

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A
BRADSHAW, SHIRLEY

MARCH 29, 2001

This is the 29th of March 2001 and this is Bob Gilgor interviewing Shirley Bradshaw at the Chapel Hill Public Library.

BOB GILGOR: Good morning, Shirley.

SHIRLEY BRADSHAW: Good morning, Bob.

BG: How are you today on this rainy, rainy day?

SB: I'm fine and you?

BG: I'm good, thank you.

First, I want to thank you for coming here. I know you are with a grandchild and your life is very busy so I appreciate your time very much, thank you. I'm going to ask you by beginning with a very broad question and that is what was it like growing up in Chapel Hill? You grew up on McDade Street?

SB: McDade, yes. We lived with my grandmother so my younger years were spent growing up with my grandmother and my aunts there to protect us while mother and daddy were working. My grandmother was a teacher as they used to say a schoolteacher.

BG: Your mother?

SB: My grandmother, my dad's mother. She was a very quiet but very strong lady because she influenced my life a great deal.

There were three children at that time. My aunt also lived there and she had four children. They lived upstairs and we lived downstairs; sort of divided up. It was an enjoyable life. The things I remember, my mother and daddy used to leave out for work early in the morning before we got up, 5:30am or something like that. Daddy would leave even earlier because he was a janitor at the Kappa Sig house that burned yesterday. At that point, mother was cooking there so he would leave earlier to stoke the furnace and then she would go in a little bit later to prepare breakfast. They were gone when we got up to get ready for school but my grandmother took care of us at that point. Mother would have a break midday and come home around one or two o'clock. She would have to be back at four but she would come home to check on us and then go back to work for the evening meal. Very often daddy would come home around breakfast time to be sure that we got off to school okay or to give us a ride to school. It was a very--.

I have good memories. My dad, I think, through us he loved animals and so I had a pony and he had a little buggy, and all of the things that you could do with them. I had saddles, buggies and all of that. We had dogs and he liked Cocker Spaniels and so that is what we had. At certain points we had ducks. Today you wouldn't be able to have all of these animals because of the ordinances. We had ducks, turkeys and all sorts of things. It was a good childhood. I think often that daddy through us was able to enjoy things that he hadn't had a chance to enjoy during his childhood. I have good memories.

My mother's mother lived out from Chapel Hill so during the week we were with my dad's mother and on weekends we would go out to visit my grandmother that was out in the country. I had cousins out there and so I just have good memories of growing up.

BG: You had a lot of family around.

SB: A lot of family.

BG: Did your relatives, who lived in the country, farm?

SB: My grandfather had farmed. He died when I was three. My grandmother didn't do very much farming. I had some uncles who lived in the area and for a while they did, but once Memorial Hospital opened they came to work at Memorial. My father, in addition to the job at the fraternity house, also worked at Memorial when it first opened. He worked on the psych ward.

BG: So he had two jobs.

SB: He had two jobs. He would go early morning and work until twelve at the fraternity and I think it was at three o'clock when he had to go and work the night shift, three to eleven.

BG: How did the fraternity treat your parents?

SB: I don't have any negative feelings. My dad worked for two fraternities during his life span. First, it was the Kappa Sig and I can remember whenever we would go up there he would take us. I can remember one incident where we were visiting and the boys were talking to us and I was saying, yes sir, as I had been taught. At that point, they kept saying, "You don't have to say that. You can just say yes or no." I didn't feel very comfortable because I had been taught to say yes sir and yes ma'am to all adults. At that point, I didn't realize that they were just teenagers. It seemed to be a good relationship.

Now the second fraternity that he worked in was Chi Psi Lodge. They more or less looked on him as a father figure. In fact, he became an honorary member of that fraternity. They looked at him a little bit differently from that first group. In fact, when he passed the whole fraternity came and they were honorary pallbearers. They came to the church and sat in the church and afterwards they invited not just our family but all who attended the funeral to come up for an after service dinner. I think that was because of their feelings of loss. This was quite different.

BG: How long had your father worked at the Chi Psi House?

SB: A number of years. I'm vague on that part. I don't remember the exact number of years. He worked at the Kappa Sig. My grandfather had worked at the Kappa Sig House so this had been passed along. Daddy was cleaning for something that he took great pride in. I can remember going to the Kappa Sig House and the floors were shinning. I can remember my mother saying one morning after he worked several days getting things spotless for some occasion that he walked in and it had been tracked up. There was mud

all over the floor and he didn't like that. He had to get down and get it done right away. He was very much like that at home where he had to have things in place and cleaned up. Those guys there were a little bit more reckless than the Chi Psi people. They had not as much regard for his feelings about wanting to keep things straight. But anyway, I think I have lost my point.

BG: That's all right. The years that your mother and father worked for the fraternities did the fraternities provide them with extra food or clothing or gifts?

SB: Not that I remember. I guess at Christmastime maybe they did. I can remember though, growing up, my mother, in terms of preparing and getting things prepared in advance for us, I can remember that she made friends with the produce people that would bring food in, and ahead of Christmastime she would buy crates of apples. Upstairs there was a closet where she used to hide our Christmas until Christmas, but in advance of Christmas you could smell apples, you could smell oranges and it was just a good smell around there. She would buy and I guess she would be given special rates and she would have not just apples, she would have red apples, yellow apples, oranges and all sorts of stuff there. I guess maybe they allowed her to do this, but in her planning she would--

In terms of us going to school, frequently daddy would come home and my aunt who cooked for the family would get up and each morning we would have cereal, cream of wheat, grits, or oatmeal. We had all those basic kinds of things, but sometimes daddy would come from the fraternity and maybe bring us a special treat if they had pancakes or

French toast or something, and he would come and make sure that we were taken care of in terms of our breakfast time.

On game days, big games, you could hear the crowds roar from the stadium. We could hear on McDade Street when Carolina had made a touchdown or when they were doing well.

Mother would have to make lots and lots of sandwiches and stuff for the crowds when they come in. On game days, I can remember that we had more friends in the neighborhood than at any other time because my brothers would invite all their buddies to share the leftovers. Daddy would bring a box home and my brothers would always have plenty of friends at the house on those particular days.

BG: Help with the feast.

SB: Help with the feast eating doughnuts and whatever. I don't remember any particular financial help that they were given other than their salaries.

BG: Did they work five days, six days, or seven days a week?

SB: They worked seven days.

BG: Seven days a week. What was your feeling about that?

SB: It was something that I was born into and I don't think I questioned it a great deal, and the fact that they saw the need to give us special time on the weekends and on Sundays, and I think there were only two meals instead of the three meals and then I think sometimes--. Mother was the main cook but she had helpers. They arranged among themselves to have maybe some time away so that weekend times and especially on Sunday that was a family time that we all spent together. In the evening, I was thinking about this not too long ago, when they would come in after we had had our baths and everything, I remember they would sit down and read to us. I think they felt sort of guilty maybe about not having as much time as they thought we needed so at night in the evening they would make a point of sitting down. I remember *Uncle Remus* being read to us a lot. We had a series of books and things that mother would always buy to sort of fill in the gaps.

My grandmother was quiet but it was just sort of the way things were and at that point in my life, I didn't do a lot of questioning what my parents had spelled out for me. This is the way things are.

BG: Just accept it.

SB: Later in life I did question things, but back then I didn't have a real need to at that time because my needs were being met at that point.

BG: If not by your parents, then by your aunt and grandmother?

SB: My aunt and grandmother and I had an aunt who was there all the time. She had been sort of sickly so she stayed at home.

BG: Is she the one that did the cooking?

SB: No, this was another aunt. The one that did the cooking later got a job and she too worked in sororities and fraternities. First, she worked in the Health Department, but later she would come to work in a fraternity.

BG: Did you feel that you were poor at the time?

SB: No.

BG: Looking back on it, did you think you were poor?

SB: No, because there were so many people who were less fortunate, and I was just being middle of the road. We were well provided for.

BG: So you didn't go hungry or with not enough clothes and the basics in life were there and there was love from, if not enough time with your parents, from other relatives in the household.

SB: Right, right. My grandmother was a seamstress. Mother enjoyed her children. She enjoyed dressing us nicely and as I told you about the fruits, she also planned in advance for clothing. When it was time for school, mid-summer, she would take us and we would ride the bus over to Durham or wherever and she would start laying away clothes for us preparing for the fall. At that point, holidays were big so you would get an outfit for Christmas, Children's Day, Easter, or whatever. I can remember once when she had bought this special dress for me for Easter and it was a thin frilly kind of thing and on Easter it snowed. At that point, we were cold but we had coats. But it was because she had planned in advance that we were not prepared for the weather.

BG: You had mentioned that were so many who were less fortunate than you. Can you describe the general tenor of the neighborhood, where you lived, your friends? You say a lot who were less fortunate and maybe you can just broaden that statement as to how you saw the community.

SB: Well, McDade Street and they used to call it Potter's Field; most of the families in that area were intact. There was a mother, a father and other family members. When I attended school, I think was when I first ran into families that were not as complete as mine. Then I became more aware of--. I think perhaps we were rather protected even after we grew older. I didn't know about--. There was an area called Tin Top and I used to hear parents and people in the house talking about these areas, but I didn't have first-hand experience with that until I attended school. I can remember in one class there was this girl that was really much, much larger than I was. She was poorly dressed and

poorly groomed. She sat behind me. Her hair was quite short. Most of our classmates were afraid of her. I too was afraid, but she sat behind me and she liked to take my hair loose and plait it because I had longer hair. Everyday when I would get home and mother was getting ready to comb my hair, she would be upset with me because this girl had taken my hair loose and re-plaited it or played with it and it was hard for mother to--. She had plaited it so finely that it would take extra time but I was not about to tell this girl to leave my hair alone because I wanted to be a friend and I was also afraid of her. She was from the other side.

BG: You mentioned Tin Top; can you tell me more about what your parents said about Tin Top?

SB: From my impression, that was an area where people lived a little bit freer than we did. I guess their standards were quite different. There was a lot of drinking, a lot of looseness that we didn't see in my house. I would often hear about fighting and people who sounded like they lived on the wild side to a child. My parents, when I say my parents I'm speaking of all the adults who belonged to my family, they were careful not to allow us to hear too much about it.

BG: They tried to protect you.

SB: Yes.

BG: In the Tin Top area were there absentee fathers and single family homes?

SB: Absentee fathers, yes. When I grew up and I went down in that area I was a little bit surprised. I was even surprised--. It didn't seem like I thought it was going to be.

BG: Wasn't as bad?

SB: It wasn't as bad. It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be, and the people weren't as bad as I thought they would be.

BG: Did you see other areas where there was the same sort of looseness in the Potter's Field area?

SB: I think there were pockets in the Potter's Field area that I wasn't aware of. I can remember people down the street, you know, sometimes we would see someone who had been drinking making their way home. That particular street was sort of--. We didn't see much of it but they were down the street away from the upper end--. It seemed like always that other side was down the street rather than up a hill. We were going up the hill and we were up the hill all the way just sort of in the middle.

BG: Correct me if I'm wrong, please. Would you say that Caldwell Street and Church Street were streets that had families that were more stable and McDade Street? Do you believe that's true?

SB: I believe true. Caldwell Street might have been maybe a step above. Well, Caldwell Street when I grew up the children had come in and built homes where the older people had owned the land, and they were newer homes at that point. The homes on Church and McDade were still older homes and so the homes on Caldwell Street were sort of the newest.

BG: Can you describe what your house was like when you were growing up, Shirley?

SB: The house we lived in was a large two-story house. Upstairs there were four bedrooms and downstairs my grandmother lived. I slept with my grandmother. My mother and father slept upstairs with my brother. They had two bedrooms upstairs. I slept downstairs with my grandmother. The living room, dining room, and kitchen were all downstairs and my grandmother had the downstairs area. My aunt, the one that I told you about doing the cooking, she actually did the cooking for my grandmother and for her family. Mother did the cooking for us. We, in fact, had a refrigerator where one side belonged to us and one side that belonged to my grandmother and my aunt. I hear this story a lot, it seemed like when I was younger I was always fascinated by that other side, what they had on that side, and I can remember the ice trays were on that side and my grandmother had a sister who lived maybe several blocks away from us and every day at lunchtime she would stop by to talk with my grandmother. They would have coffee and a lunch of some kind. It was always small, but while they were talking one day I tipped out on the back porch where the refrigerator was and this was my time to examine the refrigerator. As I said, the ice trays were on that side and I decided that I wanted to lick

some of the ice and my tongue got stuck. In order to try to free myself, I pushed my lip against the ice and there I was on toes and I couldn't call my grandmother. I didn't want to call her because I didn't want her to find me on that side. I was not too many feet away from her bedroom, but there were having their coffee and their lunch and this was my chance. They finally came out and found me and helped me get loose.

BG: It was a little embarrassing for you.

SB: A little embarrassing, but going back a little bit I will tell you about my family. My aunt was my grandmother's younger sister, and there was always closeness on both sides of the family that we grew up with. My grandmother would call her sister and they called each other sis. Every chance they had they would spend time together. This is something that we still do on Sundays even though I don't attend Brad's church. He's Baptist and I grew up Methodist. Actually, mother is Baptist, but my dad was Methodist. My grandmother that we lived with was Methodist. We grew up in the Methodist Church. I tried for a while attending Brad's church but I didn't like it so I returned to my church. I come to Chapel Hill.

BG: Is that St. Paul's?

SB: Yes. I come to Chapel Hill. We talked about it and we decided that that kind of thing would not separate us. Brad's minister asked how this ever happened and I told him that it was something that I grew up with. My dad was Methodist and mother was

Baptist so it wasn't something that I saw as dividing people. My other grandmother was Baptist. This was something else that I grew up with. My father's people were dark complexion people and mother's people were light, bright and almost white mostly. But something I learned early on was that didn't make a difference. There was always love and closeness and I'm glad that I was able to learn that as a child that that never made a difference. We loved them both even though they were different.

BG: Your mother looks like she has a fair amount of Indian blood in her. Is that true?

SB: I don't think so.

BG: Not that it makes any difference.

SB: No, my grandmother's mother might have had some, but I don't believe that was the case.

BG: I would love to stay with more about growing up but I know that you have limited time and you're tough to get a hold of, and I know that you have a lot to offer regarding your experiences at Lincoln High. Let's move on. You went to Orange County Training School?

SB: Orange County became Northside.

BG: In '48, '49.

SB: Right. I didn't attend school until '46 so just a couple of years.

BG: And then it was called Lincoln.

SB: It was Northside until I--. Lincoln was a different building all together. I graduated sixth grade from Northside and then I attended Lincoln.

BG: I see, right there at the same sight.

SB: No.

BG: You left in '51 to go to Lincoln on Merritt Mill Road.

SB: Yes.

BG: Okay. Well, I'm interested in your thoughts about Lincoln High School.

SB: Well, while I was at Northside I got involved with the band. Mr. Bell, in fact, his wife was my fifth grade teacher and that was before they married. She was a Mrs. Scales at that point when she first came to Chapel Hill. She was my fifth grade teacher and somewhere along the way they began a relationship. I was in her class and when I started

to play in the band at lunchtime I would practice with him but they would be having lunch together. I don't know but it added sort of a special feeling. I picked up on whatever they were feeling.

BG: You started playing in the band in fifth grade. Is that when you started taking lessons?

SB: That's when I started taking lessons, right.

BG: What instrument did you play?

SB: I started on the saxophone. Actually I can't remember at what point but it was under Mr. Bell that I started to march in the marching band. At first, I was one of the younger majorettes in the band and then I started music and eventually I started to play. I first played the sax by time I got in the concert band and I transferred to oboe and played in the symphonic band. I always had such a good feeling for Mr. Bell and Mrs. Bell because it seemed like I grew with them.

BG: And their love for one another.

SB: And their love for one another because she would actually sit in on my lessons.

They were having lunch together and they were practicing. I was learning the instrument.

BG: He taught you at school during lunch hour.

SB: Yes, during his lunchtime.

BG: During his lunchtime. Did he do that with others as well?

SB: I suspect he did. I don't remember specifically any other students that he might have done that with, but I remember sharing their lunchtime. Often he would be eating a sandwich and I was very bothered by the fact that playing a reed instrument I really didn't want him to show me how to play because he was eating and I'm learning. He would get so carried away sometimes with his zest for wanting me to learn a certain thing that he would grab the instrument, sandwich and all, and I couldn't say that to him. I grew with them and I just had great feelings for the two of them and the music.

BG: So you continued that when you went into seventh grade at Lincoln High on Merritt Mill Road.

SB: Yes.

BG: What was your impression of teachers at the school?

SB: I don't have very many negative feelings about teachers and I think because of the fact that I was a good student. If you were doing well, they didn't bother you necessarily,

and you didn't have that much to worry about. At that point, I was one of the better students and I enjoyed a better time at school than a lot of other children did.

BG: Can you tell me about the other children who didn't have as good a time in school? What I'm asking you is did teachers favor certain students over others and what was the characteristic of that student if they did favor? It's a tough question.

SB: Having taught myself I can understand to a certain degree those that make your life easier you are going to look on them a little bit more favorably, but there were other students who came from those areas that I talked about earlier that didn't enjoy the same kinds of things that I might have enjoyed. They weren't as involved. Their parents weren't as involved with them. I think that helped also that my parents were involved. My father was very protective, overly protective of me. At that point, I wasn't allowed to do a lot after school other than extracurricular kinds of things that I was involved in. I can remember often thinking about those other kids. I wouldn't be allowed to play with them or interact that much with them after school, but I had sympathies for them.

BG: You think the poorer students were the ones that came from the Tin Top areas and other areas that were the problem areas.

SB: Disadvantaged area.

BG: They were more likely to be less favored by the teachers.

SB: Right.

BG: Were they the ones who dropped out?

SB: A lot of them did. A lot of them learned early on to involve themselves.

BG: Tell me about that.

SB: There were students who instead of just crying in their cup they got up and worked to move themselves away from that Tin Top cloud. There were quite a few of those in the school at that point. There were some who just sat and didn't do very much about their situations, but there were some students, quite a few who worked to move themselves away from that.

BG: So it wasn't a given that if you were from that area that you necessarily were the poor student and uninvolved and drop out.

SB: Right.

BG: I want to ask you a series of closed end questions here. They are a little different from what I have done. Can you recall approximately how many were in your graduating class?

SB: Close to a hundred.

BG: A hundred students graduated with you. That is amazing. That was what year?

SB: Maybe I have expanded the number now. I have a picture of my graduating class.

BG: '58?

SB: '58. Maybe that's too many.

BG: I guess what I'm driving at is a rough percentage of how many dropped out along the way from seventh grade to graduation.

SB: Twenty-five or thirty. Frequently, there were those that were left behind.

BG: So you had some that were left behind. Were there some who left because of being pregnant?

SB: There were some. I can remember two or three. I don't remember a lot.

BG: Not many.

SB: Not many, and in fact, there was a girl who ended up being our second--. She was the salutatorian. She became pregnant but she graduated with us. I don't remember exactly how that worked out, but she just died recently. This class, my class, we're meeting and we're planning to give a small scholarship and naming it in her honor. In fact, the fellow who was the valedictorian and the girl are both dead so we're naming it in honor of those two people. We want to give a small scholarship to someone at Chapel Hill High, an Afro-American student. But I can only remember at this point two or three girls that stopped because of pregnancy.

BG: Were there people who dropped out because they had to go to work?

SB: There were some. I can remember some.

BG: Do you have a rough idea, I know it's a long time ago and you probably didn't take a survey at the time, but do you have any idea of how many went on for further education?

SB: As I said, there are a group of us now meeting and most of this group that are meeting attended college at some level. There were some who became practical nurses and I guess that wouldn't necessitate a college degree but there are about fifty at least out of that group.

BG: So you would say half of the students went on for more?

SB: At least half, right.

BG: What was it like being in the band?

SB: I enjoyed it. As I said earlier, if you were good at something, you enjoyed it better because you had more successes than some others. I was a first saxophonist and then I moved to oboe, and loved it. I enjoyed it.

BG: But you were also a drum majorette. How did you do both of those?

SB: In the marching band, I was a majorette, but once the marching season was over and it was concert time or the symphony, I played in that. So marching band was active mostly during the football season and Christmas and those kinds of things. Symphonic band I played the oboe.

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START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B
BRADSHAW, SHIRLEY

MARCH 29, 2001

SB: Mr. Bell was a person who cared about the whole person. I can remember one day we were going out onto the field to practice, the marching band, and at this point we were without a drum major. He had put me in that position of leading the band, but just before we started each day he would go over the plans for the day. While we were standing there talking he happened to look down at my nails and he stopped talking about the plans for the day to tell me that he thought I should spend more time trimming my nails and keeping them clean and that sort of thing. At first I was angry, but then afterwards I thought his interest was not just in me leading the band but also as a whole person. He gave me a real lesson on taking care of myself. I think with that kind of person it brings the best out in you, his interest.

BG: Can tell me more about how you perceived your teachers, Shirley? What kind of people were they?

SB: The Lincoln population wasn't a large population so that you got to know people. You got to know a lot about different aspects of people. We worked with them during the day and we whispered about them in the evenings. There were a lot of things that you got to know about your teachers or you thought you knew anyway. Until I reached high school, I never really had any other feelings other than respect for the teachers that I had. There were some you dreaded. I remember being in the seventh grade and dreading my eighth grade year because that was the year when we had to learn all the one hundred

counties of North Carolina. There was one teacher in particular that I didn't want because she was a stickler for your learning them and was a little bit gruff. Once I got in there and naturally I got the one I didn't want, I learned to like her and I did learn all the counties. Later when I got to high school there were a couple of teachers that I had. I had a home economics teacher who was an old maid and could be difficult, but as I said earlier, I enjoyed a pretty good time with her as such because I was a good student and I became one of her best students. In fact, I helped her with an adult sewing class in the evenings.

BG: Was that Ms. Pope?

SB: Yes. She had actually taught my aunt, mother's sister, and one of my aunts had become a seamstress and I can remember as a little girl when I was at my grandmother's Ms. Pope would frequently visit so I enjoyed a pretty good relationship with her. I did know about the other side of Ms. Pope, but I didn't have that to deal with that often. I can remember there were times we would be in class and she would launch into one of her it seemed like once a month thing and we would always say she must be on her monthly or something because she's raging. She would have these spells and I would sit there and listen to her and I would think that she could really be very rough. I didn't like it. But some of the people that you are with during that time, after I've graduated I kept contact with some people but she was one of those people that after I graduated I didn't really care to be in touch with.

BG: Were there any teachers you thought were below standard that didn't teach well, didn't have a grasp of the subject knowledge, or didn't care about the students?

SB: When my class meets we meet once a month. In fact, almost every time we laugh about it. We go back and talk about those days in high school and there is one man in particular that always comes up, and we laugh about it. I don't know if you've heard about Mr. Christmas or not, but he was a funny, funny man that we laugh about now, but at that time it was sort of difficult. I can remember when I was in high school there were some people in the community that were concerned and actually it had gotten to the white community and they were concerned about Mr. Christmas and his influence and what he was doing with the kids. I can remember being called to a meeting and as a student who did fairly well, I didn't catch the wrath that some others caught, but I was invited to this meeting because these people wanted to know more about Mr. Christmas and our experiences with him. Charlotte Adams was one of those people.

BG: What was it about Mr. Christmas that was distressing?

SB: I think the number one question that they had was whether he was homosexual or not, and I think some of the students would go home and talk and maybe some of the stories they would tell parents would have questions about and maybe some of it just sort of floated. There were questions as to whether he was doing a good job or not. He and Ms. Pope were actually friends. He was the one person that she allowed to escort her to functions. It was interesting.

BG: Was he a bad teacher in your view or poor teacher, maybe I should say?

SB: He wasn't a bad teacher, he just had us doing things that were so different from what we had been accustomed to doing. His way of presenting it was so different from the teachers that we'd had. I guess the teachers--. I don't remember any necessarily bad teachers, and I've always said that since I started I didn't want to become a teacher, but when I started to teaching I worked with students who were emotionally disturbed in the class. I had to find innovative ways of working with them to help them with their learning. My resource was, thinking back to things that I had done when I was in school and I found that some of the things that the teachers have done for me were so helpful, and I think during those times that I was in school the teachers didn't have materials and things that were available to others so they would have to find innovative ways to come up with things to help us to learn. I think the black teachers probably had to do double duty to bring it to us. When I was in school the special-ed students were in the class with the regular kids.

BG: Special-ed being emotionally disturbed?

SB? Emotionally disturbed or mongoloid, we were all together, and I can remember there was one girl that was mongoloid and she went to school with us until I was in the fifth or sixth grade before she stopped. She was about fourteen. I think she learned, if nothing else, if she didn't learn all the academic stuff she learned behavior. So there is some merit in having all the students together at certain points. She used to pinch me.

We would walk to school. She lived on Church Street and she would walk down to McDade Street and we would walk to Northside together.

BG: You mentioned that when you were teaching you thought back about some of the techniques that were used, the methods that were used by your Lincoln High School teachers and you used those, could you expand on what the kinds of things that they did that you used?

SB: Very, very basic kinds of presentations. One of my things was I felt that in order to be a good teacher you had to remember what it was like to be a child, and that's what I carried with me when I would work with these kids and see their frustrations. I would reflect back to those days early in my youth, my childhood, and try to help this student based on my feelings and what my feelings might have been as I was growing up. I was a quiet child so I did a lot of thinking when I was alone. As I said, my father was very protective. When we were at home--went home at four-thirty or whatever time-- we were there. My brothers were all over the place, but I spent a lot of time at home with older people, my grandmother talking and my aunts listening to them. When I started to teach I sort of fell into it, I didn't plan it. My first job was at Wright School, a state school for the emotionally disturbed. I liked it. I liked being able to reach those children that other people couldn't reach and that's what I ended up doing. Even though I didn't want to teach and that was one of the reasons when I started I had good feelings about the things that I had learned and wanted to share them with others.

BG: Did your teachers make home visits?

SB: Yes. My mother made herself readily available. Mother was involved with our schooling and I think it was because she enjoyed good experiences. She had been raised in the county and school was a pleasant experience for her, she was bright, and she transferred this to us. Teachers visited homes, but mother was also there in the school working with the teachers. They had special projects and she was available to help in any way that she could, she more than daddy.

BG: What was the value of the teacher visiting your home?

SB: They could see your surroundings and get a feel for you and your life and have a greater understanding of you as a person.

BG: Did it lend itself to better communication, worse communication, or no difference in communication with your parents?

SB: I think much better communication. I think that gave them a feeling of knowing the person that they were working with.

BG: Knowing the teacher?

SB: The teacher knowing the student, and it also gave the parents a comfortable feeling of this person who was working with their child.

BG: Did it change how the students saw the teacher?

SB: I think so. I can go back to Mr. Bell and the good feelings that I had about him and his wife, and I think my mother, if you were to talk with her today, you would see a smile. She enjoyed him and had as much respect for him as if she had been sitting there during his lunchtime with him as I did. These feelings were circulated; it was like a circle from the student, to the teacher, to the parent and vice-versa or whatever.

BG: I wanted to ask you about discipline, discipline at home and discipline in the school and how this was accomplished.

SB: It started at the top with Mr. McDougale and it sort of filtered on down. He was the person that set the tone. I know that there were students who were punished but I don't remember being aware of any physical punishment during my time. There could have been but I don't remember that.

BG: So you never got hit with a switch on your legs or a ruler on your palms.

SB: There was once when I in the sixth grade and this was more or less a joke. I can remember that on the playground and I had a male teacher at that point. It used to be a

joke; there were certain students in the class that never got--. He would sometimes call them up to the front and give them a ruler in the hand, but there were certain ones that would never get that and I was one of those who would never--. I would always escape. I wasn't going to go before the class and get my hands spanked. I was outside on the playground and some of the students were saying this little thing, "You got damp and something bit you" and if you say it fast enough it sounds like you're cursing. I just joined in with it and I was reported to the admin and so when I went in Mr. Todd said, "Okay, we've finally got you up here." He did that but it was not a vicious kind of punishment. I was saying it along with the other kids and we were reported to be cursing on the playground.

BG: Who was the disciplinarian in your home?

SB: Mother.

BG: How did she discipline you?

SB: A switch. Yes, it was a switch or switches. Daddy never, maybe my brothers but it was mother who was the one. This is an incident that I can remember. Mother told me there was a girl or two girls down the street that lived in sort of a ramshackle house, an old house, but their mother was a good friend of mother's. They had gone to school together. She did not want me down there for whatever reason, but I enjoyed going down there. I had gone down there a couple of times. Someone had given their mother all

these old clothes and what we would do would dress up in these old clothes and just get lost in fantasy. Mother told me not to go down there but each day I thought that I would be able to get home before she got there. I can remember one whole week that I got switched because--. I would get down there, I would go, and I thought I would be able to get home before she got there and I didn't make it because she was there when I got there. I didn't get a lot of whippings, but I remember that one in particular that time. My brothers were the ones who pushed the limit more than I did.

BG: What did a whipping consist of?

SB: Well, you would go outside. She had this thing where you would go outside and get your own switch and bring it in and she would use it.

BG: Where would she use it?

SB: On my legs.

BG: Was this like two or three swats or ten or fifteen swats, do you recall?

SB: Not fifteen, maybe between five and ten. It wasn't something that was leftover where I would be walking and people would say, "What is that?"

BG: So it didn't leave any marks?

SB: No. There was this look like--. On some Sundays, although we went to church in Chapel Hill, there were certain Sundays that we would go, as we would say, "Out to the country to my mother's home church." I can remember mother looking at my younger brother who was quite active. She could give you that certain look and without saying a word you knew that you needed to get your act together. Quite often that was enough for me. Quite often it wasn't enough for them but you just knew that this was not the thing to do. That look would come across the room.

BG: You mentioned that discipline started at the top with Mr. McDougle the principal. Can you tell me your memories of Mr. McDougle?

SB: The voice is the thing that I remember, the booming voice. You knew from the tone if this was acceptable or not. If you wanted to be on the right side, you wouldn't fear that voice.

BG: Where did you hear that? Was that on the loudspeaker system or was that in the hallway or in the classroom?

SB: His office was situated sort of in the center so that you could hear it either way without the intercom.

BG: It must have been booming if you could hear it on both sides.

SB: He didn't have a huge, huge voice, but you knew from the way it was delivered--. That's what we laugh about when we are in our meetings. We laugh about things that were said or things that were done. There was an awful lot of respect for--. He wasn't the coochie-coochie-coo, that wasn't him. I didn't see him as a person that I could go up and even want to hug or put my head on his shoulder. You knew that this person was in charge and that you needed to put it together.

BG: Follow the rules.

SB: Follow the rules and at the same time I can remember there was a side of him that was interesting. Occasionally, I would walk around school sometimes by myself and I would bump into him and he would ask me--. He knew things about plans that I had, things that I wanted to do, and he would ask me about them. I would know from that there was an interest from him and he was interested in me as a person. I go back again to the fact that I was a good student so that I'm not sure that everybody enjoyed the same kind of relationship.

There was one incident that I had with Mr. McDougle that I remember. This was during the time that I was leading the band. I was the drum majorette or the head person. This was a different bandleader, Mr. Egerton, and just before going on the field he told me what he wanted to do for that day. Then I went out on the field. After I got out on the field, we heard the intercom come on and Mr. McDougle asked for several students to come to his office after practice. When we got there he went into a tirade about us being late for practice, taking too much time. I stopped him to tell him that he mistaken me

because I was there before most of them because I had talked with the bandleader and he had told me what he wanted to do. "No, you were late." At this point, this was one of the few times--. As I said, I was quiet, but this particular day I told him no. I walked out and slammed the door. I was not going to be lambasted for being late when I knew that I wasn't so I walked out and slammed the door. By the time I got home, he had called mother and she heard me but I thought she believed some of what he was saying. At a later point, you know, I stayed away from him and I avoided him, but at some point later he came to me and apologized because there were other students who had gone to him and told him that he had made a mistake so that he did come back to me.

BG: He was a big man.

SB: He was. He apologized later. That was one of the few times that I--. I can't remember another time that I actually stood up and talked back to a teacher.

BG: Would you say that not everyone saw his discipline as a positive thing?

SB: Yes.

BG: I'm asking very pointed questions again, and I don't want to put words in your mouth. Do you think that some people felt he was too strong a disciplinarian?

SB: Here again, I would say it depended on what end of the stick you were on.

BG: Good student or bad student.

SB: Right. If you had not done well or if you had been a student that had presented a lot of problems you would not enjoy knowing the man as I might have being a better student in terms of behavior and academic performance.

BG: I know you have to go. Last question. What are your memories of the sports at Lincoln High?

SB: Lincoln had enjoyed a good reputation for sports for a long time before I even got there. You've probably heard of Mr. Kornegay. When I got there I was already involved in the band but I wanted to play girls basketball. When I was in Mrs. Bell class--she was Mrs. Scales then--they discovered that I had rheumatic fever and so mother didn't want me to play basketball. I was really disappointed because all my friends were playing. I ended up being involved anyway because Mrs. () allowed me. She was the girls' basketball coach. She allowed me to be the statistician for the girls' team, and I later became statistician for the boys' team as well.

BG: Was this at Lincoln?

SB: Yes, so I was involved even though I wasn't playing and I enjoyed that.

BG: You into a lot of different things, marching band, concert band, statistician, student council. Anything else?

SB: There wasn't much else.

BG: [Laughter]. There wasn't much time.

SB: As I said, my father was strict and this was a way for me to be involved in an acceptable way.

BG: It ended up being a positive thing in your life.

Tell me about football.

SB: Football, I knew football through the band. The band always played for the games. I was caught up in the hype of it not really knowing the game. I don't think I learned the game really until after Brad stopped coaching and I started to watch it on TV and you could see the plays more clearly than seeing through the game. As a student, I was just caught up in the hype. I can remember going to college and I went to Howard University, and I was so disappointed when I went to their first game because my idea of a game was a winning team, number one, and the other idea I had was based on what Carolina did here in Chapel Hill. There was a lot of hoopla and you would dress up for the games. When I went out on that field I was so disappointed because the stadium didn't exist and it was just a few ragged bleachers and it was not at all what I had been

used to or anticipated. I enjoyed the games because I was participating and I guess to a certain extent during that time I was one of the parts of the game, the band.

BG: What did that do for your self-esteem or did you already have great self-esteem?

SB: I think I probably did already.

BG: So it was not something you needed to do to make yourself a bigger person.

SB: No.

BG: Tell me about how good the band was and whether the band took part in any competitions and the same thing for the orchestra and how they did in the competitions.

SB: We were top of the notch in terms of competitions. Each year we practiced up until this time of the year to go to Greensboro to present certain numbers, certain musical arrangements, and each year we ended up receiving two awards for our presentation. That was the concert band. The marching band, you got that firsthand when you would march down the street. The crowds would give you a stamp of approval. In terms of numbers of the people involved, and as I said, Mr. Bell was a person who had the interest of every student there and I wasn't the only person that had that feeling. He would stop and play each instrument so you felt that he was special in his knowledge, and he had a special knowledge of each student that came across the band. We had a good band.

BG: What parades did you play in?

SB: Well, all of the local parades, but we did a lot of--.

BG: What local parades?

SB: The Christmas and whenever the school would have homecoming.

BG: Did you play at UNC sometimes?

SB: I don't remember, maybe one time, I don't remember. At that point, I think we might have had a better band than UNC and had not wanted the competition.

BG: What about homecoming or the Beat Duke parade? Did you play in that?

SB: Perhaps. I know that we would travel to Durham to participate in Central's whatever game they were having. We would go to Greensboro.

BG: Did you go to Pittsboro, Hillsborough?

SB: We were always down in Pittsboro whenever they had special parades.

BG: Hillsborough, too?

SB: I don't remember Hillsborough so much. I remember Pittsboro.

BG: How about Raleigh?

SB: Raleigh, yes.

BG: You were really all over the place. Were those by invitation?

SB: Invitation yes. People knew about us and I think all of the students enjoyed it and that's what came across. We enjoyed it. I can remember the Heels going past Lincoln, going down Merritt Mill, and going down Smith Level. We would march in the afternoons and practice going up and down that hill. It was just a lot of fun. We did it with a lot of gusto. We enjoyed it and we presented ourselves well. I mentioned that I was first saxophone in the band, but I didn't get there by just being there, there were people in front of me who had been playing for a while and so you had to be good in order to be there. I think the entire band felt that way. I talked to one of the ladies that I work with in the church and she was also in the band at that time, and we frequently talk about the good times that we had and we enjoyed. There was a fellow that I had a special interest in which made it a little more interesting for me, but he was also first trumpet so it wasn't just--. I think he played the coronet and he switched between coronet and trumpet. He was also good.

BG: Why don't we leave it on that positive note? I could ask you at least a dozen more questions, but I know it's tough for you to get away. Thank you so much for spending the time with me. I appreciate it very much.

SB: I enjoyed sharing these thoughts with you.

BG: They were great.

END OF INTERVIEW