UNCG ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Gladys Avery Tillett

INTERVIEWER: Rosemary Boney Neill

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GT: —she spoke at a meeting over here. And I thought it was just good that Miss [Harriet] Elliott [history and political science professor, dean of women], held a number of honors outside her positions at Woman's College [of the University of North Carolina].

RN: Well, we'll talk about that when we get to it.

GT: And she was chairman of the legislative committee of the American Association of University Women. She was a member of the platform committee of the Democratic Party from North Carolina. That really was quite something, you see. They—in 1936 was the first year—it couldn't have been '36, it was'32, wasn't it, Roosevelt went in?

RN: Yes, it would have been.

GT: [Nineteen] thirty-two. But I think this article here said '36, but that's incorrect because he came and was nominated. It was very moving, you know, and his son helped him forward on the platform. And Miss Elliott and Miss Dearman[?] and I and the other, I think, was the wife of a newsman and that's another name that I have to [unclear]. But anyhow, I'll save [unclear]. I guess it doesn't, everybody doesn't have to be—if I can find the name, we'll supply it. [laughs] I can see her perfectly in my vision, but I'm not, I haven't thought about it in years. But I'll think of it.

RN: It'll probably come to you. Higher education for women was still uncommon at the time you came to Woman's College. How do you think it happened that you did come? I believe it was State Normal and Industrial School when you arrived.

GT: Yes, it was. Well, I think both, two things maybe, were factors in that. To begin with, my father [Alphonso C. Avery] had been on the [North Carolina] Supreme Court before I was born. And he was in Raleigh, I think, probably when some of the battle to get this college was on. He was on the Supreme Court. And I think that it gave him an insight into the need for it. So he took me, when I was quite young, to hear someone who was speaking on education. I hope it was the president of the college, of Woman's College. I'm not sure about that because I was so young. But when we went home he told me that girls must have an education—

RN: Oh, well, he was very interested in—

GT: —and he was impressing me with the fact that I must think—live my life in terms of that. And then my mother was a graduate of, I suppose, the most advanced college in the state at that time, which was the Methodist college [Western North Carolina Female College] in Asheville [North Carolina]. And she was a graduate of that with honor. And she, more than any woman that I knew, read the daily papers and kept up with things. And it would never occur to her that her daughter shouldn't go to college because she had been—my mother had been to college. And my father, I think, had seen the founding of Woman's College. So I think both of those were very strong factors.

And then I had teachers. Miss Mary Dixon was an outstanding teacher. After the public schools came, she had a private school. She taught at one of the colleges in the country. And all of the atmosphere of the school I went to was that girls should be educated. I never really came into contact much growing up with people who thought you'd just get married. You know, that was what most girls were up against, "Oh why send her. She'll just, she'll get married," don't you know. Maybe you don't know. [laughs]

RN: Well, I am surprised that in a small town they would be that forward thinking. I believe you grew up in Morganton [North Carolina].

GT: Right.

RN: Did many other girls your age go to college?

GT: Yes, some of my cousins went to Georgia to the college there—it was a Presbyterian college—and were trained for teaching. I have—there were really a number of people trained to teach. That was considered quite an acceptable thing for a young woman to do.

RN: Teaching?

GT: Teaching, yes.

RN: Do you remember any other girls at State Normal from Morganton when you were there?

GT: Yes. Senator [Sam] Ervin's [Democratic United States representative and senator from North Carolina, chairman of Watergate Committee] sister, Catharine [Ellerbe] Ervin [Class of 1911] was my good friend, and she was there. And I think later her younger sisters went. And she was one of the very brightest girls in college. And the—I'm trying to think of others who went to Woman's College. But there was an acceptance in all families that this was now available, and it was not an expensive college. You know, you could always teach two years and get remarkable—I've forgotten how little it cost. But they realized that families wouldn't spend as much education on a girl. That's just the thinking of the times—that the boy would have to make his living.

But many girls had to make their living following the Civil War and people's loss of property and so forth. So I think that they—that there was—and then I had other friends over the state. Mildred Moses [Graves, Class of 1911] and her sister came and took to the business course. They also attracted many young women who wanted to be

stenographers and that type of thing. Some of them took both courses, education and the business.

RN: That was as accepted as the teaching profession for women?

GT: Well, I think it was accepted because men had to have stenographers, and that's about the only way they could get them. [laughs] And—but I think—now my father would not have wanted me to be. He wanted me to teach or do something education [related]. I think that's because he had been brought up in that atmosphere. His grandfather was a graduate of a Northern college and came South, and education was always held up in the family.

RN: Your mother's family must have been very interested in education.

GT: They were, they were, yes.

RN: She was a Thomas [Sara Love Thomas] I believe, wasn't she?

GT: Yes she was a Thomas. And she—on her mother's side they were very strong Methodists. And I think that they had—some of her close relatives had high positions in the Methodist church. I was born in a family which had two religions, that is Methodist and Presbyterian. It's a very good thing because it gives you a broader outlook, I think. And she felt we should go to Presbyterian church because our father was an officer in the church, but she felt that we should be baptized Methodist out of deference to her religion. So we early got the idea that all churches were worthy of consideration in joining and so forth.

RN: Was her father the [William Holland] Thomas [principal chief of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (the only white man ever to be a chief of the Cherokees) and an officer in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War, who has a role in *Unto These Hills* [outdoor drama in Cherokee, North Carolina]?

GT: Yes, yes. He was quite an unusual personality, I think. He early recognized what it would mean to go—have a railroad up the mountains and then join the railroads that went out the Middle West. And oh, at that time, people couldn't see it at all. He ran for the legislature—oh, I don't know, a long, numbers of times. And I think—he was always working towards working on getting the legislature behind this. And finally they did get it. And of course it did mean a great deal to North Carolina to be connected to Cincinnati and other places.

RN: Was he a Democrat?

GT: I'm sure he was because if he got elected to Congress in those—to legislature in those days—and then, I think they were. Now my—an ancestor in my mother's family founded Waynesville. They had just honored him by putting a portrait in the courthouse at Waynesville. And I happened to have the painting of him so I participated in getting

correct—they just had a little thing to honor him so I had this copied for them. And they—it's just this summer.

RN: Oh I see.

GT: This fall—it isn't the summer right now, but this spring.

RN: Is that where your mother grew up?

GT: Yeah, she grew up in Waynesville. And her mother died, and she was left. But her mother—this is her mother [points to picture]—had reared—their mother had died, and she had, oh, several sisters. And she was the mother, really—took the place of the mother for these younger sisters. And so they had, of course, an affectionate feeling of returning that, and they were all very lovely to my mother growing up because that's one reason she wanted—he lived in Asheville, and she saw that she went to that college.

RN: Oh the college, Methodist college in Asheville. Well, it was her father who had an earlier wife also, wasn't it?

GT: No, her husband had an earlier wife.

RN: Oh her husband, your, which would have been your grandfather.

GT: Yes, I had half-brothers, Isaac Erwin Avery, who was known on the *Charlotte Observer*, and then another who was a lawyer. And then I have sis[ters]—they were very much older. They really were sort of like my uncles, you know. They were so much older than we were coming along that—but we were very close.

RN: And their mother [Susan Washington Morrison] was the sister of Thomas—?

GT: Yes, who married—her mother married the famous man in history here in our state during the Civil War.

RN: I believe you told me it was Stonewall Jackson's sister.

GT: Yes.

RN: Or wife.

GT: Wife, yes. She was the sister of the [second] wife of Stonewall Jackson [Mary Anna Morrison].

RN: Well, that's very interesting. You had quite an interesting background.

GT: So—but they always felt close. And we were—I have a picture here that was in the family because we—and, of course, my father having fought for the Civil War while it

was in his youth—that was always held up to us, you know; they lived and died. And then there was a very heroic member who did fall in battle, and he's rather known. [Isaac Erwin Avery, died at the Battle of Gettysburg] They have his letter, I think, in the historic—in Raleigh. And he wrote on a little paper, "Major, tell my father I fell with my face to the floor." ["Major, tell my father I died with my face to the enemy."] And that was just before he died.

So this was always held up to us growing up that whatever happen to you, you just have some courage about it. So it was something in the family, you know, this was a hero that fell and fell fighting. So someone asked me, "What about the Civil War?" And I said, "Well, it was just held up to us as something as that people dedicated themselves to and gave their lives for." And I think there were several members of the family who died [unclear].

RN: You had quite a lot to live up to, didn't you?

GT: It was sometimes a strain.

RN: I can see that it's no surprise that you ended up at college and at Woman's College since your father was interested in its founding. Since the faculty is the most important part of any college, why don't we talk about them. Maybe we should start with Miss Sue [May] Kirkland [lady principal], who seemed to have been in charge of the social atmosphere.

GT: She was. And she was, I think, in a way, a typical Southern lady with very elegant manners and quite a personality. And nobody would ever dare do anything around her that wasn't correct. [laughs] But somehow or other she and I got acquainted. I had a room just back—her, she had a, really a little wing because of her position, a living room and a bedroom and so forth.

And I happened to be just back of this. And sometimes I'd go in and talk with her. I think she'd known maybe some of my people. And then she would call me and get me to do little things for her. And a number of times she just let me take up slips requests and go to town. So I had a very close tie with her. And I think she really was a remarkable individual, and she held up very high social standards for the girls and really gave standing to the college in the social way.

RN: What dorm was that?

GT: That's the big first brick dorm we had.

RN: Was it Spencer [Residence Hall]? [Editor's note: Brick Dormitory, which opened in 1892 and burned in 1904 was the first brick dormitory on campus.]

GT: Spencer, yes.

RN: It's still there, isn't it?

GT: It's still there. And it was really the dormitory that everybody wanted to be in. And I must say that I was very fortunate that I never was in any other. I moved about in it, but I was always there. And after I got there and sort of assisted Miss Kirkland in taking the things, I'm sure she wouldn't have moved me. [laughs]

RN: She had quite a bit to do with your mode of dress, too, didn't she?

GT: Oh, she always told us, even whether she liked the way we fixed our hair. She reacted socially and the appearance of the girls about everything—she contributed something in social standing, we'll say, to the college. She was known and respected and had position. And it didn't hurt.

RN: You mentioned something about going to town. Were you permitted to go to town often?

GT: Yes. We really—you had to get permission. You had to write your permission. And of course, that meant that they always knew where the girls were. And we were—it was rather rigid going to town. You couldn't go to town and have dates without—I don't know whether they'd expelled us, but they might have. It was very rigid that we couldn't. But we could—if we saw a young man that we knew, we could hail him or say hello. But we were not supposed to "engage in conversation," which I never quite understood. But that was the rule.

And engaging in conversation—always had grave discussions about whether that meant sitting down and having a Coca-Cola in the drugstore uptown. But it was so very rigid that not many people got away with doing anything but just saying hello.

RN: Were they permitted to come calling?

GT: Oh, yes, they could come calling. And they had a special living room for that. And, of course, it was just across the hall from Miss Kirkland's living room so that there was always chaperonage, which was certainly an earmark of that day. It's all right for girls to do things. just so that we're chaperoned, you know.

RN: Well, I believe when she first arrived at Woman's College [Editor's note: The name of the school was State Normal and Industrial School when Miss Kirkland arrived in 1892.]—and she was a member of the original faculty, I believe—

GT: I think she was.

RN: —that she required any girls coming from the smaller dorm going to the dining room must wear hats and gloves. Was that still enforced when you got there?

GT: No, I think hats and gloves were quite acceptable and considered a part of a woman's outfit. I know when we graduated the issue came up of whether we should have long white gloves. And I was opposed to it because I knew that many girls were sending themselves through and that five dollars or whatever it was for gloves was very—and I

stuck out real heavily on that because some of them had talked to me and felt like they'd never put them on again, you know.

But there was a formality about—we all had to be dressed in white and most everybody either made or had made a dress to wear in organdy or something with a little touch of lace, looking very ladylike, because that's the way we were—a women's college. But, still, there was a good deal of the old-fashioned lady in—

RN: In that day, you did not wear caps and gowns, did you?

GT: No, it hadn't come then. And it's a pity it hadn't because it added dignity to it. No, we all had a white dress, and they marched in white. And that was the accepted period of the day. And, of course, sometimes legislators came for that. Often the—I remember the governor spoke one year. And they always addressed us when they were speaking to us, "As I look into your beautiful faces," they would always begin with.

And then if they wanted to tell us something we shouldn't do, they would say, "I know you're not for votes for women." And then this utter silence would fall because we knew we couldn't boo like they can today, and we couldn't be rude or unladylike. So we just sat in complete silence [laughs] while nothing happened. But that frequently took place, letting us know that it was not—it was quite unladylike to vote.

RN: At your commencement, I believe the governor came, and they refused to applaud, was it? He had—he was not for women's suffrage, and I believe there was some problem about—

GT: I think he is, I think he—because [laughs] I remember he looked at me. I was all dressed up in organdy and lace, and he said, "Well, I know this young lady, this lovely young lady, is not for votes for women." And I was the guiltiest of the group. [laughs] So that really created a—I think that was Governor Craig, as I recall, who—

RN: Locke Craig?

GT: Locke Craig. I think he paid his respects to it in utter silence. And they had no concept, really, of the advancing stand of girls in that period. And, of course, the legislature came all the time, and they always said they knew we weren't for it. And one went so far one time that we just—it really got the girls all worked up. And we just—soon as he got off the campus, we paraded. And somebody worked up a little thing where we had his body on the top, and I think we burned it in effigy when we got way down to the woods where nobody could see us. [laughs]

But that was really a quite strong reaction. And I don't think he ever knew. In fact, in later life I knew him. I could never tell him about this. But he was one of the most helpful people to me when I became vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee, so I felt he was completely won over.

RN: Oh, well good. Perhaps he did know that you burned him in effigy. Another one of the original faculty, I think, was Miss Viola Boddie, head of the Latin department. I think some felt that she was a bit harsh as a teacher.

GT: She was very severe, I think, but probably was more like a teacher of the preceding generation of making you learn everything—how to sit straight at your desk, how to do all of the things that sort of indicated you were respecting what was going on. And I was very glad when I finished. It was a bit of a strain. [laughs]

RN: Was it required?

GT: Well, in the beginning we didn't have French teachers. I was always sorry I didn't take French. But I think when I started I got credit for Latin, and I felt the best thing was to go on with it and get it behind me, really, though it's a good thing to have had. It helps you a great deal in English and derivation of words, I felt at the time. But she was, I think, the severest teacher we had and—both in behavior and in regulating her class. And she was—she didn't really think student government could be a success.

RN: Oh she didn't?

GT: She didn't have that modern view that Miss Elliott and many, many others of the teachers had that just put responsibility on us and we could make a success of it. She didn't give us that assurance, you know. It was always—they teach us sitting behind the desk and ruling the roost, and you respected it and you better get your lessons.

RN: You mentioned a girl who sat in front you at exam time.

GT: Well, I remember that she walked out of the room, and that girl was going—she was a graduate that year and she didn't get, it seemed to me, six feet, you know. But she [Miss Boddie] made her take that exam over because she had left the room for a few, what seemed to me, a few seconds. And sat there just suffering, watching us because I knew she had to graduate—that she, in order to teach. I think, as I recall, she and her sister were orphans and didn't have parents. So everybody in the room almost shed a tear over that because it was so severe. But she did, when you got through, you knew your Latin. She was an excellent teacher, but severe.

RN: Do you have any recollections of [Edward Jacob] E. J. Forney, the treasurer?

GT: Oh yes. When you went to—Mr. Forney was really very attractive because he had eccentricities. And you had to—if you took a check to be cashed, he would say, "You have signed this on the wrong side, on the back. This should be signed. Don't come again with the checks not signed as they should be signed." Just little things like that. He had his rules and regulations, and you had to come up to them.

But he was an interesting personality. He was a person that everybody in college knew and everybody quoted, and everybody laughed about trying to get the checks signed just on the right side like he wanted it. He wanted to stack them up, I think, [laughs] and he knew what he wanted, and he let you know that he did. But he was excellent in his position.

RN: He was also in the commercial department, I believe.

GT: Yes, he was. [Forney organized the department of business education.]

RN: Miss Kirkland must have died while you were there. I believe she died in 1914, is that right?

GT: I guess, yes, yes. My father died and my mother was ill, and I stayed out of school so I could get her back on her feet. I just had to leave. I now remember Miss [Mary] Petty [chemistry faculty] just lectured me about leaving, but I had to. I mean, it was the situation at home, I was the oldest daughter. And I think when I came back—you see, I was out two years. And then—but all my teachers took me aside and told me I mustn't do it, but I had to do it because it was an obligation to my parents.

RN: You mentioned Miss Petty. Was that the librarian [Annie Florence Petty] or the chemistry teacher?

GT: Well, the chemistry teacher was the one that I knew best. And she was the one that just gave me a lecture. She said, "No." I said, "Well, I'm coming back." And she said, "Oh, that's what they all say." But I said, "You'll see me." And I had to leave in the spring, which meant I had to pick up her course, you see. I went back to summer school and then came back. And we were good friends. She was—but both of them, I think, made a great contribution. And the one that was librarian, I think everybody was very proud of her at being the first librarian, trained librarian. I don't know where she was trained but I wondered. [Annie Petty attended the Drexel Library School at Drexel Institute (now University) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1898.]

RN: I don't know that either. I'm not sure at all. Now her sister also was the first woman to serve on the board of trustees at Guilford [College]. You mentioned that there were a lot of Quakers.

GT: They were Quakers and no—Miss [Gertrude] Mendenhall [mathematics faculty], who taught me freshman there, was from there. I think they, Quakers, must have had a broader outlook. And I wondered if Guilford College was founded—if they had taken their training there, I don't know where—because all of my Quaker teachers, it seemed to me, were outstandingly well educated.

RN: Well, I was just looking at Miss Mendenhall's records. I see she went to Guilford and then to Wellesley [College]. Perhaps it was like Woman's College and was not accredited.

GT: That's right. They didn't—and they got a higher degree. I, now I think that's it quite remarkable, the high, the well-educated teachers we had—I mean the professors. It wasn't a college run by people who had a smattering of education. Now I remember that Dr. [Julius] Foust [president]—the way Miss Elliott came, he went to New York to the teacher training there. They had a special college. And that was the way Miss Elliott came. He just went and found someone who had done well and was highly

recommended. And that gave, I won't say a variety, but it gave different backgrounds, which I think was a very fine thing for the girls.

RN: Yes indeed. Now Miss Mendenhall was one of the original dozen of the faculty too. And they all seemed to be very qualified. I guess Dr. [Charles Duncan] McIver had chosen her.

GT: Well, I'm sure, and I think he had a very high standard because he was so, you know, he had put so much into the establishment of that college. And his wife [Lula Martin McIver] was—I think she contributed about as much as he did. She wanted to be a doctor.

RN: This is Mrs. McIver?

GT: Mrs. McIver. And I've been told by the—when I was there that there was no place she could get in, and so she wasn't. And I think that was one reason that we had a woman doctor. I know that Miss Cora Strong, my math teacher, told me once that we were indebted to her. And I think she wrote it in something, in some of the records of the college that we were indebted to her for getting a woman there. I guess she thought if she hadn't been able to get it somebody that had been able would come that the girls would have that impact, which I think is true. We all—here was a woman who had achieved and was our physician and that was a good thing for the girls to feel.

RN: This is Dr. Gove you're talking about?

GT: Yes, Dr. [Anna] Gove [graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Woman's Medical College of New York Infirmary].

RN: Oh, Gove. Oh yes, I mispronounced that. I believe you said—did you, had you done a paper on Dr. Gove at one time?

GT: Oh yes, I did. It was fairly recently, last year or two. They're getting out, at [The] University of North Carolina [at Chapel Hill]—they're publishing just background of people who have achieved in the state. And Dr. Gove and Laura [Weill] Cone, [Class of 1910, wrote the college song] who was a very outstanding student there—they gave me those, asked me to take those two. And I did it with real interest because I had known of them both. And I'd known Laura was, of course, ahead of me and all, so I really got into the upper grades, upper classes.

But, of course, Dr. Gove—she's one of the first people I knew, and I remember all the lectures she gave us on health and [laughs] exercise and things we must do. And she—the girls naturally felt close to her. Anything happened to them—if they sprained their ankle, they were under her care for a long time. Had very—didn't have an infirmary when she came there. She was graduated and came, and here was this young woman with nothing. And just gradually she worked out, and we had a place for girls to go when they were ill and so forth. And she had two trained nurses under her. And it was all very well—it grew to be very important.

RN: I believe you had some accidents that gave you fairly close contact with Dr. Gove.

GT: I did. I got my foot stepped on and had to have my toenail cut off. And she cut it off. [laughs]

RN: How did that happen?

GT: Great big girl with a great big foot just came down on it [laughs] and just happened to hit the end of my foot, you see, so—

RN: Was that during some game you were—?

GT: During a game. I was on the basketball team for the freshmen, I think. And I remember they used to have a little song they sang, "Rah rah rah for Avery, and one for Aycock, too, and a great big cheer for somebody and for the Browns' gift too." And they'd sing this, and we would play on the team. And we played—it was classes, you know.

RN: Oh, intramurals.

GT: Yes. But we didn't do any running around to other colleges. We hoped we could sometime, but we didn't.

RN: Who was "Father Brown?"

GT: "For the Browns."

RN: Oh, "for the Browns."

GT: For the Browns. There were two Browns that were very smart in athletics. And I can't tell you their other names, but we all knew—

RN: You mentioned they had a strong sports program at State Normal?

GT: They did. And I think—well, I'm sure that maybe Dr. Gove had something to do with that because of the healthy side of it. Girls didn't get much exercise just walking up and down like older people during walking period. But they did get a good deal from the games, and we did have the games. So I think that the—and the head of the political, of the group, what do you call it, exercise—there was a teacher, you see, and head of all the—

RN: For physical education?

GT: Physical education. And this came somewhat under her, in her domain, certainly. So it was encouraged, and it was a very fine thing at that period.

RN: You mentioned tennis. That surprises me that they would already have been—

GT: Oh we had a tennis thing, and they—and I really was very proud on winning it. It didn't [laughs] take much to win it, I tell you that because not many people had played tennis. We just happened to have one in our—on our front yard for many years, everybody came and played. So I probably just knew a little bit more than anybody. But it was one of the games. And we had several tennis courts. And then we had a basketball place. And we had hockey. I was goal-man on the hockey team and used to stand and wait for the balls to come. [laughs] And so we had excellent—I think all of that was, for a young college, really quite well developed.

RN: How many years did you spend at State Normal altogether?

GT: Well, you see, I took the two years because I went from the seventh grade. And they were developing the higher forms of public education over a period, you know—getting the money and the county and all that sort of thing, and building a place for it. I suppose that's one reason that my parents sent me to Greensboro because they felt there was a developing period there and then I'd probably get better training.

RN: So you actually did some high school work there before you took your college courses?

GT: Yes. You see, in North Carolina we'd had public schools a comparatively short time. I suppose half of the school—because when I went to school, there were two private institutions in Morganton and everybody went to one or the other. And then there was—they were well taught. The head of our school was a graduate, I believe, of Wellesley. And it was the high—the standards were high. And we didn't lose anything by going to a private school. We didn't have separate rooms.

I remember the first day I went to a private school I sat next to a little girl in the first who was a Baptist. And she asked me what church I went to, and I told her Presbyterian. And she said, "Oh, that's awful. You won't go to heaven," she said. Well that distressed me to no end. [laughs] I rushed home to ask my parents why I couldn't go to heaven through the Presbyterian church. And they told me that sometimes Baptists felt very strong about their religion—felt it was the only one [laughs]—I really did get consoled.

RN: That is funny. I believe you knew Miss Laura Hill Coit [Class of 1896, teacher of physical education, mathematics and English, college secretary and general assistant to the president], who was—

GT: Yes, she was really—everybody in school knew her. She looked after what everybody did. And she was really in touch with the students. I don't know all the things she did, but she was really—maybe you paid for your education. I can't recall exactly her thing, but she was—and was quite a churchly person.

RN: Oh, was she?

GT: Yes. Her family was—I think they were missionaries and ministers, and she was very much interested in our going to church on Sunday.

RN: Was that compulsory?

GT: No, no, it was never—I suppose at church schools that could have been.

RN: I guess not since the state [unclear]. Miss Minnie Lou Jamison [student 1892-1893] was one of the first students at State Normal, and I believe she was Miss Kirkland's assistant when you were there.

GT: She was. And she also taught—

RN: Domestic science?

GT: Domestic science. I think she was a very good teacher. I know one summer school I took her courses, her course, and it was—and she was quite a charming-looking woman and quite a great deal of personality. The girls all liked her, and I think some of them took that course simply because they did like her so much. But she was very popular.

RN: Miss Mary Settle Sharpe [joined the faculty of the State Normal and Industrial School in 1896, specializing in reading and speech. She served as advisor to writers, debaters, dramatists, as well as chair of the Faculty Committee on entertainment. She became the first woman to be nominated by a political party for public office in North Carolina, when she was nominated for the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1920.] was there also when you there, wasn't she?

GT: That's right.

RN: She had a lot to do with physical training, I think, and was also in the history department?

GT: Well, no, I think it was elocution, I guess they called it in that day—teaching you to stand up on your feet and speak, which was a very good thing, because at that time there were not many women—they might have talked in church or things of that sort—but there wasn't any such thing very widespread of making a speech before a legislative committee or something of that sort. And I think later, when women did, through their organizations, go to legislative committees that—to speak, they'd had that training there.

And I always thought it was a very good thing. It was considered a lighter course rather than geometry or something that was harder. But it was well taught, and I think a great many girls were prepared to go and stand up for issues that were before us, such as, we'll say the building of a dormitory for women at the university after they got there.

See, everything that women got legislatively, it always seemed that they had to work very hard to get the right to go to the University of North Carolina. And then when I was there, I was on the third floor of a boarding house, only place I could get where a girl could go, you see. Everything was filled with young men. And so then we had to work for a dormitory.

RN: Oh, at Chapel Hill.

GT: Chapel Hill, yes. So if you wanted to go on and take further training, you could. And so that was—I think the training she gave was a very good thing.

RN: I guess that's why she was in charge of the May Day celebrations.

GT: She was. She had a talent for setting up anything, and then if girls were to speak or take part in it, I'm sure she directed them.

RN: Do you remember any of those May Day celebrations? They seemed important.

GT: Well, they didn't make the impression on me that other things did. [laughs] I know we had them, and I know that we—it was considered—and somebody was crowned Queen of the May. You know, it was all the spirit of the time that time—that was the way that women were supposed to be.

RN: I believe you came in contact with Miss Sharpe in later life. Is that correct?

GT: Yes. After we established the League of Women Voters here, it was a one-party state and the league, of course, is objective and takes all parties and wants you to work for issues rather than to bring the in party [unclear] working the party. But Miss—we wanted to have a meeting where someone would tell what the Democratic Party stood for and what the Republican Party stood for. And Miss Sharpe was an outstanding Republican, so I asked her to come and state that, and I would state the Democratic as president of the League. And she did, and, of course, did it very well, whatever she did.

RN: Dr. [Julius I.] Foust was president when you were at State Normal, wasn't he?

GT: Yes he was. And I think he was a very good president. And, as I was saying about Miss Elliott and other people, I think he brought in—his requirements were high for members of the faculty. And I think he—I know that he went to New York. That's the way Miss Elliott was found. She had graduated well in political science, and so he brought back somebody trained in it. And, of course, in bringing her back he also brought back someone who came from Illinois originally—who had been educated there, then who had been in New York.

And she was there at the time that there was a great effort being put forth by Miss [Carrie Chapman] Catt [president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the founder of the League of Women Voters and the International Alliance of Women] and other leaders for the votes for women. And, of course, she knew those people and that increased her interest and enthusiasm, and she brought that to Woman's College. Everybody—every girl that took her social courses [laughs] knew that votes were going to come to women sometime and they ought to get out and help.

RN: Did I read somewhere that you had heard Miss Catt speak when you were a child?

GT: Not a child, I was grown. I think the writing up of that by—in the business professional women's magazine—after I was vice chair of the Democratic Committee, I joined the this professional women—

GT: —when Miss Catt and those who worked with her were so active, built up in her a great interest in votes for women and she brought that to the college. She strengthened the interest of girls in it because you could hardly go through her course without having some of the facts of life on women's participation in government.

And I know that Dr. Foust—later I knew her well and how she happened to come. Well, he came up there to get her teaching. he was recommended and she came, and, of course, lived there the rest of her life. She really was—and she was quite a factor in North Carolina. She was an excellent speaker, and women's clubs all over the state invited her. And that made quite an impact in getting the vote for women, getting women interested in it. Of course, we never did finally vote for it, although we had many leaders like [Governor] Max Gardner [1929-1933] who worked wholeheartedly for it

RN: Well, even though Dr. Foust was president, I believe Mrs. McIver stayed in the president's house or the house in which she was living when her husband died.

GT: Yes, that's right. There was great—of course, being the wife of the founder, there was great respect for her. And she contributed her part to the college. She was a forward-looking person. And I think just being on the campus and everybody knowing she wanted to study medicine—she wanted to do things that girls couldn't do in that period—strengthened what they were trying to teach us then was to get out and see that these things are available in your state.

RN: Did you have much contact with Mrs. McIver? Did she mingle with the students?

GT: I wouldn't say I had a great deal of contact. But all the girls felt close to her in a way, and all of them admired her and knew that she stood for something—for the advancement of women. I think that was—my feeling towards her was that she was that she had a broader outlook than most college presidents' wives had. She really stood about as strong as her husband for the education of women.

RN: It's amazing how many people there did, isn't it?

GT: It is.

RN: Did you have any contact with Miss Mary Taylor Moore [Class of 1903], the registrar [for thirty-nine years]?

GT: Yes. I tried not to have contact [laughs] because if you didn't do what you were supposed to do or get in what you were supposed to get in, say a report on your grades or something of that sort, you heard from it. And you rushed as hard as you could. She was a strict presider of her duties in the college. And everybody knew that anything that came

in her domain, you better go and do. She was very competent and had competent people around her.

And I think it was a side of college life where she made a real contribution because sometimes those times could be lax and do it. But it was held up. If you were supposed to get your grades to her, you got them. [laughs] And she was just a competent business woman of that period, and I don't know that there was as many abroad as there were later. But she was certainly excellent in her position.

RN: Doctor, is it Gudger? Dr. Eugene Gudger [biology professor] was one of your teachers, wasn't he?

GT: Who is that now?

RN: Is it Gudger? He taught—was in the science department, he taught biology.

GT: How to you spell it?

RN: G-U-D-G-E-R.

GT: Gudger, Gudger.

RN: Gudger.

GT: Oh yeah, oh my, he was—I think he had a brilliant record behind him. And he was—I took some of his courses. He was science and he was a good teacher. And I think later was very distinguished in his writings. And the college could be very proud of having had him on the faculty. He was from Asheville [Waynesville], and he had known my mother's people so he always watched out for me. [laughs] It embarrassed me sometimes when he singled me out. But I thought he was an awfully good teacher.

RN: I think he's known as a very good teacher. You mentioned Miss Etta Rider—is it Spier [Class of 1895, professor of education], from Goldsboro?

GT: Yes. I think she had—everybody knew her. I don't know—she was, I think, a teacher in the school where training the teachers. And she was a good friend of Miss Elliott's, and I think I got to know her through that, because she was interested, as Miss Elliott was, in sending girls out who would take part in public life and for the advancement of teachers and things. I know she's talked to me about that as I came along, what you could do when you got out to be a leader in this state and there were further steps for the education of women, and you were going out as a citizen. She had quite that same spirit that Miss Elliott had, of sending out with just a little more than passing the exam.

RN: And it's amazing how successful they were. I was speaking to another alumna the other day, Marie [Rich] Rowe [Class of 1929].

GT: Yes.

RN: She said that Miss Elliott said that she must look you up when she got to town.

GT: I told her she looked me up, didn't look my party up. [laughs] She's been very active in the Republican Party. We're very good friends because we have that in common. I consider her one of my very—I've known her for all the way back, you see. And she has participated, I think, and done a great deal for her political party I think as a leader.

RN: It's interesting that she's married to a Democrat, isn't it?

GT: Yes it is, but they seem to work it out.

RN: They do. I believe she's a big supporter of Jake Alexander who's running on the Republican ticket, or rather, running in the primary for governor.

GT: Yes, I'm sure she is. I haven't seen her recently, but whatever is going on, I'm sure she is, because she is—and she, I think, was influenced by Woman's College to participate. And her family were Republicans, and so that was her party, of course. And she's been very—I think she's been head of it, and I know she's participated in the elections just as she is now. I like her very much; we're very good friends.

RN: When you were in the training as a teacher, I believe you were required to take more math than most of the other students. You mentioned some math courses you had and some of your math teachers.

GT: Yes. Miss Mendenhall was wonderful. She had to take me two years in geometry to get through. But Miss Strong—somehow or other, she got all the math in my head in one year, and I was excused from exam. I always felt—we had to make between ninety and one hundred and I made it. And, but I was—she was, wasn't eccentric. She was quite unique sort of personality. But I was just devoted to her. And I don't know why she selected me, but when frequently the teacher was called out of the room, I was always left in charge of the class. And I always wondered if I'd be able to come through on everything, but I somehow made it.

But I consider her an excellent teacher, an excellent math teacher, and quite a personality. She used to walk—and we all would walk or play in the afternoon. And I don't know why she didn't have a watch, but she had a little alarm clock she carried and, of course, it was talked about all over the school. And it looked so cute, this little bitty woman and this big alarm clock on her arm taking her afternoon exercise. But she, I think, was an outstanding teacher. Miss Mendenhall was too. They both were; there were so many people who came highly trained and they were among them.

RN: They were both Quakers, weren't they.

GT: Yes. Well, no, I'm not sure that Miss Mendenhall—if she, Miss Mendenhall is a Quaker.

RN: I think Miss Mendenhall. I'm not sure about Miss Strong.

GT: No, I think because she—it seems to me that she was a Presbyterian, that somebody in her family was a minister. She was very religious.

RN: Oh, perhaps she—that's right. I only have here that she was described as brilliant, Miss Strong.

GT: Oh, well, I just think she had me pulling arithmetic, pulling—not geometry, but trigonometry—out of me. I felt, when I was excused from the exam for being the high grade, she was just a marvelous teacher. [laughs]

RN: Another one that you mentioned that has had a great deal of influence on you was Dr. Jackson, Dr. Walter Clinton Jackson [professor and head of the department of history, later chancellor].

GT: Dr. Jackson, I don't know whether he taught in New York or something or went to college, but he had a desire to broaden the views of the girl and to let them come out. He himself came from the deep South, I think Georgia, and yet I think he was the broadest minded professors that we had.

And it was he that thought it would be good to have us—a number of colleges were participating in New York in what was sort of a kindergarten effort. But I think the aim of it was to get pre-school training, get the churches interested in taking smaller children and giving them what I guess now we'd call kindergarten training. And he thought that if several girls went to New York and participated in that, that they would bring something back.

So Mary Worth [Class of 1915] and Rosa Blakeney [Class of 1916] and I—one was president of the student government—I was president of the student government; Mary was with the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association]. And he selected somebody with the leadership responsibility, and Rosa was the rising freshman to take my place when I graduated. And we went. And I remember he called us in for a conference. And he said—and I think he had done this maybe one year way back in history.

He said, "Now you're going up to New York," and he said, "and you're Southern girls, and you're trained to be very courteous and polite." And said, "They're going to ask you first thing, 'Can you do this?' or 'Can you do that?' And I want you to tell them whatever it is because I know you can do it, 'Yes, I can do it. Now what do you—?' and let them tell you."

And it made us much more outgoing. When we got off the train, I know we went up and we decided we'd just take a walk right away in New York and get acquainted. And we just set out. And it was all his talking to us, to go up there and to just take charge of whatever you had to do and do it because you know how to do it. And not—to be real polite like you're trained to be or courteous.

Just tell—and we did—we had one of their best schools, and we would go out each morning and get the girls and boys off the streets and tell them we were going to have—we made hammocks, we wove baskets, we did all sorts of things that were to keep them off the street and that they all were interested in. And then I think Mary was musical. We taught them songs.

It was a wonderful experience. And then we came back and told about it to the assembled college students. He was quite sure that it did something for us, and then that this type of thing, this getting out and doing something and bringing it back to the college should be part of the educational program.

RN: Did you keep up with Miss Blakeney and Miss Worth?

GT: Yes. Mrs. Rosa Parker, she is now, she was married [to] a man related to Judge Parker who was here—she's visited me frequently through the years. Mary has died. She married a minister and it took her—I don't think it took her out of the state, maybe, I'm not sure. But I have kept with them through the years, and particularly Mrs. Parker.

RN: You majored in history, and Dr. Jackson was head of the department or the history and political science department?

GT: Yes, right. It was really a sort of combined department because they were so closely related, you see. Political science was really modern history and how we were getting into it. And the other was—but he, really, he taught you the true history of the South. It wasn't something that was blown—that was made more attractive—we fought and bled and died. But it was what the condition was of the blacks.

And he, under him and Miss Elliott, they sent me out—when they gave you a paper it was something on modern history that would leave you with an impress of modern attitudes. And I was given the assignment of visiting Negro schools and reporting on what I saw and the teachers I saw. And it was—of course, it affected me on what should be done about the education of blacks, you see, and were their schools as good as ours because, see, we were separated at schools, the blacks and the whites at that time.

And I carried that with me through life, you see, this idea of improving the schools. And my husband was also interested in it, and he ran for the school board just on the platform. His own platform was to get on the board and make them build a school that was a brick school and would not leave little black children in a wooden schoolhouse with two floors with no way to get out if it caught on fire. And he did succeed in it. And the first brick schoolhouse was on Seventh Street, and he was chairman of the committee that built it.

So it was quite a tie between us, this building, and I'd had all this with Mr. Jackson, you see. But up to that time, there were brick schools for white children and wood schoolhouses for black children. And this was the beginning of the equality of their buildings.

RN: That makes me think of the fires they had at State Normal. They had a very bad fire before you got there, didn't they? [Editor's Note: The Brick Dormitory burned in 1904.]

GT: Yes they did. And they had one or two things. I think they had a typhoid fever; I think a great many people had it. [Editor's Note: Thirteen students and one dormitory matron died during the Typhoid Epidemic of 1899.] And they had a fire. It was really—see, people, really, I guess, hadn't gotten into building with brick at schools as we are now. And I knew they had a very bad fire. I don't know all the details of it.

RN: But I guess they still talked about it?

GT: Oh they still talk about it, still talk about the fever.

RN: Dr. Jackson and Miss Elliott, I guess, were very close then, weren't they? They seemed to have the same ideas [unclear, both talking at once].

GT: Yes, they worked together, really. I know he was willing for her to go—when he became president, you see, later, she went north during the [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt administration to assist Miss [Molly] Dawson] who was head of the women ['s division of Democratic National Committee], in getting women's groups—see she was equipped herself so—and she did a great deal of speaking around the country to women's groups and participation in politics. And when I became vice chairman of the Democratic National Committee, most of the places I went they knew Miss Elliott, knew the contribution she had made to the participation of women in political life.

RN: She was amazing. I guess. Would you say that Miss Elliott had more influence on you than anyone else at Woman's College?

GT: Well, it's hard to compare since they were different. I feel all of my teachers were good. I think about Dr. [William C.] Smith in English, and I remember a course he had that I thought was quite interesting, "Bible as Literature." Well, nobody ever thought about the Bible as literature. I hadn't. And it was just things that all of these teachers, I think, were quite up and coming.

And Miss Elliott did have—because it was at a time when there was need for leadership in political parties. If women were going to vote, you had to have leaders also. And I think she was very much interested in my accepting the leadership in the various phases of the party. And I worked myself up from just being on precinct. Then I persuaded them to—it was a matter of persuasion all the way to get men who could understand—to have the chairman of the party of the opposite sex.

And that's what brought women in on a broad base. You didn't have a man chairman and a woman go around asking what she could do. She was chairman or vice chairman; she could be either one. And I think within the period, somewhere in that period that we had the war and many men went off to war, and many more women were chairmen rather than vice chairmen.

RN: It seems that after wars women make great strides—I guess during and after the wars.

GT: That's right. And the tragedy of it—you take during the world war, women—and I went on some of these as national vice chairman—groups of women in the laboring groups in California, for example, and those women got an increase, they got what men got and—in those positions, which was really considered a wonderful thing. And then they gradually took it away from them. And this is what happens to women, see. You see it happen. Here they were, equal in sal[ary]—as they should be, and yet state by state they just do away with it. Because there wasn't any war, then why should women have it, you see. And that is a very tragic thing, I think, that happened to women.

RN: Would you say that we're in a backslide now following the several wars we've just been through?

GT: Well, I would say, in North Carolina we have now a situation that I greatly regret. We've had a state chairman, a man from New Bern, which is a more conservative part of the country, and we have had as national chairman a man who comes from Texas. And it's a very dangerous thing for women when men start rewriting the rules. And this is what happened to us last year, to women all over the country.

And it was written into the Democratic rules. It was eliminated that they should be of opposite sex. And this is considered by women everywhere now. And our state chairman here okayed it. And I regret to say that Terry Sanford [Democratic governor and senator from North Carolina] was on that committee. And I simply can't comprehend why he, who was so strong for women's participation, let that get through. But I just don't know.

But there is going to be a movement, I'm sure, among women because it's already been felt. For example, Mecklenburg County elected a large number of men to go to the national, when we have our national meeting in New York City. And in Mecklenburg County, we got one woman. And this was a blow, a body blow to women. And it was a black woman, which meant it took both the women and the blacks to get a woman in.

So, I think that this is a bit of backsliding that I don't understand. But I think that we're going—and I understand that Martha [?] met yesterday in Washington with some of the women discussing this very thing because it's being felt all over the country. And I haven't gotten a report on that, but I expect to.

This is something I'm tremendously interested in, I since I introduced this into the party and it's drawn women in for lo, these years. The man in New Bern struck out what I want drawn into the state executive committee; other women want drawn. But he's clamped down on it. So we have a job ahead. It never ends.

RN: I was just reading that the motion picture show came to Greensboro in 1907, but for many years the girls at Woman's College were not allowed to attend. Was that true in your day?

GT: Let's see, did I ever go to the movies? [laughs] I don't remember much about the movies.

RN: You were too busy.

GT: I don't remember handicapped, I don't recall that.

RN: Well, on the campus there was this lecture and entertainment series, wasn't there?

GT: There was. There was a video done in that way.

RN: Do you remember any of the speakers? Are there any that stand out in your mind? Or performers?

GT: Well, of course, there was a lady that we began, Miss Elliott began, to bring. Well, yes, Miss Elliott brought numbers of people in. I can't remember all their names. Some of them came immediately after I left because she had been associated—later Miss Catt came to North Carolina. And of course Gertrude Weil was president of League of Women Voters.

The college, they pulled together on this type of thing. And I think that Miss Elliott's ties with the leaders for the country was really quite a contribution in that period. I don't remember all the ones that came, but I know we had excellent programs and considered that we did.

People would come in—there was a very active woman from Washington [DC], I remember, who was a leader in women's,—n the movement—that came, and Miss Elliott was probably the moving spirit behind her. And there was—and I think there probably were college women who were presidents. I don't remember all the ones who came at that particular period as distinguished from ones we had later. But there was an effort.

RN: Were there many opportunities to meet the students at UNC [The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill] and State [North Carolina State University] and Davidson [College], the boys' schools?

GT: Not in the early days, no. They came and you could—they were fairly rigid about dates, and it was a very gradual thing. They finally got into letting certain classes have a dinner, and I suppose a sort of dance went with it. And each girl could invite somebody to come, which I did and the others did, whoever the young men were that they knew. And that was considered quite a step forward.

RN: I believe that was the year you graduated, wasn't it, at the senior class entertainment?

GT: Yes.

RN: Was that the first time boys were allowed to come?

GT: That's the first time I remember.

RN: Did you have anything to do with getting that permission from Dr. Foust for the boys to come?

GT: Well, we were very much interested in it, and everybody knew somebody they wanted to ask. [laughs] And everybody did ask them, and so it was quite an innovation. I remember this party, and I invited a man that I eventually married.

RN: Oh did you really?

GT: Yes. And he came, and he was very much carried away with our having a party there that we could invite young men to.

RN: How did you happen to meet him?

GT: Well, I had friends I came to visit in Charlotte. My family had friends here. And we had been up in the mountains just before that. And Frank Graham and Will Tillett—the brother of the man I married—came up to the mountains. Of course, they came by to see us at the place we were teaching. And we had a very good time. Of course, we weren't under any rules there so we could go out all we wanted to. [laughs]

And so we had—and then there was a man there that knew us all, and he had a mountain place and we all went up and spent the weekend there. Got out of Sunday school that weekend. [laughs] And so we had such a good time, they all came back talking about it.

There was three of us, Mildred Graves [Class of 1911] and Catherine Ervin and myself. And so I think that's the way the man I married had heard of me. So when I came down to visit, he called and asked if he could come to call on me. And that was the beginning of our thing. And then we were elected various things. I don't know why the newspapers took it so seriously. And my picture in some way was published in the paper.

RN: Would that be your student association, what's the—student government president—?

GT: No, it was foolish little things, like who was this, that, and the other, you know. Who was the leader and who was the prettiest and who was this, and so on.

RN: Oh, superlatives.

GT: Superlatives, oh yes.

RN: Oh, what was your superlative?

GT: Well, I hate to tell you. It was in looks. And I wrote my mother and said, "I know you will know this is not so." They are—really just seemed to like me better than the ones who really were pretty. [laughs]

RN: Oh, I'm sure it was so. Tell me about how the student government association came to be formed. I'm sure you were very instrumental in that.

GT: Well, I think there was—I'm sure people like Miss Elliott who came in—and there were numbers of teachers who had been over the country, you know, and all, they'd taught in other colleges and I'm sure they brought in—. And then there was just talk about it, you see, because they knew that it was being done at Wellesley and other colleges. And the word gets around, and why couldn't we have it too?

And I think that we were—at the college we were up and coming. We knew what was going on in the world. And in our political science and everything, there was a lot of talk about women and what they could do. I mean, University of North Carolina can have it, then why on earth couldn't we have it? I mean, that was something to compare it to, you see.

RN: Did you get much opposition?

GT: I think Miss Boddie told me she had doubts about it, and the ones who were conservative in their outlook. I don't they actually opposed it, but they doubted that we could do it. Whereas other people like Dr. Jackson, Miss Elliott, were quite sure we could do it. And they were interested in our making our rules, you know, and so forth. It was really a very interesting experience, to be the first president of the student government.

RN: Oh I'm sure. Did you make many changes in the rules?

GT: Well, we did. I think we had more—we tended go—the fact that you could go to town and if you were coming back, you know, they were very strict about being back, we'll say six o'clock [pm]. I've forgotten the hour was. And I've seen girls get off the streetcars and just run to get on the thing for fear they would be caught not getting back on time. Foolish little things like that.

And then I think that the girls just wanted—they had a desire to have—for the college to have confidence in them. And Dr. Foust was not opposed at all. And Dr. Jackson (I guess he was called a vice chairman.), he certainly was a leading member where the faculty was concerned.

And then Miss Elliott and then many other teachers, some who'd been there a long time, had confidence in the girls because they had associated with them and they felt like—and many of the dormitories, the girls participated in being sure that the lights went off and everything happened in conformance with the rules.

RN: I guess the [Literary] Societies had had a big part too?

GT: Yes they did. I think that—we could have programs in those societies. I think societies were excellent.

RN: Which one was yours?

GT: Oh, I can't even remember the name of both of them now.

RN: I believe they were Cornelian and Dikean

GT: Yes. I was not Cornelian, I was the other one.

RN: I think the officers were secret then, weren't they?

GT: Oh, yes.

RN: Did you ever serve?

GT: I was active, and I was—I don't know if I was head of that or whether I was a leader in it. And we were trying all the time to make it, you know, broader and not just a secret society that you couldn't tell who the officers were and you couldn't tell this or that.

But I think they had—for instance, they took great interest in having plays. And so I think they did a great deal to develop interest in that phase of college life, which is a

very real phase because there are many girls who have acting ability. And we had not really developed to the extent that we could, as we did in the college, in the [societies] because that was one thing we did—we developed plays within those.

RN: I believe Miss Kirkland refused to let the women playing men's parts wear trousers.

GT: Oh there was quite a good bit of discussion of that.

RN: Oh was there?

GT: [laughs] Yes. I think, well, people were so [unclear] everyone putting on pants. I remember hearing when I was growing up about a woman who had come through Morganton in pants. The whole town was talking about it. And one old gentleman said, "Well, aren't you glad she had on pants." [laughs] And that was my attitude—just so she had on something was pretty good.

RN: That is funny. Do you remember those, I believe they were Thanksgiving, debates that the literary societies had every—?

GT: Oh yes, indeed, I do remember. I can't remember if I took part in them or not. I took part in most everything that came along. But I don't—I haven't thought about this in so long I can't think about—but it probably related to the college and what we were doing [unclear]

RN: You probably took a big part in the YWCA since you were so active later on.

GT: Well, I was interested and active in it. And I think they—we could do things in the YWCA. Really, I don't know if it was the Christian aspect or not. [laughs] But they gave just a little liberty, I think, in those—in that—organization. And I know the girls that had it were—trusted that. I was not—I was president of student government, not of that.

But Mary Worth was a very much respected student, and they—see, those top offices, you could get to the faculty. They were sort of the avenue through which you went to the faculty to take up the things that you thought might be done. Oh, I remember we went—we were critical of the food we were getting; it was all starch we thought. And these organizations could go to President Foust and present their complaints in a way that they were respected. And he would look into it. And that was good.

And we were—they had rather strict rules about getting to classes on time, but it was very difficult for girls who took their gymnastics to get dressed and get on time. And, of course, it was a number one sin to be late to a class. So we took that up—that if we're going to have to be on time, we couldn't have gymnastics and get in gymnasium clothes and then get dressed and back to mathematics. And it really was quite a problem.

I can remember running as hard as I could run to get to my mathematics class. Well, you see, this gave us an avenue we could go and just say we want to present this claim because we just can't do this. This is—but the faculty wouldn't realize that.

RN: The walking period was still going on in your day, then?

GT: Oh yes. We [laughs]—and I don't know whether Dr. Gove was back of that walking period or not, but I know that she had very definite ideas about exercise and getting out and that type of thing. She entered a good deal into the things she—where she thought health was involved. Everybody was given an examination in health: did you have any shortcomings, and if so what? And—

RN: That was unusual for that time too?

GT: Oh yes.

RN: A physical examination.

GT: And this is what she brought, you see. And that's the reason I think that she made a greater impact than probably we see on the surface or recognize because she did bring certain things. And she—we had to pass some of an exam, I've forgotten what it was. They gave us lectures on health and then we had to take this. I don't think it held us back in graduation or anything of that sort.

But, anyhow, we either wrote a paper or we answered questions. And she wanted us to get it, what everybody had to do. And I think she made quite an impact, seeing how young she was, just graduated from medical school and came down there and all the way. And nothing to go on; there wasn't any infirmary. [laughs] And she just, I think, visited around in the rooms, you know, to make it get somewhere.

RN: Well, what was the feeling about smoking in those days?

GT: Well, we didn't smoke because we knew we'd be exposed—be expelled. [laughs] And unless it was when you went to town somebody got off in a corner. But I'd just as soon cut off my right hand as to smoke a cigarette because it was—there were rules against it. And I think, too, in the community, there was a strong sentiment against it. So it was a very advanced girl who smoked. We wouldn't smoke; it would be breaking rules if we did. And, of course, that gradually died out. But in my day, I didn't see any smoking. And it was a rule.

RN: Chapel, was it compulsory?

GT: Oh, Rosa Parker went north, did I tell you that?

RN: No you didn't.

GT: To sort of look—examine other schools. And when she got up there and found out they could smoke, you see, and then, but they had rules about drinking. And she came back. The amazement the students had of having—it's something to have rules about smoking, but to have rules about drinking. Well, nobody drank. [laughs] And that was one of the things she reported that was very—is now amusing but was very impressive, that up there they had to have these rules.

RN: Well, that is amazing because we certainly had very stringent rules about drinking, I would say. I don't know what the rules are now, but I guess they've changed, too. Do you remember anything about the UNC-Virginia baseball games that were often played on Easter Monday?

GT: Oh yes. It was the big day of the year, and everybody that could got somebody to chaperone them and take them. Of course, when I went to Chapel Hill—oh, we always, we'd pick out somebody that we liked, you know, and that was real attractive as we thought and real influential so nothing would happen to stop us from going.

And everybody went. It was considered—this was when there was more circulation of boys and girls, and it was, of course, a big thing to go. And the colleges did let the girls go, always well chaperoned. Even Chapel Hill, where we were with the boys all the time, had one of the wife of some professor going with us. It was fun.

RN: Oh, to the game?

GT: To the game, oh yes. We could go to the game, you see. We went up to Virginia from Chapel Hill. And it was always very—see, we were—well, it was—that game was just an event of the year. And everybody, married couples, everybody went to the Virginia game. And it—I don't know of any other athletic thing until Duke came along, and then you went to the football games between Duke and Carolina. But those were the two high spots in—

RN: What about the County Fair Day? Was that still important in your time?

GT: No, I don't think it was.

RN: Arbor Day, do you remember Arbor Day?

GT: But we didn't—we had May Day and things, but I don't think they were the things that you got terribly excited. Maybe I didn't get as excited as I should, but I don't remember. The—I think as we went along in college that the things that they permitted where you invited young men in and young men could call was—were considered very advanced, and everybody enjoyed them and it was a perfectly natural thing.

RN: Oh yes. The seniors gave a reception for the faculty on George Washington's birthday. Do you remember any of those—anything that happened at those? Of course, I don't—were they still having that in 1915?

GT: Well, we were hav[ing]—I don't know about George Washington's birthday, but the things that we felt—we were always very interested in trying to encourage—to have this sort of thing. I don't remember particularly George Washington's birthday. It probably melts into just social life.

RN: Well, they seemed to have—all the holidays seemed to have been important. The first party of the year, when they introduced new students to college life, that was called College Night.

GT: Yeah, I think those things were really very important because it did emphasize social life and did get the girls together, you know. And we had—in the gymnasiums at night we used to dance a lot. And it was a very nice thing because girls enjoyed it. It was all with girls, but still it was a social hour after dinner. People would sometimes rush through dinner to get down to the gymnasium and have music; somebody was always—there were always girls who could play good snappy music. And we would—and that was the time for, well, it really was a, as it should be and was a very—but was very much—everybody went down. Everybody knew who the good dancers were. [laughs]

RN: I guess Founders' Day was very important.

GT: Yes it was, very much. Usually they had on Founders' Day some outstanding speaker, maybe from another college or something. But much was made of that and still is. They invited me to come down once for Founders' Day from—when I was with the [Democratic] National Committee. So it—which I appreciated very much and [unclear] that I should be asked.

[End of Interview]