

GHS 55

Interviewee: Grace Ensign

Interviewer: Joy Bradshaw, Ronny Williams, Marion Lesley, Nancy Jones

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J: It is October 28, 1971. We are interviewing Mrs. Grace Ensign. The subject we are going to ask you about is how Gainesville has changed and about the houses. When did you move here?

E: We came in January 1926.

J: What were the boundaries? Can you remember any of the main streets?

E: There was no paving beyond where First Federal is today. That was all dirt road coming out to the University. There were about 500 students at that time. That was wonderful, but no business was developed. This was farmland from downtown on. The square was the most important of all. I remember riding back to New York saying, "This is a wonderful little town. Woolworth's is on one corner. And if Woolworth's has moved in, it is a mighty good town. There is a beautiful post office that has white gleaming pillars at the end of Main Street south. There is a carnated library, which we will visit from time to time." Those three things made Gainesville so outstanding. Plus [there was] the University.

J: What did University Avenue look like? Was it paved?

E: No. It was brick, lose brick. There were many horses and mules. There were street sweepers because it was very dangerous with the animals around on the streets. There was lots of filth, and the gutters had to be cleaned. When we used to let children play after a rain in the gutters, we were scared that they picked up some disease, especially hookworm. It was there.

J: Was the architecture very distinct?

E: It was. Many old colonial places are standing today, like the Stringfellow Apartments down on First Street and the big old homes across from the city park, where the president of the University, Dr. Murphree lived. We were very proud of that beautiful home. Most of them, of course, were wooden structures. Many of them were two or three stories. As you go down East University, on the right are many of those old homes. The attics are beautiful with the normal windows. Of course, the hippies have taken them over and they are called grannie houses now, which really hurts me.

J: Was that the basic residential area where the people lived?

E: Yes. University Avenue was just beautiful because down the center were rows of live oaks. On each side were live oaks. The limbs met. There was no sunshine. It was like a cathedral. You went down the right and came up the

other side. Flowers, day lilies and azaleas, were all under the live oaks down the center. It was the most beautiful avenue. It was an atmosphere that you kept quiet as you walked under it. It was so beautiful. Oh how sad we were when the city cut them all down.

J: When did they do that?

E: I imagine that was in the 1930s. I cannot remember exactly when. All the old people mourned over that, but that was progress. Traffic was getting so heavy, you could not get up the center of the street anymore. Another beautiful street is Second Avenue Southwest, which had a center. They had dogwood on each side. Some of that has survived today, but the center was dogwood and azaleas. In the spring, it was an avenue you drove just to see the blooming trees. That was all taken out of the center, of course, as progress came. You see the block houses that you see today, we did not know. There was no construction, no company making concrete block. It was brick. We had brick yards with a keel where they did their own brick. Now if you look on First Street below Wilson's Store, some of those bricks are still there. You see there was big business in making brick then. Lumber yards were just beautiful because everybody was using lumber. Soft pine were in most of our houses in the floors. If you had oak floors, that would show you were pretty good personally because you had an oak floor. Most everyone had the soft pine. The colored people who worked for you and were happy to work for you used to scrub that soft pine until it was white with lye soap. We did not have detergents and bleach even. We had strong, homemade, lye soaps. [Laughter.]

J: Where were the city boundaries?

E: Really to be technical you should go to the courthouse for that. We began where the street is now, the avenue going to Jacksonville. That was dirt road then. Little old houses were built there, not the big rich ones. The center was going down toward what is now Citizens Bank was the White House Hotel. That was really the center of town. The trains went down Main Street. As they came around the bend coming into Main Street, the porters walked through saying, now that is the White House Hotel. We will stop for lunch. All the people got off, went in, and ate. That was Major Thomas, owning all that. He was a very rich man. His home was the Hotel Thomas, which is now Junior College you know. He did a great deal for Gainesville. As you came down through the town, after the people got on the train after lunch, the porters came through again saying, look to the right at Maggie Tebeau's school. That is that huge parking lot, which is not used hardly at all below the old Commercial Hotel. That was a private school that Maggie Tebeau established. All the people sent their daughters and sons there. She had an avenue of very unusual flowering trees and of course azaleas. The trains slowed so people all went to that side to look

at her garden. Some of those plants are moved over. You know where Pantry Pride is over here off of Main Street.

J: Yes.

E: You know this flowering planted section? Some of those trees and bushes there are from Maggie Tebeau's old garden.

J: Was that the only school in Gainesville?

E: Private, yes. Now the very good grade school was East University. I cannot think of what we called it then. It is now called....

J: Is it Kirby Smith now? The big white one.

E: It was not named back then. Mrs. Ruth **Peeler** was a young teacher, and had the first grade. She was a very pretty, dynamic girl. The children just loved her. Everybody had Ruth **Peeler** to start out their education with. She was that type teacher that loved her children. [It is] likely the rest of their lives [that] they quote different things that she said. Most everyone got their start there. We had a most dramatic live PTA. Your grandfather was president. I was secretary one year. We sat up on the platform in the auditorium. The auditorium would be full of parents. Everyone was so interested in that wonderful school. Many famous teachers were there. I ought to name them all because of how they worked in those days.

J: Do you remember them?

E: I do not remember them unless I stopped and checked on some of them. But their concern was for the individual. It was not this classroom approach and this syllabus that you go by. It was more everybody to learn. Their great endeavor [was] to have their students to stand out as the smartest grade. There was that individual attention. I remember I will have to tell this for Carol's Uncle Neal. He was a quiet boy. He did not like to get into a lot of turmoil. He would kind of hang back, and did not play with the children like we thought he should. He would bring his homework home. When we would go over it, he would know all the answers. I would go visit his class. The teacher would be asking things. I would look at Neal. He knew the answer because we had talked about it. All the other children were waving their hands, and they answered. So I said to Neal, you knew the answer, why did you not say something? He said, they were so anxious to answer, why should I?

J: Were there any slums when you moved here?

E: There were nothing we called slums. The Negro community was across the

tracks right where it is now. They had nice little homes. They were not complaining about anything as long as they got work. There was no welfare, old age checks, nothing. Everybody worked.

J: Were these the black people that worked for you?

E: Yes.

J: Did they work as maids and things like that?

E: Yes. They did the laundry. There was no other way, unless they took them home. You did not usually like to have them [do that]. They did not have running water. Maybe they just had a pump that they had to use. You had city water. So you knew your close were rinsed, and you could supervise it. So we had old Aunt Kate, Bessie's mother, and Bessie was a young girl. Bessie worked for us twenty-one years. She came along to help her mother and learn how to do laundry. They took a great big washtub, and filled it with water on a fire. They put the white clothes in, all the soap, and punched them with a stick. The fire and all, you know. That was Bessie's job. [They] boiled the clothes, and rinsed them in other tubs, and hung them on the line.

J: Did you do the laundry very often?

E: Oh, yes mercy. We did it on Monday or Tuesday, but usually Monday. Then you ironed all day Tuesday. You set aside those two days. Then Wednesday you baked. Thursday and Friday you cleaned and did yard work. [Laughter.] And if your routine was upset by someone getting sick, it was a catastrophe.

J: What happened on Saturday? Did you sit around and eat or sleep?

E: We got ready for Sunday. We did not cook on Sunday very much. You baked a home, made a cake, pies, and bread. We did our bread. You can run to a store and buy a lot of things. You got ready for Sunday. You went to Sunday school and church on Sunday.

J: Were there very many churches in town or very many religions?

E: Oh yes, just about what it is now. Presbyterian. The Baptist were down where the new Chamber of Congress is being built--right up from that was a corner [I think right now the library and all that is there]. That was the First Baptist Church. The First Presbyterian is where Florida Bank is. The Methodist [Church] was down where it is now on First Street--a small church. The Episcopal was still in that same place--a small church. You know religion meant more then in those days. Your ministers visited you. You were identified by what you stood for. If you were not at church, someone asked you why. What

happened? Were you ill?

J: Did everybody go to church?

E: Yes. Sunday was just quiet.

J: Did you come home and have a family meal?

E: Yes, lots of people did that. Some people did not approve of that. They would eat very lightly on Sunday, but we did not with five children. They were all hungry. We usually made a big gallon churn of ice cream because you did not buy ice cream. It was not anywhere. We made our own eggs and cream. [It was] very rich. Nobody knew anything about cholesterol or cared. You all ground the machine and got it done. Stood on it to get it real hard. We had a lot of fun, a lot fights too. Each one wanting their turn, and usually somebody ended up in tears. They wanted to clean the panel. That was another friction. But going back to housing, there were plenty of houses. You never saw people hunting for a place to live?

J: Were houses built very often?

E: Well, not too many. The town was not growing that fast. Now faculty members, as the University began to grow, began to move out of town. They went Highlands way, you know the Duck Pond. They built lovely homes, and lots of them there. It was not moving northwest then. It looked as if it was going Highlands, out that way, and maybe towards Newnan's Lake, but it never did.

J: Did the people build their own houses?

E: Usually. You had a very good carpenter, or maybe a contractor. It was very easy to build then. [There was] plenty of labor, and people were anxious to work. Of course, everybody was paying very small salaries because none of us had much money. The University did not pay much. I know it would astonish anybody who knows what the salaries are today. Your grandfather came to the University of Florida as horticulturalist at \$1200 a year. We thought that was very good. Then I came remember when they were all raised to \$1500 a year. Oh, that was wonderful. Although we had a big family, it was fun to economize, make ends meet, and do things. Nobody was complaining. I think of that often now. People are saying, "I just do not like this job. I am not paid enough. I am going to find me another job." There was not that unrest. We lived very kind, nice lives. You can imagine how organized we were, in a way. We would have supper, and the children would go out and play maybe an hour. Then they would be bathed, put in their pajamas, and we would go for a ride. We would come up University Avenue, or we would go through Payne's Prairie, which was not the highway it is now. The snakes were all over the road. Then we would

come back, and the children would be all asleep in the car. At that time, we would just take them in and put them to bed. Then we would read, or I would cook a rug.

J: What kind of car did you have?

E: Ford. [Laughter.]

J: What year? What was the first car you ever got?

E: Well, the first one was a second-hand Buick that some man was caught with. It was a very good buy. Most of our life here was with Fords. When they had the exhibit at the mall of the antique cars, I just could not get away from the 1926--it was exactly the one that we had. It was so familiar. The wide step, or running board, we used to just pack that full of picnic equipment and tie it down. All of our stuff would be out on the running boards because there is no place inside with a bunch of children.

J: Where would you go for picnics?

E: We did not go to elaborate places. We went to Earleton Beach, Glen Springs. Old Glen Springs was beautiful then because it was natural. Nothing had ever been done to it. It was just an enormous spring with beautiful trees. A traveling group would come by, with an elephant or monkey, and they would gravitate to these people where people were coming on a picnic. I remember so well at Glen Springs. We knew this elephant and his caretaker were over here. Your grandfather was holding the baby. All of a sudden he looked down and here was this black thing taping him. He looked into that, and there was this elephant. You know if you look down into one of those black things you really do! Our life was very peaceful and nice then.

J: Did you go on picnics on Sundays mostly?

E: Well sometimes we did. We tried not to. We did not like to have you children tearing around the yards screaming and playing on Sunday. You were to come in and read or hear stories. In the winter we popped pop corn because you did not buy popcorn. You did your own popcorn balls, and we had molasses candy pulls. We had a lot of fun at home.

J: Did you all drink Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer on the picnic?

E: No. [Laughter.] One of my favorites was real lemonade with Welch's grape juice put in it. That combination is real [good]. Real lemons. We did not have any of this synthetic stuff. We took jugs of that. Oh we thought a thermos jug was the most marvelous invention because we could keep things hot or cold.

Earlton Beach, which now is nothing, was lots of fun then. They had swings and boats you could take out. But all of that is gone.

J: What about grocery stores? What were they like?

E: You were waited on in grocery stores. You came with your list. You came in and either the manager or the prominent clerk would come right up to the counter and say, may I take your list? With this list, he ran all over the store and put the things you wanted in front of you. You just stood there and waited.

J: Where were these?

E: You know where the old post office is? As you go down on the left, now there is some kind of electrical company or something in there. That was Chester Harold's father's store. We went there a great deal because we liked those people. One of the Dell's had a very swanky store down East University about where the Crane Motor Company is now across from the Legion. That was a very expensive store. The wealthy people really went there because he had imported things that they wanted for their parties. As I think of it today as we go through picking up what we want, then you could not pinch peaches or anything. He brought you what he had. You looked at it, and if you did not want it you said, "No, I will not take that this time." And he took it back. Those clerks knew where everything was. Nobody worked behind a counter. No one lifted a thing off. But those most interesting thing (I imagine someone else has talked about this) is Wilson's Store. The history of Wilson's should be written up because Mrs. Wilson, with her children _____. In those days goods were shipped in wooden boxes which you never see now. She took those boxes and each child had one. She worked in Wilson's store raising her children that way. They played with homemade things from the store in their boxes, and were fed and slept in their boxes while she managed the store. We thought how wonderful it was when up on their mezzanine they built where all their money, accounting, and bookkeepers sat. They had wires with little trolleys. You would make a purchase. The clerk would pull down a handle. Down would come one of these little boxes. In it she would put your money and the slip of what you bought, and jerk the handle. That went up and caught there. It went up to the mezzanine. Up there a girl received it, and sent back your change. No money was kept back of the counter. No thieving went on in those days that we knew about. If anyone ever broke in, we did not know it. I remember how amazed I was to see all those things going over the store--the dress department, towel and sheet department, and each one had their line. You ought to get someone who knows a lot about that because Mrs. Wilson was a brilliant business woman, and she founded that. She made it so successful.

J: Her husband did not help her, or did he die?

E: I think he died. She was left with that. Some of the other people who knew her would. They had a second floor eventually. Mrs. Nellie **Doyd** was manager, and she wore the high lace collars with the points under here and a jack bow. It has always been black. She was very queenly. Your grandfather came home one day, and I was busy with little children. I could not go shopping too much. He said, there is the nicest lady on the second floor of Wilson's that handles all the children's wear. When you need something, you must go up there and tell her what you want and she will find it for you. You see, you did not wait on yourself. You just said, I want to see so and so, and they flew around getting it for you. She managed that second floor for Mrs. Wilson. Going back to housing, I want to say that most of the houses in 1926 had a toilet. They might not have had city sewerage, but they had a septic tank. They had indoor toilets. Out in the negro section and the outskirts, it was all outside. That was the greatest improvement in Gainesville was getting more city sewerage.

J: What rooms did you have in the houses?

E: Most average houses always had a dining room. So many houses that run the kitchen and dining room together. [You had] a nice living room and dining room. You always put on a good front. Your kitchen was not anything like the kitchens now. [They] were very simple like the gas. The Gainesville Gas Company was here. We just had a burner, two burners. And we had a little wood stove. There was plenty of wood to burn.

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E: Very often in some of these kitchens, they did not have running water. We did, and we thought that was so wonderful. The average income person did have a sink with running water.

J: Was it hot and cold?

E: Yes, but to get your water hot was a problem. You did not keep the burner running all the time. If you were going to take baths and needed hot water, then you lighted this burner under your tank and got your tank full of hot water for baths.

J: You did not have showers?

E: No. People did not take showers then, just a big tub on legs. Now you paint them gold, and have a lovely sort of a conversational piece now. You know the convenience did not bother us so much. Let us go to refrigeration. I was thinking of that the other day. We had ice men. As you heard the clang of the big tongs as he threw it or hung it on the side. It was clanging and he drove a horse. You could hear him coming, and you got ready. If you had stuff in the

top of your ice box you were getting fifty pounds or 100 pounds. You got all of your food out to get the big ice in. That was very important. The ice plant was huge and doing big business. Our first electric refrigerator was just amazing to us. I remember an old friend visiting us. She said, I understand you have an electric refrigerator. I said, oh, it is just so wonderful. We have so much milk for the children. She said, oh, I would like to see it. So I took her out. I opened the door and she put her hand on the bottom to see how cold the bottom of it was. I remember that startled me so. She said, oh, it is cold. In her mind she did not think electric would be as cold as 100 pounds of ice.

J: How long did that 100 pounds of ice last?

E: Of course you had good insulation in those boxes. I think the ice man only came every other day or every third day. Three times a week maybe. You could go to the ice plant. Now you ought to visit the old ice plant because that is the original one. If the old Negro is still there, you ought to talk to him because he is a wonderful guy and he remembers all of that.

J: How long has he been there?

E: Oh he must have been there sixty years, I imagine. I saw him the other day. I do not know whether he is working or not. He hangs around there because he does not know anything else. He was one of these nice men that waited on the people, and was so happy to help you. We all liked him. That is where we got our case of ice to make the ice cream. See we would have to go with a gunny sack and get so many pounds, thirty-five or something like that. Then we would have to bring it home and take sledge hammers and break up that ice. We had the salt. In a big dish pan, we mixed it. Think of the work. You just expected to do it to get a good product. To feed your children with good food was your aim. So work did not mean too much.

J: What about big farms? Were they mostly around the outskirts of town?

E: Oh yes. The farming here out to be a special subject because there were dairy farms. Milk was not shipped in. The cattle were here. You got your milk usually from a milk man who was just like the ice man coming with his horses. Of course, there was some under state supervision, but very early they were not. Then tuberculosis and other things were carried by milk. People worked with milk. That was soon changed. The farms were very big in that they were raising all our vegetables. Vegetables were not shipped in. Vegetables tasted so good because we did not have them year round. When the first tomatoes came in these stores, we all bought tomatoes and ate them all the time. They were so wonderful, and they would soon be gone. Now today you do not get that flavor, and you do not get that pleasure in a vegetable. I regret that. We

used to have tomatoes ripening on the vine in the back yard. We would watch them turning yellow, pink, and getting ripe. Just the anticipation of a lovely ripe tomato--you do not get that today.

J: Did you do much canning?

E: Yes, all of our canning. I was teaching canning, about that time before I was married, in pressure cookers. There were the great big pressure cookers. Two layers of quart cans. We did all kinds of canning. Everything you canned like mad while the vegetable was in. If you did not get it then, you were lost. The potato farms here were wonderful. [They were] out towards La Crosse. They were beautiful potato farms because of the soil out there. We would get those fresh potatoes and sweet potatoes from that area. The cane grinding ought to be another subject because they do not do that anymore. With an old mule walking around turning this great thing. They were feeding the sugar cane in and out getting the juice.

J: Was there one in Gainesville?

E: LaCrosse. Mr. **Kyte**. Your mother put her hand in and got her hand caught in those cogs. We just remember cane grinding. The farming was wonderful. The land was very good. They were not using commercial fertilizer. They were using the natural from the cows, horses, and mules. The land was productive then. One of the richest sources of income was the pine trees, naval stores. Major Thomas got nearly all of his wealth from his acres of pine trees--selling turpentine, rosin, and so on. Of course that is all gone. People were very wealthy if you owned pine groves then.

J: Were there several large land owners in Gainesville the four or five that own most of the land now?

E: Well, the Thomas' owned a great deal.

J: What about Rip Van Winkle?

E: Now I do not know about Rip Van Winkle.

J: That is way up on Sixteenth is it not? They said he owned half the town at one time or something like that. He was really rich. Who was the man who used to own Glen Springs? His father lives downtown behind that brick wall.

E: **Beard** Hardware. Mr. Ira **Beard** was one of the richest men right along with Major Thomas. He owned farmland. They were the pioneers, see. The Stringfellows were another group. All of those pioneers. You could

look them up in the city library. I imagine _____ is when he made a tape and told about all those people. People in those days had such a good attitude toward the people working for them. They looked after them, and took care of their laborers. The negro was not restless and unhappy. He would say, "Oh my white folks are good to me. You are my white folks, and I will do this for you." And we did give them things. Of course we gave them cast off things, but they were glad to get them. I know they were abused in many cases, but I did not see that so much. I was not drawn into that. As the University began to grow, then you would see all the changes beginning to come in Gainesville. The great demand was paving University Avenue. There are minutes of an agricultural meeting that your grandfather helped hold at the University in 1928. The secretary writing it up--what was done at that meeting. People from all over the state who could get here came to hear this. It was a very important meeting. She put at the end of her minutes "the meeting was very well attended. There were thirty-seven cars from out of Alachua County."

J: Has the biggest increase in people coming to the University been in the last twenty years?

E: Since the war.

J: There has been a real rapid increase?

E: Yes. There was one time, I remember we looked at each other when we got the word there were nearly 7,000 students. We said, you know this University is getting too big. The faculty began to increase. [They] began to build better homes, and buy land. They began moving northwest. The businesses began to grow. We had our first hamburger joint.

J: Where was that?

E: I wish I could remember. My memory of service to the customers _____. You know the city drug where it is down on the square by Dell's? Cokes in a glass were five cents. Gasoline was fifteen cents a gallon. I had a friend whose husband was connected with Shaw Keeter. Shaw had established the Ford place in a little old warehouse type thing where it is today. She would buy one gallon of gas because she was just driving around town. She got good mileage with her little car. They parked on a slant all around the square, not parallel. What do you call that? They would drive in before noon at about 10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. in front of Dell's drugstore and honk their horn. Out would come a boy with a white cap or white apron, usually a high school kid. They would say, we want Coke. Here he would come with his little tray, and serve them in the

car. They would give him their nickels.

J: Were they the only ones that they would do that for?

E: Other drugstores did it, but they were not very popular. You could sit in your car for hours and watch the people, see everything that was going on. That was the way they enjoyed living.

J: Do you remember when Gainesville High School was built.

E: Do you mean down where junior college is now?

J: **Buchholz.**

E: That was marvelous when that was built. Mr. Buchholz had just returned from a scholarship to London. We thought how wonderful it was to have him for the first principal. He had so much prestige. Mrs. Blacklock [was there]. Mrs. **Phipps** was a math teacher. Her husband was in math at the University. Lots of wives of faculty went on the staff. Again, you had that close relationship there.

J: Was that just high school?

E: It began with seventh grade. That relieved the pressure down on East University. What did they call that? Other schools began to be talked about. We would have to have other grade schools. It was always money, money, money. Where are we going to get the money?

J: What were the major businesses that were going on?

E: Now you know that Gainesville has never had a big industrial center of any kind where there is a big payroll. It was clothing. There were no women at the University. It was all male. All of your clothing stores sprang up. L & M was one of the leading ones. What is the one across from Primrose Inn?

J: Silvermans.

E: All of those people just began to establish their stores because of the boys. Then your athletic department came. One or two stores would sell that. The high school teams were growing and needing it. We never had money from a big payroll.

J: Do you remember anything about **Chitty**?

E: Oh yes. Now you see that was a mens clothing store. That was one of the

biggest ones downtown. I read a very famous one to you the other night--Burnett's which was across from the courthouse where that eating place has just sprung up. In there was the leading mens store. We were reading about an old letter in the *Gainesville Sun*. It said, "Burnett's Clothing Store. 'Nuff sed." That was his advertisement. He had that on everything. He was a leading merchant. **Chitty's** catered more to the country people. The farmers got all their clothing there, shoes and everything. When that store went out of business last year, it was one of the last old landmarks. Years ago as Gainesville began to grow and change, an old resident came back and got lost. She came in. She took the wrong turn or something. She said she did not know where she was until she was going down a street and looked and saw **Chitty's** Store. Then she knew where she was on the south side of the square. The courthouse was a beautiful red brick. Of course that was all changed. But everybody was proud of the courthouse. You ought to look up old pictures of it. I do wish now that we had had a presence or that we had known enough that as we took down the old courthouse to have made the square a mall, covered, carpeted, and new stores all around the square. That is what we should have done instead of building another courthouse. We should have moved that way off somewhere and made that an industrial center. It was talked about and people just turned thumbs down. That was just be terrible, we could not see it. We made a mistake.

J: All the businesses are around there.

E: How they are going to survive I just do not know. You people are going to have to work on that in years to come. All towns and cities are faced with that same problem. Going back to housing again.

J: Were there more skilled laborers to do the stuff? I know on the gingerbread houses. Were there really skilled people that are not around anymore?

E: Yes. I know what it was. Right next door is a stone house. Native stone from Alachua County. They had a big quarry of it out here, and one down across from Krispy Kreme Donut. Those were stone masons that are dead now. They were wonderful people in that they built stone fireplaces that threw out the heat, and were just perfect. So there were many little stone houses. Maybe one or two rooms for the poor people because they could bring in that stone and fix a very warm, snug house. People could not afford to build a stone house today.

J: You said something about that you have a dining room and a kitchen.

E: Yes. And your livingroom was very important because that is where you entertained. There were big families, and the dining room should seat twelve people. This table, when I raise this leaf and pull it out, we can seat twelve.

Many a table seated fourteen. Your dining room was like Norman Rockwell drawings--his pictures of Thanksgiving and so on. It was always this great big family of about three or four generations. Many of the old houses, and you will see them today, had what they called a breezeway. As they had negro cooks, maids, and yardmen, they kept them in the back. Maybe they lived in little cottages on the back of the estate. But this breezeway was wonderful in Florida because you always had wind going through it. Your kitchen was at the end, not connected to your house. You just walked through the breezeway. So all of your great tureens, soup, and vegetable were brought in through the breezeway.

To get them hot on a table was their problem then. That is why they all had huge cupboards and silver dishes with the great huge dome over a platter of chicken. Many a farm place you see now has a breezeway because of the coolness. They did not know why they built them really. You could sit out in the breezeway many a day. It was terrific. We did not worry about the weather like you do now. We did not even talk about it. We would just say, was it not a lovely day? Was that not a good rain? We were so thankful. We did not fuss. We did not know what was going on. If there was a great storm somewhere we did not know. So it did not worry us. Ignorance was bliss in those days.

J: When did the radio start knowing about that stuff?

E: We had our first radio. Now that was Amos and Andy were on then. That must have been the early 1930s. It must have been 1929 and 1930. Our first radio was a big dome shaped thing. That set our day because there were certain programs. You would get all your work done to go hear this. We would get up to go do something else. At night, we gathered for Amos and Andy.

J: Was there any news reports?

E: Yes. Who was that famous man who did all the first world war news? **Gabriel Peters**. We stopped everything for him. Many families I knew did not eat supper until they had heard him because their sons were in the war. They just had to hear his latest things. So radio came. Of course you know we had phones many years before that, electricity, and all. This was wonderful. We had pretty lamps and chandeliers. It made a very nice leaving. As I look back on it, I think of how happy the people were then. They were not tearing around. They did not go off on long vacations. There was so much to do right here. It was lots of fun. You could afford it. People did not travel. We went up to New York, and many a time it took days to go. We stopped and visited things along the way. [We] visited Washington, and saw everything. It was a great effort to make a trip.

J: How often would you go on a trip like that?

E: Just in the summer. Just once.

J: You went to the World's Fair once, did you not?

E: Oh, we went to Chicago. Think of seven of us in a Ford.

J: Did you sleep in the car?

E: No. We had tourist cabins. We would watch for those. It would take three you know. Many a time they would not have three, just one. So we would have to go on. In Chicago, the whole city was geared to take care of people, so there would be houses advertising so many rooms. We would get a home where we would have three bedrooms. I can remember people looking at us in amazement, with our five children.

J: What year was this? 1933?

E: 1933 or 1934.

J: Were there very many special social events in Gainesville that happened every year? Any parties?

E: Your social life was connected with your church. The big affairs they had when you visited others—bazaars for Christmas. The Episcopalians always led the town in Christmas bazaars.

J: They still do that.

E: They are excellent. We would have covered dish suppers in the churches. There was no country club at the time, but there were private parties with wealthy people. Major Thomas would have a big party at his home there at what was Hotel Thomas. The elite of Gainesville would be invited. The Stringfellows' would have one, and the Bairds' would. The Bairds' beautiful old home down East University now where the Christian Church is. Way down there on the right. All that property was the Bairds' home.

J: Did everybody in the town know about these parties?

E: No, it was really restricted. You were invited. You dressed so beautifully to go to them. They had beautiful clothes then. I do not think this ought to go on the tape, but these students should hear that letter about the hat designer.

J: What was her name?

E: Mrs. McCormick. She was way ahead of her time. Do any of you all have a

grandmother who lives here?

J: No.

E: Mrs. McCormick was a hatmaker. She was the only one in Gainesville. She had a big shop. She hired women. She designed her hats. She designed one for you for a certain occasion.

[End of the interview.]