TRANSCRIPT—FRANCES HARGRAVES

Interviewee:	FRANCES HARGRAVES
Interviewer:	Bob Gilgor
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START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

BOB GILGOR: This is January 22nd in the year 2001 and this is Bob Gilgor interviewing Frances Hargraves at her home at 108 Caldwell Street in Chapel Hill.

Good morning, Frances.

FRANCES HARGRAVES: Good morning, Bob.

BG: How are you today?

FH: Just fine.

BG: Good. I appreciate your spending time with me, letting me pick your brain. I'll start out with a very broad question, and that is, what do you remember about growing up here in Chapel Hill?

FH: I guess I was just like any other youngster. I was more concerned about the neighborhood and being accepted by my peers and also my relatives. Just being a part of what was going on, and playing games, and going to school like any child would at that period.

You must remember I was born in 1914. So things are very different now than it was when I was a child. Even so far as the town and how people think and what was going on. There's quite a difference there.

I definitely remember my first going to school. I was too young to enter the public school. My mother thought she might get me in but they told her that I wouldn't be able to go. So I went to sort of a kindergarten—it wasn't called a kindergarten—Miss Carrie's school was on Robinson Street. Now they call it Roberson Street. She took in children who were four, five years old and then she had summer classes. My experience there was very rewarding, and I was more ready to go into the public schools when

I was six years old. And of all the teachers that I remember, I remember my first grade teacher, so it was quite an experience for me. And of course the school was located on Merritt Mill Road. The primary building was off from the main building. And they were all wooden frame buildings but, being a child, and just enjoying the experience, I didn't think about the building or what was taught. But it was wonderful. And I seemed to be very happy in that setting.

BG: What was the name of that school?

FH: It was called Hackney School, as far as I can remember. Of course, when the school was destroyed by fire several years later, we moved into different buildings, churches, and a Masonic lodge. Even a theater, just anywhere that we could get space. I was very sad—I was just around nine years old, I guess—I was very sad because I missed the conveniences that we had at school. And I can't even remember having any recess space. We were very crowded. But we went on with our lessons. It was still a learning situation. But it was very dreary, the two years that we were there. Later, we moved in 1924 to what we now call Northside. It was called Orange County Training School.

BG: Where did the black community get the land to build Orange County Training School, and who paid for the building?

FH: As I understand, the Stroud family gave some of the land and I think they bought some from other people. It was very hilly. It wasn't smoothed down. And there were no roads to it. We had to climb hills from every area wherever you lived, and I guess trampling over the grounds over the years just made, what you might call a cow path to school.

But we were just so pleased and happy to get that space after being cramped up for two years that it was just going into Glory Land, literally speaking. And being young children, you had more space to play and to have fun.

BG: So the Stroud family donated a significant portion, just gave it for the construction of the school specifically?

FH: Yes, as far as I can remember. I understand they did purchase some of the land, from Mr. Stroud or other landowners I'm not too sure.

BG: Was Mr. Stroud an African-American man?

FH: Oh, yes. He was a very prosperous person. Doing well, what we would say well. He owned land, and a home, so they were doing fine.

BG: What did he do to earn his money?

FH: I don't exactly remember. I was a very young child. But I know he was very visible in the community.

BG: Did you have relatives living near you on the street where you grew up?

FH: Oh, yes, very much so. And all the community area, relatives, cousins, and what not. We played together. Of course, like children, we had our little spats. But we had so much fun, especially during the summer months. We played baseball. We played regular games that the children are still playing today: hide-and-go-seek and jack rocks.

One of our neighbors, who was a very good friend of the family, grew up, got a job and bought a radio. Well, we thought that was the grandest thing in the neighborhood. It ran by batteries. And they would invite us on Friday or Saturday evening to watch the programs. I can remember Amos & Andy on the radio. Sometimes, using batteries, it would get so scratchy that we couldn't half hear what was going on. But it was a new experience—radio, that was just something that was fantastic to have during those days.

BG: So you had aunts and uncles or grandparents living in the same neighborhood as you?

FH: Yes. My uncle, my mother's brother, lived with us. The others were married and had their own families. But we were very close in our getting together and going to church and socializing. We just had wonderful family gatherings. There was a lot of cohesiveness in those days in families. We planned parties, and Christmas events, and dinners, and picnics, and we still do that today. And that's been many, many years that we have carried on this tradition.

BG: Did your parents work?

FH: Oh, yes. My mother, started working for the McNiders. He was in the School of Pharmacy, I think that's what he was in, Dr. McNider, at the university. And his mother was Miss Sophia. My mother went there when she was just fifteen to do housework. Those were about the only jobs that were available during that time. You can just imagine what type of work that black people could qualify for. She taught

my mother—she was my mother's first teacher in how to cook, and my mother loved it so well that she decided that would be her occupation.

My father came from Greenville, South Carolina, when he was just nineteen. He was referred by the MacRays. His brother in Greenville referred him. He liked to cook, too. So my mother and father met, and found out they had the same interests, and so eventually they married. That was quite an experience for them, to find out that they had the same interests in cooking. I can imagine during their courting days most of the conversation was geared at their recipes and what they were doing.

BG: What did your father do for a living?

FH: He was a cook. He cooked at fraternity houses. He cooked on campus. And during the war, pre-flight. And he was the head cook there at Swain Hall. Then he went into the mountains in Penland, North Carolina, where they had a workshop. And he would always go every summer to cook there. They had the same interests, I think, my mother and my father. They had a lot in common and enjoyed talking about their foods and what they could do.

BG: How would you characterize their marriage? Was it—well, I won't put any words in your mouth.

FH: My father—I have never seen one man so dedicated, so devoted to his wife. He appreciated my mother. He grew up in rural Greenville. Six children, seven I believe. They were sharecroppers. After his father died, his mother would come to town, she would work for people, and she would always bring him along with her. He would help his mother wash the dishes, help with the food. And I think that's what started his liking to do that.

When he came here it was altogether a different setting. So he started working for fraternity houses and other places. I know the students meant well, but anyway, everything that he did fine, his reward was always a fifth of whiskey or something, and I think he picked up the habit. He started drinking like many of his friends did. But he never—he was finest, the sweetest man. I never appreciated him, just what kind of father he was, until I was grown up. My mother would take charge because she had more education than he did, and he just got whatever was available in a rural area, and that was very little. His father's business was sharecropping. Most of them were working in fields, did that type of farmwork. But he was so devoted to her. Everything that she did or said, he respected that. And what was so wonderful

about it, I never heard my father say a curse word. I never saw him strike my mother. The match was just perfect. I appreciate that so much, and as I grew up I said so many times, "Why didn't I say that to him, what a good father he was?" I guess he knew that deep down.

First thing he wanted, all the children get an education. I was an only child. But my mother had married previously and her husband died, so he was her second husband. But he took her in as his own daughter, so there were two girls. And that's one thing he talked about, getting an education. He knew what an education could do.

BG: Did your grandparents or your ants and uncles encourage education to you also?

FH: Very much so. It was a family tradition because my grandfather, my mother told me—it was what you might say oral history—she told me that her father was one of the first black teachers in Chapel Hill. I don't know whether he was the first, but I certainly got some record of him teaching. I did some research in Hillsborough. And also his cousin taught in Hillsborough. The whole line of the ( ) were in the teaching field. They were ministers and teachers. His sister taught in Durham, and the school is named for her, ( ) School. And then his cousin, James, he taught in Durham and they named ( ) School for James. The family record shows that they were very much in the field of education and encouraged black people to get an education.

BG: Which side of the family was this?

FH: My mother's family. I didn't know too much about my father's family. Greenville, South Carolina was just like going to Siberia, or China or somewhere [laughs]. When I was a child it sounded quite a long distance, just knowing around the neighborhood. Our main place was Hillsborough and Durham. We seldom went to Pittsborough. But Hillsborough was where the family roots on the ( ) side. And of course, his people lived in Durham, so we were very much familiar with it.

BG: Would you say that you grew up happy?

FH: Bob, at the time, I didn't realize how fortunate I was. I really didn't. My cousins lived right across the street. That was her brother's children, two boys. I just came up being a tomboy. I was clumsy. I liked to play ball with the group, but I was the last one chosen on the team because I just couldn't hold on to the ball. And I was a poor hitter. Not being accepted by the group, I knew then that I was inferior when it came to games. And they teased me a lot because I was chubby. And I had mossy, grass-colored hair I

guess is what you'd call it. And my fair-skinned cousins had beautiful hair, just the opposite. I was called a "footsie" because my feet were large. They would look at my hair and say "redhead, cabbage head, five cents a cabbage head." Where they got that from, I never knew, why they got that little song together. I felt left out. I had the feeling of not being accepted.

But my mother just came right in, and she just boosted my self-esteem. And the teachers, I give them credit, too. So I began to find myself, and I found out what I liked to do. I liked to act. Always liked to be in plays at school. Even at home, around the neighborhood, when we did anything, I always wanted to take part in the acting or what not. And she exposed me to things—I had organ lessons, organ that you pedal. Then she bought a piano for me, later on. She bought a violin for me. Of course I didn't get but a couple of lessons because at that time we just had one black person in Chapel Hill who could play the violin and he moved to Pittsburgh. So that ended that. I didn't get any more lessons. I still have the violin in the attic. It's still there. And I will not sell it. I just want to keep it as a memory of my childhood.

Then she sent me—I went to a private school, Mary Potter Academy. And that's where I became a lady [laughs]. So I'm very grateful and I just don't know what I would've done without her support.

And I must give it to the teachers. Because they discovered that I had talent, too. I still like to act, and I enjoy music. And I guess that's why I married my husband. He was a musician, he loved music too. And generally, that happens. You meet people that have the same interests. And so eventually you get together, and finally you fall in love and you get married.

When I look back on it and I think of all the things that she did to encourage me and to help me develop a good attitude, a good self-esteem, that I could do things.

And I went to all the plays—they were segregated, we had to sit on the side or in the balcony. But she didn't seem to bother. That was the system. That was the way the system worked. She really had difficulty in trying to answer questions to me about that period. It was short and not quite in depth, and I'm sure she didn't know how to answer why we were separated or why we couldn't go to places. She just did the best she could.

BG: So you left the Orange County Training School in which grade?

FH: Eighth grade was my last grade there. Orange County Training School. And then I went to Mary Potter Academy. Mary Potter Academy was a Presbyterian school. They named it Mary Potter

because Mary Potter was the benefactor. She started the school. And ironically, they didn't even have a high school for black people in Oxford. When they finished the elementary school, that was it. They had to go somewhere else if they wanted to further their education. Mary Potter picked up the tab, you see, so they started with seventh grade. They found out that some students need, what we have at the universities, sometimes students take courses to enhance their education, they find a deficit in certain areas. Well, that's what they had at Mary Potter. High school started at eighth grade. And if you were not ready for eighth grade you went into the seventh grade to get you prepared for the eighth grade. We just had eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh. So we didn't have twelfth grade, just until eleventh grade. But there I continued my music. I was in play after play after play. ( ) contest. Debating teams. You can see what direction I went into. That's why I'm such a talker [laughs]. Those are things that I liked.

Of course they had a dress code in Mary Potter. Something that we don't have in the schools here. I think they're getting at it, what not. We went to church every Sunday. Prayer meeting Wednesday night. Our principal was a minister. My coach, he was a minister. Sometimes we'd laugh at him and say, "Revered Hanson got pretty warm." We thought the wrong words might come out. You know how coaches are when you make a bad play. But I enjoyed the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. The three grades that I stayed at Mary Potter were very enriching, very rewarding.

BG: Now that was a private school that your parents sent you? It was a boarding school?

FH: It was a boarding school. The city supported that school because they didn't have one for black children. What you had to do was—now that's in '28—you paid fifteen dollars a month—see now that's the beginning of the Depression.

But you had to work. All students worked. And you were assigned a job to do—from the kitchen to the basement to the yard—everything was done by students. That included the boys and the girls. I remember my mother always told me, "Whatever job you must do, be sure you give it your best. If it's sweeping the floor, washing dishes, anything. Give it your best." And I still carry that philosophy. Whatever you do, give it your best, I don't care what it is. So she assigned me to the bathrooms, the matron did. Well, you usually changed jobs twice a year. When you came back in January, you had another job. Well for some reasons for three years she gave me those same bathrooms. And she's always saying, "Oh, Frances, you do such a fine job." And I thought about, maybe I shouldn't have given it my best [laughs].

But I did it well, just the way I'd been taught to do. So when I graduated I told my group, you ought to get a diploma for keeping the bathrooms clean, because I did it so many years.

But it was fine. And I learned a lot. I was accepted there. You might say I was a popular student. Because children judge you by what you do, and if you do good things, you can get popularity that way. You don't have to go the wrong way. You don't have to do what so many students—especially some of the black students of today—think that you're not so popular if you excel, or you're smart, or you make A's. Stand tall. Stand tall. Be yourself and know that you're doing the right thing. Gracious Heavens to Betsy. It's a struggle for young people. And it's hard to be alienated, have that feeling. But you can. You'll pass through.

BG: Frances, can you describe your neighborhood? The houses, what they looked like, your house? Do your remember how most people lived when you were growing up?

FH: Yes. You didn't find any residential section, where they were all fine homes. You might find one or two nice homes, that were well painted. I was born in a home that was unpainted.

BG: Were most of them unpainted?

FH: Most of them were unpainted. On West Franklin Street, we had a couple that were painted. But most of them were unpainted homes. They had anywhere from four to six rooms, in my neighborhood. It goes back to your salary or the economics or what not. If you had a good job, were prosperous. My great-grand-uncle had a painted home, and he had a basement, and the kitchen was in the basement, and the dining room on the lower level. And you had to go upstairs to the living room, and the bedrooms. But his home was very nice because he was in the realty business and he was very prosperous. What you might call a well-to-do person in that period.

But they were comfortable. Most of them were heated by wood. I can't remember using coal. I remember seeing the wood pile out in the back. Slabs that they would buy. Later on, in the middle thirties, a little bit earlier than that, they began to have coal in the homes. But my early days, all I can remember is the wood. And candles. And lamps. We had privies, and no sewer, no water. You had your own wells. So we didn't have any utility bill. They had the family well cleaned at least once a year. And most of the neighborhood chipped in to pay for the buckets and the rope and repairs. So very few people—my uncle had one of those pumps. Another resident had a pump. When you had a pump, that was moving up, you

were doing pretty well. But open wells is what most of us had. What they did to the open wells, they also had a top. They would refrigerate it, use the well, lower it down and the bucket's on the side of the well to keep the things that were perishable. And with the passing of time we got an icebox. Oh, an icebox! And of course the iceman would come around and he'd always ring his bell with the horse. And you would run out with your dime. And get ten cents worth. And if you got twenty-five cents, woo! That was a big chunk. So we brought back five or ten cents worth of ice. And little chips we'd grab them, oh, delicious ice! You know, the ice that was chipped off. That was so much fun, to follow the iceman. There was no other way, so we enjoyed what was there.

There was more a family cohesiveness there. I'd had that all through my childhood, the family getting together as I've already explained. You did more things together in the neighborhood. So many activities.

Now the lodges. There were two lodges. You had the Elks and the Masons. And they gave Christmas parties, even gave afternoon, evening--. They gave dances. Not parties, but dances. Well they did have some parties and picnics, but the biggest occasion was the Christmas dances.

BG: These were black Elks, black Masons?

FH: Yes. The Masonic lodge was right next door to our house. There's an eating establishment there now. And they had a huge building. They had their meetings upstairs and the whole downstairs was for the social, where they had dinners and parties. And the Christmas dances were—well, by invitation. And they had, I mean, <u>real</u> music. They didn't have Benny Goodman, but they had large bands coming in from Fayetteville and other places in North Carolina. And they had afternoon dances from four to six for the young people. We didn't go to the night dances. You had to be an adult. But it was fun. And we looked forward every year to those fine dances. You always got souvenirs. And that was quite a joy to enjoy that type of entertainment. They did fine.

And later on, up in the years, one of the well-to-do, Mr. David O'Kelley, he had a miniature golf right where the *Chapel Hill News* newspaper building on West Franklin Street. And across the street was the Hollywood Theater. Now the only time we could go to that was on Friday nights. We didn't go on Saturday because it was kind of—you know—a mixed group there. Men coming there from work. They

always had a lot of westerns just for the men. It was silent movies and everybody was explaining [laughs]—

BG: And this movie was called the--?

FH: Hollywood Theater.

BG: The Hollywood Theater. And was this an all-black theater?

FH: Yes. It was all-black theater. And the reading would come on the screen. Oh, oh, oh, see and go, you know? There was loud reading and--. We was just enjoying, just had a wonderful time. I was glad they did that because we had one man who came from Durham once a week some time and then he came about twice a week. And he did all the talking. It was very dull. And so after, Mr. O'Kelley started saying. It was very enjoyable. They were separated.

But we went as a child, we went on Friday night. And we'd start getting very good before Friday, maybe start up Wednesday or Thursday, [laughs] so you'd be eligible to go. Doing housework or any little thing, or being very sweet with your tongue, and very mannerly, to get to go to the movies. You know that's one thing my mother—if I ever did something wrong or anything, "You are not going to the movie." That was the way of punishing. There were very few whippings that I actually got. Sometimes when you spank the child, it might make you feel better, but it doesn't guarantee that they won't repeat. But taking something away that you really enjoy, that you really love to do, I think that's a big hurt, rather than a spanking. A spanking burns, hurts, then it's all over with. But you know, if you get off the track anytime Thursday or Friday morning, you won't go to the movie. So we were very cautious about that.

BG: Who did the disciplining in your house?

FH: Strange enough, my mother. And she would always say, "If you don't do so-and-so, I'm going to tell your father." She did all the disciplining. And I can remember one whipping my father gave me. I still wonder why he did that.

He was a cook. He would go to work at five o'clock in the morning. Because he was always a person on time. He believed in being on time. He went to church for the eleven o'clock service at ten. When he was a cook, at pre-flight school, the manager told my mother, "The only trouble I have with him, he has breakfast ready too early. They eat breakfast at five o'clock, and he has it ready at four." And I think everybody had that trouble with him.

He was kind. And I had just been ornery all day. She told him some of the things that I did. And he wore those flat shoes, you know. And you know when you do ugly things you go to bed early. I was in bed. It was about nine o'clock I guess. He came there and threw that cover back and told me and spanked me with that shoe. I never forgot that spanking. I don't think he did either. In a couple of days he talked to me again. I think he didn't want to do it. But he knew I needed it. That was the only whipping that I can remember my father giving me.

BG: Did you get disciplined by other people in the neighborhood?

FH: Oh, did I! You did anything, you better do it undercover so they didn't see it.

BG: So the neighbors disciplined you as well? And did they use a switch when it was necessary?

FH: Well they might have with other children. But those in my neighborhood would tell my mother what I did. And she would call me in and she wouldn't tell me who it was. Very seldom can I remember her telling me something. She would sit down and talk to me and tell me what could happen and what not and that was wrong or whatever. You know, you don't have to—everyone else was, well that doesn't mean you have to do things that are wrong. And you knew that was wrong. And what she was trying to say, things that I would do I was doing because the others were doing it, just going along with the gang. Trying to outshine them. Kids would do that. And she would scold me about that in a motherly way, the right way.

BG: Who was the boss of your family?

FH: It so happened that my father didn't have much schooling, as I said previously. You could put all the schooling he had in a couple of years. He was a cook, and he taught himself how to read the recipes. And I could see him trying to read the newspaper and I could see his lips moving. And when he was writing his name, it was so scratchy that my mother even told him how to write his name.

So she had more education. She told me that she left school when she was in the eighth grade, and you didn't go but one more year to finish. And she didn't go that year. The whole family was doing something, you know. And another thing you got to look at, education was important. But most important that you were not at the stage where you couldn't read or write. But higher education wasn't important because there wasn't any jobs available. You could get graduate or PhDs or anything like that. So you

could manage your business, and what not. Well my father didn't have that. When he got bills and everything, he would always refer them to her.

BG: So she sort of ran the household?

FH: Right. She would look at it, and they would talk about bills or anything. I remember her scolding him about, he bought a chair ( ). And I don't think he got a receipt. Mr. Brown was a little off, he had a mental problem. And he came to collect. And he didn't know where the receipt was. And I remember, "Don't you ever throw a receipt away. Don't ever. Always keep your receipts." I remember that. But my father was so strict in his thinking, I remember him telling her, "Receipt or no receipt, he's not getting paid again." But she would tell him how important it was to keep things like that.

Any deal or somebody come to see him, he would say, "Well maybe you all should discuss that with my wife, see what she thinks about it." And anything that came up, if it's something of importance, he would always refer them to her. And they did discuss things together. When they got ready to buy a home and everything. In a way you could almost say it was a partnership.

BG: Did they talk about their jobs?

FH: They talked more about incidents that happened at work more than they did what they were doing.

BG: What kind of incidents did they talk about?

FH: They worked together at Chapel Hill High School. And they hired their help. Chapel Hill High School didn't get as much money from the County Commissioner like they do. And they did a lot of fundraising for the athletics team.

BG: You're talking about Chapel Hill High School, the white school, on Franklin Street?

FH: Right. Yes. Right on Franklin Street. The schools at that time had to do a lot of fundraising.

BG: White and black?

FH: White and black. And I mean there was fundraising all the time, or else you didn't get that money to operate. They had a summer, a dinner that they served to students. And the place was packed. Because you had two good cooks there. And so some times they would get together and laugh at some of the help or what one said. And for instance, I don't know if I told you about one of the ladies they hired. She was on one side of the counter with drinks, milk and what not. And one man accosted her and asked

her, and said, "What was that." She told him it was lemonade. He said, "I don't see any lemons in it." And the answer was, "You don't see a cow in milk." And they would laugh about things, what they had said. Somebody they hired, the dishwasher or something, they hired my brother-in-law. He was in school and we would need summer jobs. And mistakes that they would make they would turn it into fun. Of course it irritated them at the time, but when they got together they would laugh about it. One time she was cooking biscuits, and she put them in the over and looked at them and said, "They're not quite ready. I want to get them nice, brown and tan like me." He heard her say that and he told one fellow, "Take that bread out of the over before Alice burns it up." It was going to be black!

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

FH: --Chapel Hill High School, she lived in Durham. She was the manager. All three of them got together to plan the meals. Some times when they would get together, she don't know what people eat, you know, what they like. Fix this this way or what not. It was very much entertaining for them to discuss their work together. They did that for three or four years, raising extra funds for the schools.

BG: When you were growing up, here in Chapel Hill, did you have books at home, or an encyclopedia or a dictionary in the house?

FH: We had that. We had books, oozes of books and encyclopedia. But during the school year we had to go to the book depository on East Franklin Street—I'm trying to think of the name of that store, it's still there on the corner—to buy books. Or you could get hand-me-downs. Or some neighbor would sell you a second-hand book. Then there were a couple of stores that had second-hand books. But to get a new book—I think at the depository they had some second-hand books—you'd turn them in, and you'd get a discount. It was unheard of, all books were purchased one way or another. Some of them were in the family. We had large families and they just passed them on. But gosh, you were fine if you could get all new books. That was quite an honor for a student to get all new books. As far as I can remember, I might have gotten one or two new books. But some of them were second hand.

BG: What I heard from a lot of people is that, when they went to school they got books that were previously used in white schools. I guess what I hear you saying is that, before that policy started you had to go out and buy--.

FH: Buy your own books, that's right. You see in the front of the book, when you turn your books in, they put the condition: whether it's good, excellent, or poor, fair. And sometimes, when we got the books, a lot of them were "poor." Some of them were "good." If there's any damage, you have to pay for the damage fees, if a page is torn. And usually you mark that "poor," or "fair." When the child turns the books in, you go through them. We got quite a number of books in that condition.

BG: How old were those books that came to your school provided by the white students?

FH: Two or three years old, I guess. Usually the newer books had "good." And maybe that child used it one year. And if it was "fair," might have had it just one year and damaged the book. It was more about damage. In honesty, we did get a lot of damaged books, that didn't say "good." Some children just had a book one year and just demolished--. Destruction for poor handling of the books. In issuing books, all teachers, you had a lesson in how to use the books. You practice it, you talk about it. Every year, when you are issuing out books. And sometimes some will say, "Miss Hargraves, this page is already torn." And we'll get some tape or something and tape the book up. It's good for them to know that someone had turned them in at the beginning of the year, they won't be charged for that damage. I'm sure the others did the same. We did a lot of mending to some of the books so they wouldn't be charged for damage.

BG: So if a child in a black school damaged a book further, he or she would be charged for it?

FH: Yes, that's right. It was a small amount—ten, fifteen, or twenty cents. A lost book was the highest. We'd look and see what it was, what the book cost, maybe seventy-five cents. Lost books was the highest fee of all. I've had several children do that. Even my own children misplaced theirs sometimes.

BG: I'd like to ask you some questions about some uncomfortable things in the community—and that is about alcoholism, and crime and absentee fathers and the things that are part of every society. Did you see this in the black community in Chapel Hill or Carrboro?

FH: There are some things that happen in every community. I think that goes along with the size of the city, your population, your demographics. You take Durham. Durham is much larger, you had more of that in Durham. Or you take Hillsborough, you had a small amount of that. And Chapel Hill, being a

small town, had a small amount of that. Not as much as you would find in our neighbors. A lot of times we would think that some of the people here would go into Durham and see what was going on there. Read about it and try to imitate the conduct. Some times Durham would come over here, like they're doing now, and do that sort of thing that's undesirable. But what I am saying is we had our share of it, as a small town.

Then you look at what was here. What you had was a university town. The drinking was going on, and there was a lot of bootlegging at that time. A lot of parties and things were going on at the university. Students had their wild parties, and the help, for good work or anything, they were rewarded with a drink. And sometimes they would all get together and take a drink and sing together with the help. So this kind of behavior reached out with the men in the neighborhood. That was a fun thing to do.

Some could take it, just like my father. If he drank twenty drinks he wouldn't come home and abuse his wife. You see? Where there might have been others who got off the track and became abusive. If there was ten men drinking, one or two might come out and do that. A small percentage of them would do that. It was picked up, this good time, this good feeling. You didn't have too many places for the men to go, the average man.

And so there was some drinking in the neighborhood among the black men. Not too many women. Unless they picked up the habit themselves. But it was prevalent among the men more so than among the women, that were hitched on to the bottle. And then you might have found, just like you do today, a lot of people just turned to be alcoholics. Just drowning out some problem that they can't handle. Which is very common not among just the poor blacks but among anybody. When you get depressed, it gives you a feeling of feeling good, forgetting. It's our cover for problems that you can't handle, conditions that you can't--.

BG: Did you lock your door at night?

FH: What door? [laughs] No.

BG: So you felt pretty safe? Crime wasn't an issue that worried you or your parents?

FH: Getting back to the size of the town. Early days, I really don't remember locking doors. It was so neighborly. Your neighbor would tap on the door, and you'd be in the kitchen and you'd say, "Come in" because the door wasn't locked. It was that sort of attitude. Of course today things are quite different. Quite, quite different. So the neighborhoods were very safe.

BG: Did you play pretty much in your own neighborhood, or did you go into other neighborhoods?

FH: We had more land in our neighborhood. We had a field where we could play baseball. We had more space in our neighborhoods. We had large yards where you could play either the front or the back. We'd always get together in vacant lots. You see very few now. They're seeing how important it is to have neighborhood space. You have some here in Chapel Hill where the children go and play. You got Umstead Park. We didn't have such things. And if they did have swimming pools, they were segregated, so we didn't have that. But we did have fields where we could play games.

BG: Was there much interaction with the white children growing up?

FH: It really was where you lived. The part of town that I lived on, West Franklin Street, we had white neighbors. We even had merchants. ( ) Hunter ran a grocery store. She catered to black people. And then we had a fish—Mr. Hudson. He was always fooling. My father had more fun about Mr. Hudson. Strange enough, we'd always call those people Miss or Mrs.

He would go across the street and ask, "Mr. Hudson, what kind of fish you got?" "Henry, I got some of the finest crawfish you ever had. I got some small ones, I got some big ones. Those crawfish are really good. Just any kind, any size you want." And he never named but one fish, and that was a crawfish. And he would come home and laugh, "He got 'em all size crawfish." At that time those were cheap fish. I guess salmon and trout would have been too much. So he just stuck with the crawfish. And he did have all sizes. That's what he was trying to tell him. "You'll only need but one next time."

BG: So you graduated from Mary Potter?

FH: In '31.

BG: And did you go on and get more education after that?

FH: Yes. Well, we had a lot of sickness in my family. And my mother and father, both of them, came ill. And we went to West Virginia. Now West Virginia, that was a very expensive school. And ( ) was there the same year.

BG: ( ).

FH: My sister. It mostly happened—your classmates. Her classmates, seven or eight of them, went to West Virginia. My sister went living with her aunt. When my mother's first husband died, her sister,

who lived in Durham, took her child so she could work. It may have been ( ). So she took my sister. And she didn't turn my sister loose until she graduated from college. But she let her come over every summer. She spent summers with us. So she went to West Virginia.

BG: West Virginia University?

FH: West Virginia State. Now West Virginia State is integrated to the point where you have more whites than you have blacks. There are very few blacks.

BG: Today?

FH: Yes.

BG: But when you went there it was a black school?

FH: That's right. It was a struggle. What they did if you were in arrears with paying your bill—I was a working student—they would post your name. Very embarrassing. When I came out my junior year and got married—married this musician ( ) finish school. We got married, and I did go to North Carolina College. My first child was born. That was Billy. And after he was born, I took another course at North Carolina Central. It ( ) North Carolina College for Negroes. So then my daughter came along, I got pregnant with my daughter, that was another pause. But I still went back. I needed some more hours to graduate because at that time, I changed my mind about where I was going. I was in secondary education. I had a major in biology—I already won that. Then I started thinking about it and talked with my husband. I decided to change it to elementary education. Well NCU was secondary, high school. So I decided to go to Winston-Salem State University. It was Winston-Salem Teachers' College, that was the name of it. I couldn't take it anywhere else. That was the closest one.

Willy had been in college too. His father had five children in college at one time. And the Depression hit us all, that was during Depression. So anyway, I got a degree in elementary education, in primary. Certified to teach primary. So I went to Winston-Salem State College. Then, when I came out and taught ten years, my supervisor wanted me to go into this new concept called "special education." So I had to go back and get thirty-three hours. I didn't have the money so she got a scholarship for me to go to Syracuse. So I went to Syracuse, and I went to North Carolina Central, and I went to UNC. She got two scholarships. I got my thirty-three hours. I wanted to complete, finish, and get a master's, but my mother

became very ill, and I wanted to be near her. I didn't want to go back to Syracuse. That was too far away. I wanted to be close to my mother.

BG: What was the school in Syracuse?

FH: That was a special school for that type of work. And the one in Indiana, there weren't but two in the country, they really were tops, and Syracuse was one of them.

BG: Syracuse University?

FH: Yes. They had what they called at that time "special education" department. It's got a new name now, but it's all the same. It's a school that works with children with learning disorders. And you get the real works. UNC didn't have it. North Carolina Central didn't have it. So that's why I had to go there.

BG: How long did you stay there?

FH: Summer school, twelve weeks. Then I came to UNC and stayed six weeks, I believe. But what I'm trying to say is at that time it was hard to find qualified teachers. That's why they sent me. I was the first teacher in Orange County to be certified to teach special education. So I ran a lot of workshops. And when I came back, UNC, this university up here sent students to me to train.

BG: In teaching learning disabilities? Attention deficit disorders, dyslexia?

FH: All of it. Right. So for eighteen years—I stayed in it twenty years—for eighteen years I had teachers in my room. Even as far as Greensboro, Durham, training teachers. A lot of people ask me about charter schools. The first thing I say is charter schools take in a wide range. But I have worked with children with trainable children. I've worked with children who have behavior disorders. I've worked even with exceptional, talented children. I've worked with three or four different kinds. I say the charter schools, some of them are really on the right track. But what is needed most is well-trained teachers. You've got to know what you're doing, what approaches.

BG: I wish we had time to go into that a little more and maybe we will ( ).

FH: Right. You have more now than you ever had. People are going in all specialties. Just like doctors.

BG: I wanted to get on and talk about Lincoln High School. I know you didn't teach there. But I also know that you were in teaching, that you were in the community ( ). And so you must have some

impressions about what Lincoln High School was, the teachers there, the attitudes there. I wonder if you could just take off and talk about Lincoln High School.

FH: I was at Lincoln High School for ten years.

BG: You were?

FH: Yes. I was with Mr. McDougle. Mr. McDougle and Mr. Peace.

BG: Mr. Peace was the principal at Northside?

FH: Yes. The building itself. I was in that building. I taught with Mr. McDougle in 4th to 6th grade. Mr. McDougle was a good disciplinarian. What had happened before Mr. McDougle came, there was a lot of looseness, of students roaming around in the streets, trying to imitate, I guess, the college people. The behavior problems, kids seemed to be out of tune. When they hired Mr. McDougle, he had an overall picture of just what had happened. What they needed: more restrictions of students leaving, or students getting down to the work. When he came in as principal some students might have had the idea, since they had all that looseness, that he was really very strict.

BG: Now he came as principal?

FH: Yes.

BG: At Northside?

FH: No. At Lincoln High.

BG: While he's still at Northside?

FH: When Mr. McDougle was teaching there, it was Orange Country Training School. And I did a lot of substitute. I substitute in the county, Orange County, for two years. That's what I was trying to tell you. When I was substituting, I didn't get but ten dollars a week. That wasn't enough for me to go back to school—I just couldn't do that. I stopped substituting and went to the university where I could get a steady salary. ( ) so I did substitute. It was about six weeks. I later had an appendectomy. And I substituted for about six weeks. But a substitute might be for a day, two days, three.

BG: So Mr. McDougle started teaching, not as a principal?

FH: You're right. When he came here, he was in math and science.

BG: When was that and how long did he teach?

FH: Well that's just it. Giving you the exact dates, I don't think I could do it right off hand. But it was in the '30s, definitely in the '30s. It was in the '30s when he came as a teacher.

BG: And he became principal when?

FH: I don't know the date of that. It could have been in the '40s, or late '30s.

BG: So he became principal of Orange County Training School?

FH: Yes. He changed the name of it. They changed it from Orange County Training School to Lincoln High.

BG: Did he have any other training except--?

FH: Oh, yes. One summer I went with him to summer school. Over here in North Carolina Central.

BG: Did he have a master's degree, a Ph.D.?

FH: I know he didn't have a Ph.D. He might have had a master's degree because he and his wife went to New York University. She got hers and I'm sure he probably got his too.

BG: So he changed the attitude of the school? ( ) disciplinarian?

FH: Very much so. He was more concerned about student behavior and hitting the books. Really getting down to it. He brought a lot of dignity and respect from parents. I enjoyed working under Mr. McDougle.

BG: How did he affect the teaching or the teachers? If there was this laxness before, it must have been in part teachers who were lax as well as the previous principal?

FH: It wasn't so much the teachers being lax. It was more the structure. The students were getting out of hand. There was a lot of movement, a lot of going into town. They were doing that also at the high school later on. Students getting in their cars and going out. But these students didn't go in cars. They just walked. He brought more structure. Getting rid of the little unnecessary things that were going on.

BG: What about smoking? And alcohol?

FH: I can't remember too much of that being done. I really don't. He began to tighten up the loose ends, you know? And put it in a more structured behavior. I wish his wife could talk. She would tell you a lot about the school.

BG: What effect did he have on teachers?

FH: We respected his program and went along with it. We had opportunities to be a part of the planning, suggestions and what not. He had an open mind in that way. Knowing the previous history of what was happening, that the school board was not satisfied, made him catch hold of the reins maybe a little tighter. And some times even the students, maybe even the teachers thought it was a little bit too strong, but it was what we needed.

BG: How did you know that the school board was not satisfied?

FH: I don't remember whether the principal was fired or he left on his own. But the one before Mr. McDougle was a little too lax. And I think that's what they wanted, somebody to ( ) the children. This is what I think might have happened.

BG: What was the feeling about Lincoln High School when it was moved to Merritt Mill Road in 1951? How did the community relate to the school?

FH: Wonderful, wonderful! Good heavens, you had everything: space, better school, more equipment. All of it was just wonderful. Very accepting of moving to a new building. You go into a building and you see what's over there--. They were very pleased with the spaciousness and the equipment and everything at Lincoln High School. Now, my daughter complained because she had to walk. You had to be in a certain radius before you could ride the bus. But I know she walked.

BG: She walked from here? What is that, a mile and a half?

FH: Whatever it is, she walked it.

BG: Right past the white school.

FH: There you are, exactly. But being young, they have strong legs. They had the feeling, you owned this, this is ours. Something to be proud of, this is our school. And I don't think they even at that time thought too much about desegregating. That was in the '50s, that's true. But they weren't hip to that. They had school pride, very strong. The kids really were very proud: they were proud of their band, they were proud of their program, they were proud of the athletes, of the athletic department. They really had school pride. Students seemed to be doing much. Along with the parents, they had a lot of support from them. And other agencies, too. You always want to see your children doing well, and you're open to being a part of it.

BG: ( ) the parents' support of the school. You mentioned "other agencies." Could you address that also?

FH: Well, just like you do now, you had a lot of groups that were interested in helping children. Maybe with summer school programs, different things like that. So many churches involved. Trying to help the children, different departments always raising money. I'm telling you there's always raising money, forever.

BG: Who raised the money?

FH: Everybody [laughs].

BG: Was it the PTA--?

FH: Yes, through the PTA. I remember even at Lincoln High, the athletic department, we were selling food and crackers—not candy—to the children. We sold those at lunch, at recess and lunch period.

BG: And what did you do with that money?

FH: Well it's for the athletic department, when they had to go off on trips or maybe the band. And just as I said, everybody was doing it then. The white and the black schools were constantly raising money, support different programs in schools, but equipment. That's why you had the School Foundation. I've been on that board, moneys that they're not going to get from the County Commissioner. Most of the County Commissioner's for construction. And you need all the programs in the schools that need financial support. So a lot of schools, we really had our nose to the ground for that type of support. It will always be, I'm sure. Bands want to go out of town, you've got to raise money for that. For instructional supplies ( ). Of course, the State throws out a couple of pennies now and then [laughs]. Not enough. Well they have so many. They are just overloaded.

BG: What were the PTA meetings like? ( ) that you went to them when your kids were in school?

BG: Whatever was needed, you know? Maybe the playground needed some equipment. They needed something in the libraries. They were very supportive in doing that. Maybe the children wanted to go sing at the Hillsborough ( ) and they financed things like that. They helped with chaperone programs. Just wherever they were needed. It was a total effort of the whole group.

BR: So a lot of people attended the PTA meetings?

FH: Oh, yes. Very much so.

BG: Were those meetings run by committees, or was it a group kind of vote when you had to decide on something?

FH: Well just like any other organization, you always had your president, you've got your officers, and then your committees, and working on certain things that the school needs. Might be band uniforms, something like that. They were always supportive in school programs. Things that needed to be done that we couldn't get any other way.

BG: I don't think I made myself quite clear. One of the comments that I've heard other people I've interviewed is that when the schools were integrated, some of the blacks would go to the PTA meetings, they felt that they were run differently from the PTA meetings at Lincoln High School. They were run by committee and decisions were always made and they couldn't raise their hand and say, "Yes, I agree." Whereas they felt that the decisions were made differently at the PTA at Lincoln High School. I wonder if you can remember that or address that.

FH: Well, let's look at it this way. You're dealing with a different situation. In the first place, I never felt that the school, they were not integrated in the true sense, they were desegregated. Number two, it's a different ballgame. You're dealing with different people, a lot of them professional. And you're dealing with a large population of students, people with different ideas. The old school just had the few children and few parents, not vast and large, not as many problems. You got all kind of problems, now. You need all those committees. Children are doing everything in the schools. Drugs, all of that. So the more problems you have in the school, the more committees you'll need. It's a different world; it's a different situation. You can easily get lost. I don't know how many blacks are on the committees.

Now you had a problem with student harassment one time. I think they had a committee for that. You have different kinds of problems that come up in the school; quite naturally you're going to have different kinds of committees. We never had any committees on student harassment. We never had one on drugs in the school. So the more problems you have, the more committees you're going to have. I can see that.

Then you got a large student population, about a thousand children. You got about three hundred or four hundred or six hundred you're dealing with. So it makes a lot of difference in your student enrollment and the people who are there and their concerns. You have just as many or more white children

involved in drugs or smoking than you do blacks. So that might be one of the reasons. So you have to take in the total picture.

I really don't know what the setup is at the high school. It might be that black parents don't feel like they have that problem and they're left out of the committees or whatever. But in most of our parent organization, there's always a lot of effort made to involve black people. And sometimes I stay in one over and over again because they're having difficulty trying to get a fair representation. So I don't know who is involved in what's going on. But what I would like to see, and I'm really honest about it, is see more black parents at these meetings. And to me your excuse might be a little feeble, I don't know. I just see it that way. If you're concerned about it, get a spokesperson. Fifty of you go there, they know you mean business. Twenty black people go there, representing the same cause. They will look up and say, "Hell, we have a problem. These people are concerned." That's why I say, attendance, a show of faces, being there, you don't have to say a word. One spokesperson can speak for you.

BG: Are you saying that you feel the blacks were reluctant to have a spokesperson?

FH: I don't know whether they had considered that. When we had a problem, we had a spokesperson to go before the board. We were there, in person. And he was speaking for the whole group. And it works. And a lot of us do that, not only in the schools but in a lot of places. You might have two people. I'll go to Town Hall. And they'll give you so many minutes to speak, three minutes. You'll have somebody representing—but we're back there clapping hands, I'm one of the hand-clappers. Working for the museum, I spoke up for the community. Why we needed that museum. Gave me three minutes. I spoke over a little bit, I was tinkling or what not. Same procedure can work with PTAs, this is all I'm saying.

BG: I think this is interesting, and a lot of it is theoretical. So I want to go back to Lincoln High School and more of your memories of Lincoln High School. What the teachers were like, what the students were like. The sports, and the band, the chorus. Anything else you remember from Lincoln High.

FH: I call it enjoyable years, taking in the total picture. I felt that we performed well. We had the same problems that any school of our size would have. We seemed to handle them well. There was a lot of respect from students to their teachers. And we in turn tried to be fair with our students. It was more a family feeling. You know, cohesiveness. You're working for the same cause, you're educating children. You want this to be the best school, with students doing the best that they can. You had that feeling. And I

was very proud of those kids, I really was. I was proud of all they did. ( ) sports, or what not, but in academic achievement, they seemed to be growing. The kids were very respectful, very respectful. I had that good feeling. I enjoyed those years. I was in elementary. I taught fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. And I really enjoyed teaching.

BG: Do you have any idea of the percentage of students who graduated from Lincoln and went on to college?

FH: I wish I did. I think the percentage was maybe pretty high. You had—you know it's costly to go to college. I had children who had great potential. I even talked to one about it. I said, "You just have all the potential of being a wonderful teacher because you were my aid when I had the sixth grade." And you know what she told me? She said, "Miss Hargraves, I wanted to go to school, too, but I don't have the money." I've had at least two or three tell me—[tape ends].

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

FH: --just ( ). But it's like I said, they didn't have that kind of money. It's sad, but it happens. It happens with children in all walks of life, they just don't have that money.

BG: So that was a factor for a certain percentage of the black students, that they couldn't go on for more education because of the ( )?

FH: That's right. I wish it was ( ). But in my experience I have had many students who had high potential of being successful but didn't have the funds to continue their education. But you had a pretty good percentage who did go. Some might not have stayed the four years, and some—now that the technical schools have come in—you have a large influx of children going to those now. That's a plus for children who want to excel. In fact, it's hard to get any other type of job. Things are pretty tight now. You've got to have a handle on your pot!

BG: What happened to the black students who did get a college education from Lincoln High School? Did they stay in the area? I know you can't say a hundred percent, but do you have a broad idea?

FH: Well, coming up in the olden days, very few of them stayed. You didn't have any job opportunities. Everything was segregated. So they had to go to other towns, other places. Durham had a lot of our people. And Mutual, some work at the Mutual.

BG: The insurance company?

FH: That's right. But you didn't have any outstanding business in Chapel Hill. You just had the university. That's a menial job. There's nothing wrong with the job—you've got to have people—but the salaries are very low. So those who didn't have funds to continue, they got jobs here in the Chapel Hill system, whether it's in the hospital or other industries. And some of them worked up to getting better positions. I don't know whether there's a fund in the university that helps those students, but there are a lot of them. Some of them that I taught help themselves by going either to Durham Tech or somewhere to enhance their education to get better jobs. And with that goes better pay. But as I said before, there's a lot of children who did have great potential who went into other areas where they are low paying. They don't get as much, but they survive, but not on a high salary.

BG: Did the community or the teachers at Lincoln do anything to help the students get into colleges or support them while they were in college?

FH: I'm glad you said that. I know of some cases where they financially supported some of the students.

BG: The teachers?

FH: Yes!

BG: On their small salary?

FH: That's right. They tried so hard. I really know that of some cases where they did. All teachers encouraged children to continue their education. That's just a part of our feelings about it. High school is fine. It just opens the door for you to get into a higher education, to do something else. If it's just technical school, you know, something that you can put your finger on, that you like to do, that is going to give you a decent salary. I know that all of the teachers that I know are one hundred percent behind their students to continue their education. But we're very much aware that it's not free anymore. The finance side holds a lot of children from continuing--. You're finding black organizations as well as white organizations—I belong to both kinds, predominantly for blacks and predominantly for whites. We are trying to help children. We

give scholarships. There's not one organization that I belong to that we don't that. So we're all reaching out or trying to help those students who ( ) on to continue. And we're just as proud of them when they come back and tell us how successful they're doing. It gives us the zip to go on to help other children. Our problem is we can't help as many as we would like to. So we try to encourage any group, any member, anyone, to support a child. And I do that. I support, individually, I support students who are going for their education. Some of them are in the family, and some are outside the family. I might contribute to a church club child.

BG: The churches give money? Sending children to college?

FH: Yes. We're all doing that. But it just isn't enough. I would encourage individuals as well as organizations and agencies to really be strong about that, thinking about helping children. Just isn't free anymore. And you can see why, because the people who are doing the teaching have to have salaries, too. They've got their meals, too. Something to pursue and something to think about seriously. Help those children.

BG: Frances, are there any other things that you'd like to talk about? Anything that you want to expand on that we've already covered? Anything else you'd like to say?

FH: I think you've done an excellent job. I admire you, just everything that you--. I wish—it could be a dream—that there would be more cohesiveness with black parents in the school system, of being a part of attending performances. The reason I'm saying that is I don't have any children in the school, but I attend more performances and more ( ) of children than the parent who isn't there. And you've got to give children more than food, clothing, and shelter. You've got to give them self-esteem, and you've got to give them love, and you've got to give them support. These are the things that parents sort of put in the background—not all parents, but too many of them. You start to support your child and his pursuit of education from kindergarten all the way. And support him by being interested, by going into the schools. It's not enough. Some of us are doing a fine job, but there's not enough people doing that. Don't see the need of it.

I know because I've had that experience from my mother, from my parents. And I know what it meant to me. And I still say I don't know what I would've done if I didn't have supportive parents. It's very important. It's more than food, clothing, and shelter. It's those intangible things, you know, that children

need. This is what I'm saying. I know you have your problems. I know parents have problems. I know they're trying to make ends meet. But that kid you've got there, you brought that kid in. That is your responsibility. Give him the best that you can. So that's my final say.

BG: Great way to end this. Thank you so much for your time. I've run you out of energy.

FH: I've run you out of tape!

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

END OF INTERVIEW