

UNCG ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Mary Lewis Harris Reed

INTERVIEWER: Annette Shinn

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AS: Now, Mary Lewis, when you came to Greensboro, where did you come from?

MLR: I came from Winston-Salem. I really came from Concord, but I'd been living in Winston all those years. But I really came from Concord—went to Concord and found I couldn't get in Winston-Salem. Then I went there from.

AS: Who did you live with in Winston?

MLR: I lived with my sister and brother-in-law, Tom Wilson. He was just as good to me as he could be. I didn't know any difference. They lived there on Poplar Street, and Poplar Street was right near the Moravian Church—the Winston church. I used to go down there a lot of times on Sunday nights, and a lot of times on Sunday nights I'd go to the Episcopal Church because it was nearer and I couldn't go to the Presbyterian Church by myself. And we were next to the Carters. They were a real prominent family in Concord, lived next door to sister and brother Tom's. They had a beautiful home and everything you want. And I was very fond of them. They were Presbyterian—went to the same church.

AS: And you studied at Salem [Academy & College] too?

MLR: I went to Salem; took music lessons. Went down there once a week. Walked. But it was so wonderful to take music lessons down there, and I've never forgotten it. And she gave me a foundation that has stayed with me. And I went there and didn't practice right; I want to play a piece. But if I made one mistake in the exercises, it's goodbye piece. I didn't make any mistake any time. Next time I played those exercises right.

AS: But now, when you went to Greensboro, did you go on the train?

MLR: I think I must have gone on the train. I don't see how else I could have gotten there. I got the scholarship. And I roomed with Mary Wiley [Class of 1894]. I knew her in Winston-Salem. Her sister, Annie Wiley, taught there in Greensboro. She didn't stay there long. But I knew them real well in Winston-Salem. When I went back to Winston and Mary taught in the school, and I taught—we taught in the same school. She taught the high school subject, and I taught primary. And I went out to the West End School, and I'd been praying to teach. And they said I wouldn't tell anybody else this.

But they said that the children—and I made them all line up and march to the chapel. Went to the chapel every morning—said that that had been never done before because the teacher they had there before—I forgot what her name was—she wasn't a trained teacher. She didn't know anything about teaching children. She just let them run over each other, hell mall, pell mell, any which way. And they had no order about anything they did. And I was real successful with my teaching. Looking back on it now, I mean, comparatively speaking. But I made a lot of nice friends there. And then, I went home. I stayed there, I believe, three years, and I would have kept on. But I went home, and I found Mama needed me so much. She didn't have anybody. And I could work there—teach in Concord and help her there at home. That's the reason I went back to Concord.

AS: Well, when you got to Greensboro, who met you at the train? Was it some—did they have somebody from the college?

MLR: They had somebody from the college to meet us. That's why they took us out all together.

AS: What did the college look like when you first saw it?

MLR: It was awfully nice looking. And Miss [Sue May] Kirkland [lady principal] was in—I suppose you would call her the dean. She had the rooms on to the right as you went in. She had a sitting room and a bedroom. I think probably had three rooms. And she was always immaculate. And she—before you went anywhere you had to go by her room. That pass on your appearance. If you're not right, you went back to your room and made yourself right. And I always will be grateful to her that she was so strict. She did teach me things that I had never thought about—Sue May Kirkland from Raleigh.

AS: Do you remember what your room looked like?

MLR: Yes, I had a double bed in that corner. And Mary Wiley and I slept together. And seems to me that there was another single bed on the other corner, other side. I'm not certain about that. Yes, it was because Denise Collins from Hillsborough shared the room with us. And she was a perfect and lovely person. And after she came to Concord to see me. She came from—she was an Episcopalian, went to the Episcopal Church every Sunday. And the rest of us all were Presbyterian, and she was Episcopalian. And all these Presbyterians and Methodists were around. But she was an awfully nice person.

AS: Well, did you have to keep your room yourself? Did you have inspection?

MLR: We had inspection once a week. We had to clean it ourselves. That's my recollection.

AS: Now, tell me about the dining room.

MLR: Well, when we first went there we had a nice—we had a long table. There were three or four on one side and somebody at the end. And the one at the end, I forget—one of the teachers. And seems to me that she asked the blessing every time. And we had to wash our own dishes. That was just killing. And one day they announced that we wouldn't have to wash dishes anymore because afterwards they would be taken care of. And that was a wonderful day. We didn't have to wash dishes anymore. You see the college had just started, and they didn't have any money and had all these girls to be taken care of. I don't see how they took care of us. And I don't see how I ever got in the junior class to save my soul.

AS: But tell me, how did you get in the junior class?

MLR: Took an examination. And then, of course, I had been reading—ever since I could remember I've read. And I passed the test, so they took me in the junior class. But afterwards I realized that there were a lot of thing in the sophomore class that I would liked to have studied. And I missed it. But I went there and graduated in two years. And Mama came up from Concord and saw me get my diploma.

AS: Well, in the dining room, was the food good?

MLR: The food was all right.

AS: Did you have a favorite dish?

MLR: I don't remember that.

AS: Did you have to get your own food, or was it served?

MLR: My recollection is that we went by a place that had the food and took and served ourselves at first, and then they served us. But they didn't keep that up long. We didn't have to do it long. You know, they didn't have any—they had just started. And we had to do things when we first went there. They didn't have the help, and they had all these girls that they didn't expect hat had to be taken care about it. And there was one girl from the mountains. And she had never been away from the mountains. And she—I've forgotten her name. But she really was lost in that crowd. She didn't have any clothes. She had plenty of sense though; she stayed there and graduated eventually.

AS: Well, Miss Marjorie Hood, who is the archivist and in charge of Special Collections at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library, has sent us some information from the catalogs of 1892-93, 1893-94, and here, is a picture of Miss Sue May Kirkland, the lady principal.

MLR: That's right.

AS: And you've been telling me about her. What else did she do besides inspect?

MLR: She sat in her room. And you had to get in touch with her when you went to town, and when you came back, you had to report. She kept up with the girls. And you couldn't leave without going by and speaking to her and asking her permission. And I don't know if she did anything else.

AS: What did she look like?

MLR: She was a rather large woman, but she knew how to wear her clothes. She knew how to carry herself. The girls had the greatest respect for her. They were afraid of her. I was afraid of her myself, to tell you the truth, but she was wonderful. Miss Sue May Kirkland. She was from Raleigh.

AS: How about callers or dates?

MLR: Well, I think that plenty of them—I didn't have many, but other girls did. But you had to have permission to have them. And there was a room right across the hall from where Miss Kirkland sat, and she inspected everybody that came in. You didn't get by with us all. And before you went to town, she looked you over from top to toe to see if you were presentable.

AS: Did you have to wear hats?

MLR: I don't remember any, but I think we did though. And then, did I tell you when the teacher was killed?

AS: Tell me about that.

MLR: That was terrible. Well, somebody came in our room early in the morning. It was dark and wakes us up. And they wanted to see if we were all in the room. I was sleeping with Mary Wiley, and there was somebody on this other bed. And we didn't know anything about it—why she came in the dark to see where we were. She went to every room on the hall. And we went to breakfast. Nobody knew anything about it. And then, the same morning they were going to have a meeting in the chapel. It was nine o'clock. Everybody to be there. And they got up and told us about—Miss Sue May. And Miss Lina McDonald, it was, had been killed that morning walking on the railroad track. It was perfectly terrible. Her mother lived in Winston-Salem and taught up at the North End School. And it was just—she had gotten up—Lina McDonald had gotten up early to go out to walk and walked on the track. Of course, they didn't see her. It was early in the morning. Killed her.

AS: Well, you could go downtown.

MLR: Went downtown once a week. Seems to me. That's my recollection. Yeah, we went downtown. But we always had to pass inspection before we went downtown.

AS: Did you have to have a chaperone, or could you go in groups, or—?

MLR: Went in groups as I understood it, as I remember it. No, you couldn't go alone. And we went to church on Sunday.

AS: If you broke a rule, what happened?

MLR: You didn't have that privilege again.

AS: Did you break any rules?

MLR: Not that I know of. If I did, I got by with somehow or another. I think really I believe I was law abiding when I went there. I believe I was. I was so glad to go where I could go to school. I appreciated the college because I had never been to a place like that before and was perfectly wonderful the opportunities you had. And I came in contact with so many wonderful people. Now, Miss [Viola] Boddie [professor of Latin and French] was an awfully nice. I was a little bit afraid of her though. And Miss [Gertrude] Mendenhall was sort of [unclear] was a Quaker. She taught mathematics, and I'm poor at mathematics. And it was Dr. [J.Y.] Joyner [head of the English department, lawyer, became North Carolina superintendent of public instruction] now—I think it was who after went to the University of Tennessee. He was awfully good. I think I've got his name right.

AS: I believe Dr. Joyner went to Raleigh.

MLR: Did he go to Raleigh? Well, it was somebody else went to University of Tennessee. I've forgotten who it was and have forgotten his name. But I enjoyed his classes. [long pause] The Negro man who used to ring the college bell was Zeke. Zeke, Z-E-K-E. Zeke always rang the bell for the college, for the classes.

AS: On the hour?

MLR: On the hour.

AS: I was trying to find this man from Tennessee. We'll come across him later. How about study hours, Mary Lewis, and the library?

MLR: We studied in our rooms, my recollection. We studied in our rooms. And then, we sometimes studied out in the hall. But they were very strict about if you went in the hall—you couldn't talk, couldn't disturb anybody. And let us go out there sometimes, but we studied in our rooms.

AS: What kind of books did you have in the library?

MLR: I don't remember, Annette. Had a good library as I recollect.

AS: Did you have any light fiction, or was it mostly on the serious side?

MLR: I don't remember. I used to get books from the library once a week, but it had a connection to what I was doing with most of my studies. I can't go in detail because I don't remember. Miss Kirkland was an outstanding person in that home.

AS: I have a picture here of the graduating Class of 1894. There were eight students. You had more than that when you started, didn't you?

MLR: Yes, we did. I thought there were nine in the class.

AS: I believe there are eight. I'm going to read the names to you. Rachel Brown [Class of 1894].

MLR: Yes, I remember Rachel.

AS: Virginia Taylor [Class of 1894].

MLR: I remember the name. That's all.

AS: Susan Israel [Class of 1894].

MLR: Yes. I actually knew her in Concord. She came from Asheville, if I'm not mistaken.

AS: And then this Mary Lewis Harris. We know her.

MLR: Mary Applewhite [Class of 1894].

AS: I remember the name, Annette, but I can't face anything about her.

MLR: I believe you said she was an older person.

AS: I think she must have been, but I can't recall.

MLR: Annie Lee Rose [Class of 1894].

AS: Yes.

MLR: Mary Wiley.

AS: Mary Wiley, of course, I knew well, better than any of the rest of them. We roomed together and slept in the same bed. There was a double bed in that corner and a single bed over there. And I don't know who was in that single bed. Yes, I do. It was Denise Collins from Hillsborough. She was a perfectly lovely person. And she was an Episcopalian. She was unhappy at the school. But, Annette, she

was just as poor as she could be. All of us were poor. Nobody had any money. So we were all in the same boat as far as that's concerned. But at least—she couldn't spend a cent, couldn't spend a cent. And afterwards she came to see me in Concord. And I miss her again. I was glad to see her.

AS: Gertrude Bagby [Class of 1894].

MLR: Gertrude Bagby. That's right. She was from Wilmington, I think. Talked a great deal, never stopped talking. And she was smart. Had lots more sense than I had.

AS: Was Mary Wiley related to the Calvin Wiley, the North Carolina—?

MLR: She was his daughter. Her father was Calvin Wiley [first superintendent of North Carolina Common Schools]. Her sister, Annie Wiley, was there in Greensboro and taught there at the college. And Mary lived there on—I've been to her house hundreds of times. And she went to Presbyterian Church. I went to Presbyterian Church after we began teaching. And I used to go down to the Wiley's nearly every Saturday afternoon and eat supper with them.

AS: What was the story about Jim Wiley?

MLR: Jim Wiley disappeared. And he went to South America. And they didn't know anything about him, couldn't hear from him. Nobody knew anything about Jim Wiley. But, Annette—afterwards he came back to Winston-Salem and in Concord they had a series of lectures when they wanted to do away with barrooms and had a series of lectures on drinking and what we were do—one thing to do away with barrooms all over the state. And he came down from Winston-Salem and made a talk. And how he happened to come back, I don't know. That was a different Jim Wiley than the one I used to know in Winston-Salem. Something happened to him down in South America. His people didn't know one living blessed thing about him. I don't know how he ever happened to come back. But he soon disappeared from the scene.

Mary Wiley was awfully smart. She was a lot smarter than I was. She never forgot anything. She couldn't see, and she sat on that corner with a book and we would read the lesson to her. She couldn't read hardly a thing, her poor eyes. But she made the grade all right because she had a wonderful mind.

AS: I have here a list of the officers and faculty. What do you remember about Dr. [Charles Duncan] McIver [founding president]?

MLR: Well, I remember the girls had the greatest respect for him. And yet we all knew him to speak to him. And that's all. I was in his office just once or twice, was scared to death. Went there for something. But he was all right. I can't tell you much about him now.

AS: Did you go to chapel?

MLR: Yes, we went to chapel. They had chapel every day. I was trying to think. Somebody read the scriptures.

AS: Was Dr. McIver there?

MLR: I think he came occasionally, but not all of the time. And, then, when the chapel service was over, everybody went to their classrooms. But they started with the chapel every morning.

AS: Dr. Edwin A. Alderman [professor], history and English literature.

MLR: He was a shining light to me. And he went to the University of Tennessee, but he was perfectly wonderful. And, Annette, I joined that class and I had no more business joining it. I ought to have been in the freshman. But I had read all my life long. So, they gave us a test and put me in his class. And, of course, it was wonderful to be in his class because he was just a wonderful teacher and a wonderful man. And I wouldn't take anything in the world for it, but I don't know how I got in there. But I stayed in there. I didn't fail on anything so far as I know.

AS: Did he teach you Shakespeare?

MLR: Yes, he did. We had—I forgot which one of Shakespeare's plays he taught us. We just had one—we ended up the year with that.

AS: Gertrude W. Mendenhall.

MLR: Miss Mendenhall was just wonderful. She was mathematics, wasn't she?

AS: Mathematics and German.

MLR: That's right. And I think I studied German under her. But I didn't take mathematics because I wasn't any good in mathematics.

AS: Dixie Lee Bryant [professor of geology, biology, physical geography].

MLR: She was my favorite of all the teachers. She was my favorite. I got along with her just fine. I've forgotten what she taught.

AS: She taught natural sciences.

MLR: Well, that's right.

AS: What did she look like?

MLR: She was a small woman is all I remember, Annette. But she was a teacher.

AS: Miriam Bitting [medical doctor and original campus physician] who taught physiology, hygiene and—

MLR: Who did that?

AS: Miriam Bitting, B-I-T-T-I-N-G.

MLR: Oh, yes. And what did she teach?

AS: Physiology, hygiene, physical culture.

MLR: No, I didn't study under her I don't think.

AS: You weren't very athletic?

MLR: No, I wasn't athletic at all.

AS: Then comes Miss Viola Boddie.

MLR: Miss Boddie was wonderful. She taught Latin and—taught Latin?

AS: That's right.

MLR: And French, that's right.

AS: Tell me about Clarence R. Brown [music professor] and vocal culture.

MLR: Yes, but I think he came there from Winston-Salem. And I don't know that—I can't tell you much about his classes, what he taught, because I take anything under him. But I knew him in Winston-Salem. And he came in and directed music. That's all I remember.

AS: Did he come to chapel?

MLR: Yes, he came to chapel. And I don't know who played for them. Once or twice I played for them in chapel. Had to have things mighty simple for me to do it. But, anyhow, I didn't do it every day.

AS: Melville Fort, industrial art?

MLR: No, I didn't have anything under Miss Fort.

AS: Edith A. McIntyre, domestic science?

MLR: No.

AS: A.J. Forney and Miss Van Hickcock, spelling, bookkeeping, stenography, typewriting, telegraphy.

MKR: I remember Mr. Forney well, but I didn't take anything under him.

AS: Now, these are the assistants, Maude F. Broadaway [Class of 1893, professor of physical culture].

MKR: Yes, I remember Miss Broadaway.

AS: Minnie R. Hampton [Class of 1893], who taught—

MLR: That's right. She's related to us. Hampton family. She's from Asheville. I think that's right.

AS: Lina J. McDonald.

MLR: Her mother lived in Winston-Salem, and she was the one that was killed on the railroad track. She was on it—lived on my hall.

AS: Lizzie Lee Williams [Class of 1893], an assistant in Latin.

MLR: No, I don't remember—didn't study under her.

AS: Now, these are the tutors: Mary K. Applewhite [Class of 1894], Georgia McLeod, Annie M. Page [Class of 1893] in English.

MLR: I knew every one of them. Applewhite, what did she teach?

AS: English.

MLR: And, then, who were the other two, Annette?

AS: Georgia McLeod, Annie M. Page.

MLR: I think I studied under Miss Page.

AS: Was she of the family around Carthage?

MLR: I don't know where she came from.

AS: Walter Hines Page [journalist and diplomat]?

MLR: I don't know. I just don't know.

AS: The assistants or rather the tutors in mathematics, Zella McCulloch and Carrie Mullins [Class of 1893].

MLR: No, I didn't take mathematics. I should have done it, because I didn't know anything about it. But I didn't take it. I was scared of it.

AS: And the tutors in science, Mattie Bolton [Class of 1893] and Maggie Burke [Class of 1893].

MLR: No.

AS: The librarian and registrar was Gertrude Mendenhall.

MLR: Yes, I remember Miss Mendenhall well.

AS: Where were they from?

MLR: Guilford College.

AS: The bursar, A.J. Forney.

MLR: Yes, I remember Mr. Forney.

AS: How much did it cost to go to Woman's College [of the University of North Carolina]—to the Normal?

MLR: Annette, I don't know. But it didn't cost much or I couldn't have gone. Because we didn't have any money. Brother Tom—really I think he was the one that got me in there. And I think he sent me for the first year. I think he paid—I used to go up to Winston-Salem often for the weekend. And I think he paid for my expenses, but I'm not certain about that. I know he paid for me taking music lessons down in Salem when I lived with him in Winston-Salem. No, he didn't pay for my expenses there in college, but he paid for music lessons before I went to college. But how they raked up the money to send me, I don't know.

AS: Was Aunt Clara [her sister] at Converse [College] then?

MLR: No, she started later on. And I always felt bad that we skipped Sara [her sister], because she had the brightest mind of anybody in the family. She never forgot anything, and she stayed there and she cooked for the rest of us and took care of us. But I went to college and Clara went to college, but skipped Sara. She just went to private school. But she read all the time and never forgot anything she read.

AS: How about mother?

MLR: Same thing. But I remember when she married and left home. She lived down on the next street. And then, it seems to me they moved to Matthews. There was nothing down there. She took typhoid fever.

AS: I thought he had typhoid fever while he was staying Mr. J. W. Cannon's [founder of Cannon Mills].

MLR: Well, maybe it was, and then he went to Matthews. And then, they came back to Concord. And they lived down—just about the block below us. I can't think of the street. What street did the Rogers' live on?

AS: Georgia? Spring?

MLR: No, Spring Street runs this way. They lived down that way.

AS: Franklin?

MLR: That's where it was. He lived in front of the Crowleys, where the Crowleys lived. Now he lived across the street.

AS: And he was principal of the school?

MLR: Now, at first he lived—before he was married, he lived up in the Kalen House at the end right where Marvin and Jones located, that dark, red big building. That's where he lived. And he married and came down closer to the school.

AS: I have here a copy of the commencement of 1894. It starts with a prayer by Reverend J. W. Weaver; introductory remarks by Honorable J. C. Scarborough, president of the board of directors; introduction of the orator of the day by His Excellency Governor Elias Carr and then, the address by the Honorable William Jennings Bryan [American politician, Secretary of State, candidate for President of the United States]. Tell me about that.

MLR: I never will forget that—eloquence personified. I don't remember a word he said. But he held you steadfast, just—you couldn't listen to anything else. He was perfectly wonderful. Now, I often wonder how they got him to come down to Greensboro to our college. It was an experience I never will forget, Annette. It was wonderful. Mama came up from Concord, and she was there. She heard him.

AS: Where did she stay?

MLR: There at the college. I don't know. There was an extra bed in my room or not, but she stayed there at the college. She may have come up in the morning and gone back out. I forgot now when she got here. I've forgotten about it, the details.

AS: At 8:30 that night you had the class exercises. The president's address, Susan Ellen Israel. Then your roommate; Mary Callum Wiley, gave an essay, "Let him First Be a Man." Do you remember anything about that?

MLR: No, I don't Annette.

AS: Then follows a class history by Virginia Taylor [Class of 1894]. Then comes the essay, "What Shall We Eat, and Wherewithal Shall We Be Clothed?" by Mary Lewis Harris. Tell me about it.

MLR: I don't know how—I think the teachers suggested that title. And I don't know what I wrote about. I really do not know. I lost what I said. I'd like to know myself, Annette. I kept the paper for years and then destroyed it.

AS: Probably [unclear]?

MLR: I can't tell you. I can't tell you. But I think it was nice that Mel Barnham [?] had something to do with the commencement, that I had something to do with the commencement. If they had left me out, I would have felt awfully bad.

AS: I think you told me this morning something about your essay—that the food should not be only for physical body, but for the mind and the soul. Can you tell me about that again?

MLR: I don't think I can, Annette. [long pause]

AS: Well, maybe you will think about it later.

MLR: I'll try to.

AS: Then there was a class poem, and another essay, and the class prophecy by Gertrude Bagby [Class of 1894]. And, then, Mr. William Jennings Bryan's remarks to the class.

MLR: Yes.

AS: On Thursday at 10:30 a.m., a prayer by Reverend F.L. Reid, then a sermon by the Right Reverend Edward Rondthaler.

MLR: Yes, from Winston-Salem. That's right. I remember they brought him up for that. He preached a sermon; came from Winston-Salem. He was a pastor down there at the Salem Memorial Church.

AS: Then you had the presentation of the diplomas by Dr. McIver.

MLR: And I kept mine for years. I wish I had kept it. I wish I had it now.

AS: Well, you know where it is?

MLR: No, I don't Annette.

AS: It's over in the department of archives and special collections at Woman's College.

MLR: But I thought I must have done something with it. But I didn't know where it was.

AS: You gave it to me, and I asked Miss [Marjorie] Hood [Class of 1926, librarian] if she would like to have it in the archives over there, and she said, "Please, send it." So that's where it is.

MLR: I'm certainly am glad of it. I think that's fine Annette. I really think that's quite an honor. I'm proud of it.

AS: Then there was a presentation of the Constitution of the United States and North Carolina by Chief Justice James E. Shepherd and the presentation of Bibles by Reverend Jesse H. Page. At 4:30 [pm], you had physical culture exercises. Did you engage?

MLR: That was a terrible blow for me. I didn't like physical college exercises.

AS: At 8:30 that night there was an address by General John B. Gordon on the last days of the Confederacy.

MLR: That's right. I think it's wonderful you're reading that out to me. It all comes back to me.

AS: Was he in uniform?

MLR: No, I don't think so. No, he wasn't in uniform. Not that I remember. But he knew what he was talking about. [long pause]

AS: Is there anything else you can remember? Anything exciting or alarming or outstanding, that happened while you were there?

MLR: Well, the thing that I remember best is when we had stop washing dishes. Somebody came to take charge of the dining room. That was a terrible blow to us. And in front of it was a great place there. Got sickly, took best care of you.

AS: You had a registered doctor?

MLR: Yes. I supposed so. Yes, I think so.

AS: Man or woman?

MLR: Annette, I don't know.

AS: You must not have been sick?

MLR: No, I wasn't sick when I was over there. I wasn't sick at all. I wasn't in bed at all. I remember being in bed in my room, something like sore throat or something of that sort. But I wasn't sick. I was well the whole time I was there.

AS: Did you get homesick?

MLR: First Sunday night I nearly died of homesickness. After that I was all right.

AS: You thought it was a very wonderful place, didn't you, Aunt Mary Lewis?

MLR: It was wonderful. It was wonderful because the teachers were really head and shoulders above the average person that I had been with. As Miss Mendenhall and Miss Boddie, she was my favorite of them all. Miss Fort taught art. And I didn't know her very well. She was all right. But Miss Boddie and Miss Fort were the ones that I knew better.

AS: Mendenhall.

MLR: Miss Mendenhall. Miss Mendenhall really was my favorite. And Miss Boddie. And then later, I studied under Dr. Alderman. Of course, he was fine.

AS: Where did the girls come from who were there, Mary Lewis?

MLR: They came from all over the state. And some of them had never left home before. And some of them didn't have hardly any clothes to wear. I remember that. There was one girl from Wilmington, I think she was. She wore the same dress week in and week out. But they had a laundry there. You go over there and wash your clothes and iron them if you wanted to. You see, the school had just started, and the girls had to do a lot of things that later on they didn't have to do.

AS: Well, I suppose that makes it mean all the more to you.

MLR: It does. We went to church on Sundays. Generally, went to church on Sunday because that was a far piece to go to piece to walk.

AS: Did you walk in the body?

MLR: I think we did, Annette. I'm not quite certain about that, but I think we did. But I didn't—now, Denise Collins was in my room. And she was an Episcopalian. She went to church every Sunday; she never missed. But I didn't. And why I don't know. But she did. Denise never missed. She was an awfully nice person.

AS: Was the Episcopal Church nearer than the Presbyterian?

MLR: I don't think it was. But she got there somehow or another. And Nell Boddie, I don't think went to church either. We were in the same room. But they had church there at school. So, maybe that just took the place of going to town to church. And we went to town about once a week, as I recollect it. I didn't go often because I had nothing to buy, and, Annette. I didn't have any money. What's the use of going to town if you didn't have any money? And I wasn't the only one there. Nine out of ten there didn't have any money either.

AS: How about vacations?

MLR: I spent it at home.

AS: How often did you come back to Concord? Did you come for Thanksgiving or Christmas or Easter?

MLR: I think I went for Christmas. Then I went to Winston-Salem. Generally went for Easter—always went to Winston-Salem for Easter. And one Easter I took one of the friends there with me. She was an Episcopalian, and she enjoyed the Easter services. I've been sorry a lot of times I ever left Winston-Salem because my church was there. I'd been going to that church. I knew everybody in the church. And my friends were there, and my work was there. But when I went home that summer, I found Mama didn't have anybody. She had somebody—needed somebody to help her, and I just couldn't go back and leave her. No use talking about it. I couldn't do it. That money that I made was the greatest help in the world to her. And then, I was at home.

AS: Was Dr. Reed there in Concord, too?

MLR: He may have been, but he wasn't there then. But I know I began playing the organ for different people. I played up at Forest Hill for awhile, and then I took the organ down and played the organ down at the First Church. Been playing the organ ever since.

AS: When did you meet Dr. Reed?

MLR: I met him there in Concord. And Dr. Reed, he liked the violin. He would bring the violin down home, and he would play. I would play with him. Mama used to say, "Well, I know you all were downstairs when I hear you playing with the piano, and he's playing the violin and I could turn over and go to sleep."

AS: He had a harp, too, didn't he?

MLR: Yes, he did. He bought that after we were married. And then, after his death, I sold it because—and I was sorry afterwards I didn't keep it. But, Annette, it was a perfect and beautiful instrument. I couldn't play it. Dr. Reed could just play it perfectly beautifully. And they're awfully expensive. And I wrote to the people in

Charlotte, and they came up and got it and said, “Yes, they would take it back right now.” So, they took it back immediately. I couldn’t keep that harp.

AS: What happened to his violin?

MLR: I kept that for years. And then, people from South Carolina came up to see his violin. They knew he had it. And people from Lexington came down to see it. And finally, I sold it. And I didn’t know what to do about it. I didn’t want to sell his violin. And I went down there to ask Dr. Spencer [?]. And Dr. Spencer didn’t know anything about music. And he said, “I can’t tell you.” Annette, I didn’t know what to do. I knew I couldn’t play it. And this man from Lexington came down, and I finally sold it to him. I don’t know whether I did right or not.

AS: Did you study music at Greensboro?

MLR: No, I studied music at Salem.

AS: Did you have visiting lecturers and—?

MLR: Yes, we did.

AS: Did you have concerts?

MLR: I think they did, Annette. Had nice programs, something to go to. But we were supposed to study. And I really—I think I made good grades. I think I passed all right. I worked hard.

AS: Tell me about your practice teaching.

MLR: Scared me half to death. I went in, and I had to teach this class. The teacher sat there and listened to every word I said. She didn’t say a word. And I went around— instead of teaching up, I went to each desk and taught. And that isn’t what she wanted. Next time I did better. I talked to all of them at one time. But they criticize you. If you did anything right, they would tell you what is right. It helped me to teach. I was cut out to be a teacher. The schools in Concord couldn’t touch the schools in Winston-Salem. Just too bad. I never will forget just how poor they were.

AS: Maybe it was a good thing you went back.

MLR: I don’t know. But I built up the primary part of the school.

AS: Did you have many students in the practice school?

MLR: Had a roomful, Annette, but I don’t remember just how many there were. But there was a roomful. And the teachers sat over there and listened. They didn’t

offer a word the entire time you were teaching your lesson. They didn't offer one suggestion. They said plenty to you afterwards, but not during the lesson. They didn't interrupt you at all—left you alone.

AS: Do you remember anything about the weather the two years you were there?

MLR: Not particularly. I remember when we had snow. That's all. I remember the colored man, Zeke, that used to ring the school bell. Have you heard about Zeke? He was quite an institution, a Negro man. And he rang the school bell every morning.

AS: What time did you have to get up for breakfast?

MLR: I think we ate breakfast about half past seven [o'clock] is my recollection, because I think classes began at eight o'clock.

AS: What did they serve for breakfast?

MLR: Annette, I've forgotten. But we had a good breakfast. They had eggs and something like that to eat—toast.

AS: But you didn't like to wash the dishes?

MLR: Didn't like that worth a cent. Nobody did. And there was great rejoicing when they announced we wouldn't have to do it any more.

AS: And now, you say you had a laundry there?

MLR: Yes, that's right up on the third floor. You see the school had just started, and they didn't—had all these girls pouring in there. They couldn't take care of them hardly. But Miss Kirkland was really an outstanding figure. She taught me and lots because she was always dressed perfectly. And she had the most wonderful manners. And she was the kind person that the girls—I had never come in contact with anybody quite like that before. And I held her in greatest respect with a whole lot of awe mixed to it. But she really taught us a great deal. She was from Raleigh.

AS: I believe she stayed there until 1914.

MLR: I don't know how long she stayed. But she was an outstanding person. And if you went to town, as I said awhile ago, she inspected you so that you were all right to go to town. And just her very presence, I look back on her and think she was a wonderful person to have to look forward to. She inspected you and she'd correct you. If you didn't do the right thing, she would correct you.

AS: Did you say you have any classes with Mrs. Lucy H. Robertson [head of history department]?

MLR: You know, I don't think so.

AS: Well, later she became president of Greensboro College.

MLR: I don't believe I did Annette. If I did, I can't recall it if I did. Miss Boddie was one of the main teachers—and Miss Mendenhall and Miss Boddie. Miss Mendenhall taught mathematics. And Dr. Alderman, he was outstanding teacher there.

AS: Mrs. Robertson taught history and reading, and she may have been in the freshman and sophomore classes.

MLR: Yes, but I studied history. I took an examination. Annette, they put me where I didn't belong because there was so much afterwards I found out in the freshman and sophomore classes that I had never studied I would have loved to study. But they put me up in the other classes, and I went right on with it. But whatever it was, the examination was, I passed that all right, and they thought I could—but I read all my life long. We didn't know anything else but to read.

AS: Now, grandmother went to Salem. Why didn't you go to Salem?

MLR: I took music there. They wouldn't take anything. Brother Tom sent me down there to take music. Wouldn't take anything in the world for it. Miss Vest [?] was my teacher, and I went in. If I made—didn't play my exercises right she wouldn't let me play a piece. [telephone ringing] Annette, you want to answer that?

[End of Interview]

[Interviewer's notes]

Side one of the tape was ended as the telephone rang. After answering the telephone, we turned to side two. But because of something not uncommon in these days, probably an imperfection in the tape or human malfunction, the concluding remarks of Mrs. Reed were not recorded. It was probably just as well. We had covered the ground rather thoroughly. The hour was late, and I was exhausted. My aunt was feeling fine.

In the brief concluding remarks, there was some repetition of information recorded on tape one, but Mrs. Reed did remember the name of the professor whom she admired so much. Professor P[hilander] P[riestly] Claxton [department of pedagogy]. She later saw him when she was attending summer school at the University of Tennessee. She also remembered that Dr. Bitting was the doctor at the college, a woman. She referred

again to the main theme of her commencement as saying, namely, the importance of food for the mind and especially the soul. She cleared up the question of nine members of the class of 1894 by recalling that one of the students (She thought her name was Miss Alderman.) had been first to leave school because of illness. She said she knew colleges had undergone many changes; some good and some not so good. But she thought that everyone should continue to read, read, read and to study. And, if possible, go to college. Of course, in her opinion, the best place of all was a university which began as a normal and industrial school.

This interview with Mrs. John F. Reed was recorded at Sharon Towers Presbyterian Home, Charlotte, North Carolina on Sunday, August 8, 1976. According to the family history compiled by Mrs. Reed's sister, Clara Carmichael Harris, Mrs. Reed was born on December 1876. In the church record, however, the sessions book of the First Presbyterian Church, Concord, North Carolina, covering the period April 29, 1873 through March 30, 1890, Mary Lewis Harris, daughter of R. S. and M. A. Harris was baptized April 9, 1876, thus creating a conflict of dates and age. Mrs. Reed's niece, Annette Harris Shinn, conducted and recorded the interview.

I should like to fill the remaining part of the tapes by reading from some of the material sent to me by Miss Marjorie Hood, archivist and head of Special Collections at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. [Editor's note: Marjorie Hood worked part time in Special Collections; Emmy Mills was archivist and head of Special Collections.] The first is taken from a book written by Virginia Terrell Lathrop [Class of 1923, president of student body, member of Consolidated University of North Carolina board of trustees] entitled, *Educate a Woman*. "When the first 176 students arrived at the State Normal and Industrial School for its opening on October 5, 1892, they found reality of their great expectations to be these two red brick buildings surrounded by ten acres of mud with one tree to beautify the landscape. Main building on the left subsequently called Administration, housed classrooms, auditorium, gymnasium, offices. Brick dormitory on the right, a four-story building without lights or running water, contained the bedrooms but not enough for all the students. The kitchen and the dining room, as well as reception rooms, big dormitory and all therein was presided over by Miss Sue May Kirkland, lady principal, and as the first catalog states, 'referee in matters social and domestic.' Within a few years, wings were added to main building at the east and west ends to meet the need for more classroom, laboratory and office space. The wings also relieved the squat appearance of the building and the trees improved the landscape. It is said that a picture taken of the members of the faculty the first year, but one member moved, and the picture was ruined. This year another picture was taken. The members of the faculty those first years were of high caliber, despite the pitifully small funds available for salaries and the poor housing facilities. At the opening of the college in 1892, there were gathered on the platform of the auditorium in main building President McIver, AB., University of North Carolina, who taught principles and history of education, science and art of teaching; Edwin A. Alderman, PhD, University of North Carolina, history and English literature; Miss Gertrude W. Mendenhall, BS, Wellesley College, mathematics and German; Miss Dixie Lee Bryant, BS, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, natural sciences. Miss Miriam Bitting, MD, Woman's Medical College, Philadelphia, physiology and hygiene, physical culture; Miss Viola Boddie, L.I. Peabody, Normal College, Latin and French; Clarence R.

Brown, vocal culture; Miss Melville Fort, Mississippi Industrial Institute and College, industrial arts; Miss Edith McIntire, New York College for the Training of Teachers, domestic science; E. J. Forney and Miss Fannie Coy Bell, Bookkeeping, stenography, typewriting and telegraphy; and Miss Sue May Kirkland, lady principal; Mrs. W. P. Caraway was housekeeper.

By the time this picture was taken in 1893, there were several changes in the personnel of the faculty. In that year there were reading left to right: first row, Miss Boddie, Miss Florence Stone, French; Second row, Miss McIntire, Miss Mary Petty, BS, Wellesley College, chemistry and physics; Miss Anna M. Gold, MD, Woman's Medical College, New York, physiology and hygiene; Dr. McIver, Mrs. Lucy H. Robertson, Chowan Baptist Institute, history and reading; third row, Mr. Forney, Miss Maude Broadaway, State Normal and Industrial School, physical culture, J. Y. Joyner, PhD, University of North Carolina, English literature and methods of teaching arithmetic, Miss Fort, P. P. Claxton, AM, University of Tennessee, pedagogics and German; fourth row, Miss Kirkland, Miss Bryant, Miss Mendenhall. Mr. Brown was not present for the picture."

And to continue, the second thing I would like to read is taken from the *Decentennial, 1892-1902*, published by the Adelpia and Cornelian literary societies of the State Normal and Industrial School. "Class of 1894, officers: Sue Ellen Israel, president; Virginia Taylor, historian; Annie Lee Rose, poet; Gertrude M. Bagby, prophet; Mary C. Wiley, Mary K. Applewhite, Mary Lewis Harris, essayists. It was our good fortune as the Class of '94 [1894] to enter the Normal the first day its doors were thrown open to students. Nor shall we soon forget that day. For to most of us, it was a turning point in our lives. The bare, unfinished buildings, the irregular meals, the homesickness, and the skunkards [?] of those early days have long since passed from our minds but no so the bravery and loyalty of the girls, the untiring labors of the faculty, and the never failing courage and zeal of our president. Indeed, his faith and courage were as bulwarks of strength to us girls. And looking through his clear vision, we were able to see beyond the present discomforts and failures into a glorious future for the women of North Carolina. As a class, we wish to bear a testimony that whatever of service we have been able to render since graduation we owe to our alma mater, to the inspiration received within her walls. Starting that bravery with twenty or thirty in our junior year we thought to do great things as the class of '94 [1894], but allows for our hopes.

At the very beginning of our senior year, we found our ranks were diffused to one half the original number. And before the year was out, only eight of us could call ourselves seniors. What we did as seniors need not here be told. It is enough to say we had our class meetings at which we discussed the affairs of the college as if the weight of the institution rested upon our shoulders and our weekly class dinners and being allowed full privileges, delightful class walks afterwards. Oh, it was a fine thing to be a senior in those old days.

In the years since we have never felt our importance as we did then. Most of us expected to be teachers when we left the Normal. And so, our work and pedagogics was especially enjoyable. Though we cannot say we gained much experience by our practice schoolwork since there were only eight pupils to nine of us teachers. Eight years have passed since we taught together in the little practice school. To most of us these have been quiet years spent in the schoolroom. As a class, we have made no great stir in the

world. Yet, we trust our earnest endeavors to help the boys and girls of our state have not been in vain. We're glad the privilege has been given us of waging the great battle against ignorance. Nor do we mean to give up the conflict so long as we call ourselves daughters of the Normal. As individuals, we have reason to be proud of our girls. Mary Lewis Harris has fulfilled the bright promise of her college life and is now a successful primary teacher. Sudie Israel has also made her mark as a primary teacher. Virginia Taylor's work has been mostly in the ungraded schools of her county. Mary Applewhite is in the high school. Gertrude Bagby and Annie Lee Rose, after gaining quite a reputation as high school teachers in Wilmington, have left the classroom for the quiet home life. Rachel Brown has never felt called to the teacher's profession, but in her chosen field of business, she has made quite a name for herself. As for Mary Wiley, she has nothing to say of herself save that the years of separation have only strengthened her love for the girls of '94 [1894] and the alma mater. Mary Callum Wiley, '94 [1894]."

And to continue, from *Educate A Woman* by Virginia Terrell Lathrop, we have a picture of Sue May Kirkland, lady principal, 1892-1914, "The embodiment of the Victorian lady as developed against the background of the Old South with manners and morals, as unbending as a commanding figure, she moved through the dormitory and dining room, a presence, a dignity, a formidable mentor but with awe an exponent of the niceties of life, of form, and ceremony and of order and gracious living."