to the integrated environment, she took French. And she’s the one when she went—She went to Africa to see her—well, you know the colleges are now encouraging you to travel abroad. She went to see her father’s country so, like, she goes to the airport and her uncle meets her and she goes to meet her relatives for the first time and stuff like that. And her daddy went over.

SM: And what country was he from?

TS: Ghana in West Africa. Now he’s always been around. He’s always called them on the phone ever since we divorced or when we were separated. He would call them every Sunday.

SM: Where did you meet him?

TS: At UNCG. After I left the UN, I decided I was going to try graduate school and I stayed about one semester. I could not get back to it. I noticed in New York, I could not go to school. I loved New York so, have mercy. My girlfriend had already taught me how to go through a museum so I was going to all the museums—

SM: You actually lived in New York?

TS: While I was a tour guide.

SM: But you didn't live in New Jersey with you family, you were—

TS: No. I had family in New York, too.

SM: Okay.

TS: So I went into Harlem because Langston Hughes—we learned his poetry and stuff. Langston Hughes lived in Harlem and I wanted to see everything he saw. I wanted to see the Cotton Club [nightclub in Harlem area of New York City] and Club Derby and the Apollo [Theater], and you know, and then I was trying to see everybody. I met Johnny Mathis and while I was at the UN, Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King's protégé, came through and I got to meet him and Harry Belafonte [sings] "Dayo, Dayo." He was there with Bill Cosby but while I was on tour the other kids saw Bill Cosby and when I was off tour Bill Cosby was working with something, with UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund] or something. And Harry Belafonte was free (you know they're buddies). So I got to spend some time with him.

At any rate, I ended up with friends from different places, Philippines, and places in Africa. Oh, that's what I wanted to tell you: the girl from France was—you know, the French like to travel and she wanted to go to Mexico so we went to Mexico for a week with—I went with a girl from Lebanon. She was a guide. When she first came to the UN, she wore black the whole year because her mother had just died and that was a custom that they had. Then she started wearing the uniform after that. And then there was a girl from—I think she was from Norway—and I, so there was a French one, a Lebanese, a Norwegian, and a black American. [laughter] And we roomed together in Mexico and then, see, because I was studying Spanish I took my [unclear]. The UN has classes so you could take classes with—in French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese or English. Those were the five official languages at the time. And so Dr. Ralph Bunche, who instrumented the peace in the Middle East at that time in 1948, I think it was somewhere along there—His daughter was in my class, in one of my French classes—but anyway I thought—I got to meet some of the world's great people. It was great and I think I took a picture with Jackie Robinson because Jesse Jackson was starting this operation PUSH [People United to Serve Humanity] or something or other. He had like a fund-raiser at an armory about two blocks from where I lived in Harlem. And so Aretha Franklin was there, I think it was, and the oldest black actor, and—Who else did I see? I saw, of course, Jesse Jackson. I've forgotten who now. But the biggest one was Jackie Robinson. And I think he died, like, a couple of years after that.

SM: And what did you want to go to graduate school for?

TS: Well, I was going to do French, but I just couldn't study. And I remember—you see once I started making a paycheck, it just wasn't in my mind to be on a schedule. And I had studied so hard at UNCG and I could not study in New York. I said, "I cannot study;

there are too many things to see, you know, and too many places to go.” And so I just didn’t. I stayed there about a semester and left. And while I was there, when I first went back, when I left the UN, I came back with the intention of going to grad school and I did go for that semester. And while I was there, I met a girl named Alice Brown and we lived in—what is the name of that? It was the graduate dorm and it was connected to the dining room. That side was the graduate dorm. I’ve forgotten the name of it now. And at any rate, she and I were going to the lunchroom and we came across this soccer team that was playing UNCG and they were from Belmont Abbey College outside of Charlotte. He was on the team and this other guy from Nigeria was with him. The guy from Nigeria and Alice were making a date. Well, Alice was married. And she tried to push me up to date this other guy. I—“Okay. But Alice, you’re married.” And she really didn’t keep the date so when they called—they were coming back to play A&T that next weekend, you see, or some night, whenever they were coming. And so it ended up that he and I were dating. Alice went home. She set me up and then went home. She told that guy that she wasn’t going on a date. She just, you know how that is. So, anyway, that’s how I met him. And he was so nice and courteous and stuff and we just started dating after that.

SM: Okay. Then after you left graduate school, did you immediately get a teaching job or did you have to wait until the next school year?

TS: Well, when I left graduate school, well I—My immediate teaching job was when I first graduated college.

SM: Right, then you left that.

TS: I went back to the UN and I stayed out about five years before I went back. And when I left UNCG, I think I went to Charlotte or lived here [Lumberton]—I forgot. But I got married—we got married at, like we met in the fall and we got married that summer.

And then I lived in Charlotte for a year and I worked at Harris-Teeter [grocery store] and subbed some at different schools. But I decided—It was like a semester. I’ve forgotten now how the darn thing went but it might have been a whole year because I think I started a regular year. I came back and worked at the junior high. Well, the Lumberton Junior High was where they sent the kids after they graduated Hayswood. After they closed Hayswood down, they called it Lumberton Junior-Senior High, so it was a black high school for two years.

And by then integration was in full force and so all black kids and any color kids went to Lumberton Senior High and Lumberton Senior High moved from their location. They were at where the post office is now. They’re out on Fayetteville Road now. And everybody was going to that school. Lumberton Senior was for grades nine through twelve and Lumberton Junior; that school became Lumberton Junior. It was Lumberton Junior-Senior but then it became Lumberton Junior and they put grades seven through nine and then they had a Carroll Middle School and it was for grades four through six at first, then they changed it to five through seven. So they moved the seventh grade from the junior high back to the middle school and moved the fourth grade back—

Because when they set that school up, the fourth grade classrooms in all the elementary school were empty and junior high was overcrowded so they did that to—we

had about—There were two middle schools like that in the whole state because of that problem. But it didn't matter. And eventually they have made two grades—they made two grades at the junior high. Then eventually they moved seventh grade back over there and—I think the ninth grade from the high school went over there. Just something, something—but now it's nine through twelve again at the high school level.

SM: So did you teach middle school French or high school French?

TS: I started out high school French. At the junior high I taught high school French but during that time, the Spanish teacher left and so they were right. Spanish was useful. They said I'd be more useful to the schools I went to if I took another foreign language. I thought that was crazy but they were right. Spanish wasn't all that bad, so once I took Spanish at Carolina I liked it.

And so while I was at the UN, I took French classes and I said, "Well, I'll keep my Spanish going, too." So I took a Spanish class and that's how I got to meet with Pablo Casals because I was learning Spanish and so when I went down to Mexico that was kind of like: "Keep up with the Spanish, speak some Spanish," and then when I went back, the supervisor, Chris Rita, that was her name, put me to this, you know, "So you can practice your Spanish some more," or something. So she was just kind of encouraging me, I guess. I don't know because we had Spanish-speaking people on the staff. At least we had Rosario Diaz. That's the one that was paired with—I can't remember any more right now but that might have been—I don't know why she put me there [unclear]. But I got a chance to meet the world's greatest cellist. You know. I didn't know what, you know—much but I learned something from that. I had a lot of great experiences.

SM: So you always taught French; you never taught Spanish?

TS: Yes, when the junior high—okay, what I was trying to tell you [was that] when I started working at junior high in about 1976 or '75, I did French but the Spanish teacher left and so I said, well, I have—So he said, "Well, you do his teaching because I don't have anybody to replace him." And it wasn't a full day's activity so I did one class of Spanish and one of French or two of French. I've forgotten. And then after a while the band situation changed from an outside activity, an extracurricular activity, to a course and the kids who were taking French had a choice, only it was an elective so they could only take French or band. They couldn't take French and band. See when I grew up we only had French in this area. But where my girlfriend that was telling me to take Spanish, they had Spanish; they had a choice.

And so, it's like you know, "OH, well." So then when I got the teacher's certificate my mother was right. I did need something to fall back on. So eventually, what I'm trying to say is that they created a course called "pre-language" because we lost the French students to band and so I did pre-language maybe a year or two and then eventually I just kind of got out of it because they didn't have the enrollment like they used to have. And I taught over there. I taught language arts, the social studies and then, when they created the middle school, with the seventh grade going over there, I went over there with them just to see, you know, what a new school would be like, you know—furnishings and how it would operate. And when I did that—for about two years I

was doing language arts and social studies. Eventually I could do only one, so I picked social studies. That's because I was interested in black history and I taught North African, Middle East, I learned about religions—had been interested in those and so that is sort of saying that everything—There was more reasoning to what I was doing and so I learned a lot about black history in Africa.

And I liked French because it allowed me to teach, speak with more people in the world, all over the world because a lot of people spoke French as a second language, or a first language. And then Spanish, by adding those, I could speak with a whole lot of people in this world now, you know. So that was interesting and eventually I decided I wouldn't stay in it because—I mean stay at the school where I was. I wasn't in it as a teacher because I loved French and I couldn't teach French because they didn't have it. And the boss over there, Mr. Loam, he and I didn't get along. He was just—and so we were fussing one time and he said, "Put in your transfer letter." I said, "I will put in my transfer letter but I won't be putting it in because you told me to put it in. I put it in every year so I can get back in my field." "Well, what is your field?" I said, "Foreign language." And from then on he created a course and I was doing French on the enrichment schedule so the other teachers could get their break because they put PE [physical education] on that schedule, and band and strings and, you know, just—We had sign language. Just different things the kids could do while the teachers got their planning period. And so I was doing that for a while and I was so delighted to get back in French because I had said when I was out of it, "If I have to do this [unclear]." Just doing any other course—I don't mind another course for a year or two but it gets boring and I'm tired and I wasn't in my area. I said, "I'm retiring in twenty years." Well, that was about fifteen years in but I got back in about year seventeen and then I got a job in French at a school in Red Springs. Now Red Springs was interesting because their population was like forty-eight percent Native American. I'd never been in that situation before and that's when I learned a whole lot of stuff. And then there were about twenty-five percent black, about five percent white and then they had started this influx of Spanish speakers. So you'd have thought that people, you know, would have jumped to—These kids are not trying to speak Spanish with those kids. It's terrible, I said, "You used to have to pay to go to Mexico or somewhere to speak it and you have it right here and you won't even try." But anyway, I just spent a lot of time around people saying stuff I knew in Spanish and they'd be so thrilled that somebody spoke Spanish and run into the Spanish stores and stuff and looking at the products, and buying—I just had a good time with that.

And then there's place over in Laurinburg, Laurinburg Institute, that they take foreigners in who want to improve their SAT score and play basketball. Laurinburg Institute used to beat every school they played in basketball. When they came to Hayswood I'd say—I was a cheerleader—I'd say "Well, here's a game we lost." [laughter] But anyway, I would go over and get kids from French-speaking areas. I got a guy from—let's see, where was it—in North Africa, one from, I think it was Algeria and one from France that had a North African parent, a French parent, and then the last one I got was from Paris, but his parents were actually from Guinea or somewhere in West Africa. Well, it was interesting but I would always go get some and bring them to my classes. I started that when I was in Red Springs, so they would have, like, native speakers to speak with. Do you think they tried hard? No. They wanted to ask them questions in English. Well, that was another reason why they were there. They came to

improve their English and all that. So that was kind of interesting. I've always had, like, interesting kinds of things going on like that.

SM: Yes. Well, you seem—we have a copy of your yearbook page—and you seem, I mean, we've gone over a couple of these extracurriculars but there are a couple of things we haven't gone over. Can you just tell us what some of these things are? What they mean. One of them is this magazine or—

TS: I'll have to put my glasses back on. I didn't even remember reading all this stuff and it's in mine. That's the French Club. Black Student Union, that's BSU. That's the group that started that Neo-Black Society, I guess. I think that's—Wesley Fellowship. I think that was just like a church group that, you know, you could sit and talk around. I didn't do much with that. Public Relations chairman, probably the Neo-Black Society, that's what it was. French House president, International House liaison. Well, International House was—we didn't do anything.

SM: It's just all the languages together?

TS: I don't know why they put all that there. I don't remember what I did with the International House liaison. I guess if somebody wanted to know something or something—

SM: What were you most involved with: French Club or the French House? And what was kind of the thing that stuck out the most?

TS: Well, I don't remember doing much with French Club. We were just there and, you know, we have, little, whatever. The big idea was we talked and—Look at that picture. We talked and—[noticing a name on the list] Linda Packard—whatever we needed. We just tried to make sure we spoke French as much as we could. That's all I remember with that.

SM: Do you remember any of your professors from the—

TS: Dr. [John Philip] Couch. I told you. Doctor—

SM: Do you remember anything about them specifically?

TS: I remember the “dégoustacion de vin et de fromage” with Dr. Couch. He was a literature teacher. And then there was a Dr. Claude Chauvigné, whose wife was also a Claude Chauvigné, they both had the same name. But she taught at Guilford College or somewhere, French. And named Monsieur Gambon, but I don't remember his first name. He was my conversation teacher. Conversation was my best subject. And—I enjoyed that. But there was a lady—I can't remember her name—but she was a little pert, I should say, perk—little perky little old lady. She had dark hair and was very neat. Everything was just so orderly. I think I kind of modeled after her somehow, kind of the way she spoke and stuff. But I can't remember her name now. And, oh yes, we had another one

and she died. Because when I went back, she'd died. And what was her name, I can't remember her name now. I can't remember her name. But she was one of my lit teachers, I think. I've forgotten her now.

SM: Did you interact the most [unclear] with French professors?

TS: Surely. And I suppose the Neo-Black Society was the most activity involvement that I had. Well I just didn't think—French was just like second nature to me because we were living in French House so we were French, French, French. And we had a study group and some—

SM: What did you have to do as president?

TS: Nothing much. I can't remember doing much of anything. Just [unclear] and checking on everybody, you know, just being sure I spoke French and being sure that, whatever we were doing got done.

SM: Did you speak French in the dorm?

TS Yes,

SM: All the time?

TS: Not all the time, for sure. Because Myrtle was just, there, you know, for speaking French but I was, like, a French major. And so, you know

SM: But you guys would try to speak French?

TS: Yes, she would. In fact my daughter, when she went to Africa, I told her—because she hadn't—I told her accidentally. She just accidentally happened to be placed in a family in Ghana—which is an English speaking area—that was French and in my grade at [unclear] and she lived with them a whole week and I said, "Well, speak French all the time when you're there so you get your practice." And then when she went to Duke they gave her a list of students from everywhere and there were some listed from French-speaking—and I said, "Now you go look those up so you can—" You know, like that. Of course she didn't do that. And then when she went on that trip, she wished she had, you know. But—And she does try to speak French [unclear] and she went to France herself. But I've never been to France. I think about going now but I don't have to go. I don't really like traveling. I'm a strange person.

SM: That doesn't make you strange. Did you guys do anything in the dining halls with your French House? Did you guys—

TS: Yes. We would have—

SM: —eat together or—

- TS: Yes, we could have a French table sometimes but I don't know that we did that often because I've often thought about that with other schools and things. I think we had one but I just don't remember.
- SM: Do you remember any other kind of events, like you talked about, I can't say it in French, but the wine and cheese thing. Do you remember other kinds of extracurricular activities you guys did, not just in French Club but in other things?
- TS: Other than that thing I did with Pat, when we went with CIRUNA [Council of International Relations and United Nations Affairs] up to the UN.
- SM: CIRUNA, what is—
- TS: It was something like the council of something, of international relations of the United States of America, something like that. It was some group and they just sponsored a busload from UNCG—and it must have been from other schools—to go up and tour the UN and see what it was, you know. And they paid for it. Pat had spied it out and said, "Let's go." I said, "Okay." [laughs]
- SM: Do you remember anything like in the dorms, any kind of activities you guys had there or in the union, like movies or shows? You said Dionne Warwick was one you remembered.
- TS: Yes. Yes. They would have, like, special stuff but all the schools did that. They had some special somebody come.
- SM: Did you guys keep a lot of the traditions that went from when it was Woman's College, like when it was Rat Day or Daisy Chain, anything like that?
- TS: Yes, they had those—
- SM: Or anything like that?
- TS: Yes, they had those, but I don't remember doing much with them. I heard of those, though. But that song, "I am from UNC so pity me—" Okay, that was probably a part of that—what was that?—Daisy Chain stuff and, you know.
- SM: I figure that at some point those traditions had to have died out because they're not around now and I feel like with men they probably died out sometime around—
- TS: I don't think the men did anything with that. Anyway, I cannot remember—I'm looking over there, the wall over there to see if I can see anything else I need to tell you or show you. I've got some pictures from the UN up there. I don't think I have any UNCG stuff up here.
- SM: And did you guys ever, I mean, by the time you got there integration had, you know, was in full swing. It wasn't by any means integrated completely—

TS: Well, I call “full-swing” when they all started living wherever they wanted to live. But I think that was just an option at first—I think that’s what they did that first year—that first year there; that’s what they did. After first year, they weren’t trying to see that anybody did anything. You did what you wanted to.

SM: You were on your own at that point.

TS: Yes.

SM: Did you ever have any trouble with, like, faculty or staff, integration wise, anybody—

TS: No. That teacher I told you about, he was just a hard teacher.

SM: Right.

TS: He was just a hard teacher; that’s all. I wish I could think of that—Dr. Barineau, that was her name. The one that died, I think that was her name. Dr. Barineau. It might have been Elizabeth Barineau. But she died when, that time I went back to graduate school because I remember going to her funeral.

SM: And do you—

TS: Thank you. I’m so glad that name came to me. I always liked her. She would always tell me to come by and see her and you know. She’d always try to encourage me.

SM: That’s good. And were students, you said the one time you kind of were kind of mistreated, you think it was an outsider. Were students nice, you know, to—

TS: Well, some [both talking, unclear].

SM: White and black, or—

TS: I told you, Pat was white. What is that name of that scholarship? There’s a famous scholarship, everybody gets it, they still give it. It’s sort of like—but anyway she got that and then when she graduated they gave her another one for graduate school. I think she ended up getting two master’s degrees.

SM: All from UNCG?

TS: Yes. And whatever that thing is they get, she was just smart. And when we went home for the holidays, Pat would stay up there and do her papers and work downtown, keep somebody’s apartment. Everyone else was going home, resting and visiting, and she would send money home to her grandmother.

SM: Wow. And you said your sister was at A&T while you were there?

TS: Now, let me see your list a minute, of other names, because I wanted to ask you about a couple—Yes, she was at A&T.

SM: Did you hang out at A&T a lot otherwise or just to see her?

TS: No. This is not the one [the list]. You had another with some names on it.

SM: This one? This is just the directory, this is just—Those are all the African American students—

TS: Oh, it's not. Okay. That's where the names were. Okay. Okay. Okay, go ahead.

SM: Did you hang out with anyone else at A&T or just your sister?

TS: Well, you see I was gone—Well, I'd go see my sister, but the girls, my roommate—remember the pretty roommates, that's the only—

SM: Did any of your high school friends go to A&T?

TS: No. I don't think so.

SM: And was it ever—I mean, what was it like going to an all-black college to visit? Was it something you missed? Did you ever regret going to UNCG?

TS: Because I never knew what that was, no, I never regretted going to UNCG. Because it did what I was looking for.

SM: Right.

TS: My younger daughter [unclear] my older daughter, and I think my older may have missed something just by going to only black institutions. Because she did not like, administratively, how they did things. But they could have been just as messy anywhere. I always tell people, "Don't think because they're black or they're white or they're whatever—don't think that way," because it could be, you know—Like they're talking about [President Barack] Obama now, and giving him such a hard time. There may be some prejudice there, but they gave [President W. George] Bush a hard time; thought he was so dumb. They gave [President] Jimmy Carter a hard time—

SM: Whoever's in charge—

TS: They gave [President] Gerald Ford a hard time. Now the [unclear], they gave them all a hard time. At first, they gave them all a hard time. So he's just getting his dose; he might be getting a little extra.

SM: When the economy is bad, people want someone to blame.

TS: Now this McAdoo girl, she had a brother there when we were there, this Francine McAdoo.

SM: She had a brother?

TS: He was somebody McAdoo. I remember he was one of our—he was light-skinned. She might [unclear]—Do you remember her? You don't know all of them, do you?

SM: We—actually she was a late addition. She wasn't on our original list. And people told us about her—she's in Greensboro but for some reason we haven't tracked her down yet. [noise, unclear]

TS: Yes, Wilson was where they were from. My mind is getting—the older I—I mean people around here, I can't even remember. That's what happens when you get old. I don't know most of these people. Well, when I went back to the reunion I hardly saw anybody I knew. But I should have—there's Alice Barnes; she's the one, Alice Freeman, see. She married Beatrice's brother. And she was a drama student and, Lord, I learned what drama students were then. Have mercy. Drama students would be one thing today and I learned they were getting in character, you see. So I learned stuff. [turning pages] So the “reds” are people you can't get to see.

SM: Red—

TS: Alice is a “red.”

SM: Yes, well “red” is people we've contacted.

TS: Oh, you've already contacted her. What's she doing now, do you know? Or do we get to hear about what happened with these people? Cassandra Hodges: oh, she died. Edwina Holley [Moses], I remember her. You have—Janyce Brewer [Marshal], see, that's the little pretty girl.

SM: Is she in red? Or is she in—

TS: Silver Springs, Maryland.

SM: Okay. We didn't—Yes, there was—

TS: Oh, she was far away.

SM: We're trying to—There are probably more people that live in the [Washington] DC metro area than any other area on this entire list, even more than North Carolina.

TS: I appreciate you letting me look at this.

SM: Oh, yes. We're going to have to go up to—

TS: Barbara Wesley [Baker]. You're not seeing her? Now Barbara was into everything.

SM: What—

TS: And it's red. She's in Silver Spring, Maryland. She was in the [University] Chorus. I said I should have been in Chorus because I like to sing. I wasn't in the one at the UN either. Marie was in the Chorus and I could have done that. I liked singing.

SM: Yes, red actually may be—It's on the last page. Red means either we've contacted them or they're late additions to our list.

TS: Okay. Mary Jo—Martha Jo Hightower [Campbell], I remember her. She's probably still in Winston-Salem. She's in red. Janice Belton.

SM: What was Hightower's name?

TS: Martha Jo.

SM: Martha Jo. She was [background noise, unclear].

TS: Wait, I saw two "Janices," Oh, I saw Brewer, I guess. Wonder what happened with that. Because Janice Belton was the name of the girl that was from Charlotte, but I saw somebody in—I might just be confusing stuff. I thought I had seen the name already. [pages turning] That's interesting. Do you have any more questions for me because I'm having a good time?

SM: I was going to say, if you want anybody's information, you can—You know, I can give you a sheet of paper and you can write it down if you want to reconnect with any of these people. I don't know—

TS: Yes, I do.

SM: Okay.

TS: I really do because it's just nice to keep up with them.

SM: Do you want me to give you a book to press on?

TS: I got it. Let me see here. Oh, you're so good to me. [laughter] Thank you so much. Cynthia Brown. Now she [unclear]—She was from Raleigh. She was one of our class and I had a—

SM: Does it say "Harrington."

TS: It just says "Cynthia Brown." That was my class.

- SM: Hopefully this information—What’s on that list is the last known e-mail, phone, address—everything that we have—so there’s a chance that it could be changed or moved and we have had multiple people we’ve tried to contact and I knew something was wrong because their address would be Raleigh but their area code would be Charlotte and I would say “Now, that doesn’t make sense and so—.”
- TS: Well, we move around a lot. Now, everybody was shocked because of [unclear], “You lived in New York and you came back to North Carolina.” I said, “Yes.”
- SM: I guess the other question I had was, do you remember anything—You had two chancellors when you were there: Dr. Otis Singletary who was there for a long time and then you had an acting chancellor, James Ferguson. Do you remember anything about that?
- TS: No, just those names. But I remember going back and finding they had a woman who was my PE [physical education] teacher.
- SM: Really.
- TS: And I forgot, but she was a PE teacher because I had to go over the horse and I went over and knocked her down on the floor. [laughter] That was something but she was nice about it. She didn’t act ugly. And I think my being a camper, working at that camp in Connecticut, where I had saved money—I worked in the kitchen but I learned to swim up there and dance. We had a ballet teacher. They were doing stuff; I did it, too. The lady let me do it, too.
- SM: Do you remember anything about the Dean of College Mereb Mossman?
- TS: Yes, Dean Mossman. Just the names.
- SM: She was there for, apparently, forever. The [Mossman] Administration Building is named after her. Dean of Students Katherine Taylor, and then later, the Alumni Secretary Barbara Parrish. She was someone you would probably only have known afterwards.
- TS: I just remember those names.
- SM: What would you say was your favorite aspect of college?
- TS: I liked learning. I really liked learning and I liked French. I’m still in love with French. And they—I retired in 2005 and I kept working half a day. I worked half a day for five years and then they didn’t take us back because they had this money crunch. So, I hate that, wasn’t any way. There you go.
- SM: At least you’re retired. That’s—
- TS: Well, I sub because that helps a lot. Look there. Any more questions?

SM: Another question I have—We talked about Martin Luther King and RFK [Robert F. Kennedy] and Black Power. You also went to school during the escalation and the height of the Vietnam War. Was that a big deal on campus?

TS: It could have been, but I generally tried to be sure I did my studies. And I saw the flower children and all that. That was all during my time.

SM: The flower what?

TS: The flower children.

SM: The flower children, yes.

TS: You heard about them?

SM: Yes.

TS: And Vietnam was interesting and I listened to the people say “You know, we haven’t done anything to them. Why are we killing them? And they haven’t done anything to us.” And then blacks had a different point of view because we didn’t have equality here. Why would you go fight for a country when you don’t have equality? And, you know, you had all that going but I generally didn’t get too much into that kind of stuff. I remember going to a party and the drugs were starting—marijuana stuff—and they told us that it smelled like weed and if you were around it, the police would pick you up. So we used to go to a lot of parties with UNC—I mean, with A&T people because of that group of girls, you see. And so we went to one—and that was probably about my senior year—and we smelled weed and we said, “Well, time to go.” But over time, you see, I’ve seen people with weed and stuff but they didn’t really arrest anybody. They just told you they were going to do it. Then I learned that the group from A&T that integrated the dime store stuff, Woolworth stuff—I learned that UNCG, and I was so proud of this, UNCG girls went over and helped them with that by being white, coming up and sitting down and the people would come and try to wait on them. They [the UNCG girls] would say, “Oh, I believe they’re ahead of me.” [laughter] I thought that was wonderful. [Editor’s note: several white and African American students from Woman’s College, now UNCG, participated in the 1960 Greensboro Sit-ins at the Woolworth dime store in downtown Greensboro.]

SM: They were and they got, you know, reprimanded for it because the—

TS: Did they?

SM: Well, they were warned by the administration at the university because they were white; they were wearing their class jackets and they were—it was known that they were WC [Woman’s College] girls and they did that on purpose. They wanted people to know where they were from and so now we remember them as—we remember the Greensboro Four, but UNCG loves that they have a stake in that story.

TS: Oh, when I read that I just loved it, sort of like I loved that story about the KKK running the folks out—I mean the Indians running the KKK out. I loved that, too.

SM: Well, when the museum opened at the Woolworth's [International] Civil Rights Center [& Museum], UNCG had a march that commemorated the walk that the girls took from Woman's College to downtown. Unfortunately, it snowed and so a lot of the marchers didn't come out. But they at least commemorated that. I was going to ask you, did you guys have class jackets when you were there or had they already got rid of that?

TS: They might have gotten rid of that. I don't remember any.

SM: It may have just been a Woman's College thing.

TS: I wore my afro while I was there.

SM: And you said you go to reunions. Do you—

TS: No, I only went once and I didn't meet anybody that I knew and I didn't do any more.

SM: So do you stay involved with UNCG at all or—

TS: No.

SM: Do you stay in touch with any of your classmates?

TS: No, that's why I'm looking at this so hard. They got all these numbers—I didn't know Terry though. Charles Cole! Now he was one of our classmates. I want to get his number. But I don't really want to—I guess that's just curiosity. I don't really—Claudette [Alexander Douglas] died. Here's Myrtle [E. Goore] right here. She's in Montgomery, Alabama. Myrtle. Okay, what else?

SM: Well, the only other thing I have is—what we're asking people is: "What do you want future students or scholars or anyone who is going to listen to this story, to learn about your experience at UNCG—Greensboro?"

TS: My experience was mild and it was just as I expected that everybody was sensible. If there were some people that, you know, didn't want us there, we didn't know it. But I just felt like intelligent people realized, you know, if you're intelligent, you're just intelligent. I always tell my kids now—Because I've visited places in Africa. I did travel some but I'm not a traveler. But I visited Ghana and I also visited Mexico and Canada and I've seen a lot of videos and stuff. I could take you through Paris even though I haven't been there. But my point there is that wherever you go you are going to find intelligent people. It doesn't matter what color they are: you're going to find poor people, you're going to find retarded people, you're going to have—find crazy people, you're going to have rich and poor, you're going to have all colors of people. Don't just look at the outside because it doesn't matter. You wait and see what a person's like. And you know, we're taught to

treat everybody, treat strangers—well, I never meet a stranger, see I’m talking like I’m—
But after I know you awhile I’ll try to be quiet. Isn’t that strange? Well, people look at
me because I’m an extrovert and I’ve learned about introverts. They’re still good people.
You know, but I look at them: “Why aren’t you going to speak? Why don’t you—.” And
they’re looking at me, “Why are you going over doing that?” That’s just me and that’s
my nature.

SM: Right. Well, is there any—I don’t have any other questions. Is there anything else you’d
like to add?

TS: No. Now this Pearline, the girl I asked you about, is in blue.

SM: Okay, blue.

TS: What does that mean?

SM: I don’t know what; I don’t have the key yet. I don’t know—Blue means something. Blue
may mean a late addition or incomplete record. It’s all color-coded because the more
people we add, the more complicated the system.

TS: She’s in Nashville [Tennessee]. I was in Nashville. I tried to contact her brother in
Winston-Salem where she was from. This might not work. And there’s Alice McCallum,
we were good friends. I am sorry I’m holding you up. How many appointments have you
got today?

SM: That’s it. I’ve just got to drive back. And then whenever you’re done—we just have a
permission form.

TS: I could probably photocopy this form.

[End of Interview]