

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

JANE DOUGLAS GIBBS BASKERVILL

INTERVIEW 702

This is M. B. Pope. I am representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 700. I am interviewing Mrs. Jane Baskervill, interview number 702. This interview is being conducted on May 1, 1992. We are at the home of Mrs. Jane Baskervill at 209 Johnson Street in New Bern, North Carolina.

Mr. Pope: Jane, when were you born?

Mrs. Baskervill: M. B., I was born in 1918 the day after the armistice was signed for World War I.

Mr. Pope: So, that was November 12, 1918.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes.

Mr. Pope: What was your full maiden name.

Mrs. Baskervill: I was Jane Douglas Gibbs.

Mr. Pope: Where were you born?

Mrs. Baskervill: Right upstairs here in this house.

Mr. Pope: What were your parent's names.

Mrs. Baskervill: My father was Dr. Norfleet Mann Gibbs. My mother was Rosa Goodlow McMillan Gibbs.

Mr. Pope: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. My brother was Norfleet Mann Gibbs, Jr.

Mr. Pope: Was there anyone else living here in this house at the time that you were born, and if so, were they related to you?

Mrs. Baskervill: No. Miss Celia Singletary, a trained nurse who had worked for Dr. Pollock before he went to France with our Battery B boys who fought there, was helping my father and she lived here and rocked me many miles. I had a nice trained nurse to help me when I

came into the world.

Mr. Pope: But she was of no blood relation?

Mrs. Baskervill: No relation.

Mr. Pope: Let's talk just a minute about your childhood memories, and I'm just gonna try to stir up a few. What street did you live on as a child?

Mrs. Baskervill: At 27 Johnson Street. It's now 209 Johnson Street, and originally it was 11 Union Street. There's an 11 in the glass over the front door.

Mr. Pope: Do you remember any of your playmates?

Mrs. Baskervill: Oh yes! We were lucky in this neighborhood. Mary Anderson and Marion Terwilliger and Billy Hand. In fact, Marion and I used to play football with the little Dr. Hand gang boys over there on the corner. Dr. Hand would take us with them on hunting trips. When it snowed, he would ride us to school in an old sleigh that he had made. He taught the boys to box, and we learned to box. The mothers had wonderful refreshments for the Boy Scouts later. When they would have a dance, I remember one boy who is a man in New Bern now, drank twenty-six cups of punch at one of the parties. But even when we were in college, we still had a Christmas dance. None of the boys, when I made my debut, drank whiskey or beer. That was no problem. We could ride to Morehead during college days to the dance and not have to worry about driving home under the influence of alcohol. They had sailboats and ponies. We used to play jousting games on the sidewalk, lifting the rings from the standards. There were beautiful parades. I remember

helping decorate the Hand boat one year with Japanese lanterns. Every Labor Day we had a lighted flotilla. I remember when Billy Hand had his bird dog, Fritz, surf boarding behind the boat in the parade; a ride from the Country Club down between the draw bridges and back.

We put on plays. My mother's kindergarten equipment was always in use with slides and seesaws and acting bars and rings. There was just always something to do. We enjoyed the yards all over the neighborhood.

Dr. Hand made a slide that went down to the corner of the Hollister yard from an old tree in the back of the Anderson yard. He nailed steps up on the tree and we'd hang on with our hands and slide down the slide and then pull it back and then stand in line to take another ride.

Mr. Pope: You mentioned a few moments ago that you made your debut. What do you remember about that?

Mrs. Baskervill: That was wonderful. I think that was a highlight of my life really and my marriage, my wedding. They were the two outstanding times for me. In those days, you had five marshals. I was fortunate to visit Liz Bailey, Senator Bailey's daughter, for the ball. She had an allergy and couldn't go, and so I inherited her marshals. When we would go to some of the lovely Raleigh parties, the food would just disappear from the table when I walked in with all my escorts. In those days, the boys would break on each other and so you would change partners and you got to know lots of young people from all over North Carolina.

Mr. Pope: What type of transportation did you use to get from

here to Raleigh?

Mrs. Baskervill: We drove. My father was dead. There were five widows sitting up in the balcony from New Bern that year, and there were five debutante's. They were wearing black, but they came anyway, and they were holding our red roses for us to dance. We wore white ball gowns.

Mr. Pope: Did you go up by automobile or by train?

Mrs. Baskervill: My marshall took me.

Mr. Pope: I know home entertainment has changed a great deal from now when we all sit around and watch TV most of the time from back in your earlier days. Back in your early childhood, what did you do in the home for entertainment?

Mrs. Baskervill: In my early childhood, I remember riding a tricycle to kindergarten around the corner. I could cross Change Street and Linden Street which was called Short Street at that time. I thought I was grown. A little later in grammar school, there was a nice YMCA director, Mr. Gossard and his wife who were here with their family.

We played volley ball and he would take us on hikes. We would walk out to Sloan's Spring, or the Country Club or cross over by the William's property on Madam Moore's Lane. We would come home so tired. We'd go fishing or crabbing. We had, as I said before, sailboats. We'd take a watermelon and supper and sail over to Greens Springs and go swimming. Our little boat was called the Norjan for Norfleet and Jane.

We docked at the foot of Johnson Street on Dr. Hand's property. Everybody could swim, and we'd spend lots of happy hours.

Mr. Pope: What would you do in your home at night time? I suppose you went to bed earlier than we do now days.

Mrs. Baskervill: We read a lot and listened to the radio. We had to get our lessons. In those days, you had homework. On the weekends, we'd go to the picture show. For ten cents on a Saturday afternoon we went about two o'clock and stayed until about six, they'd have double features, and you didn't dare miss going to that. We'd make candy. I remember we played Michigan for match sticks and sometimes maybe pennies and little silver bell chocolates when we got up to Blackjack. We spent the summers at Morehead. Maybe that's why I don't remember the early years. We sent our furniture down by boat.

It was better than the road. They hadn't paved the road when I was about five years old and we went. Mother bought a block of lots and sold them to our New Bern neighbors for exactly what she paid for them, \$400. So then there we played pirate. Every summer we had something different. We beat soaps suds one summer and tried to see how many different colors we could make from poke berries or mercurochrome or whatever we could think of, and we'd put soda in to make it look foamy and look like a soda. We whittled one year. We'd go to the shipyards and get balsa wood or wood that was soft and easy to cut. We learned to lasso and do rope tricks one summer. There was always something going on. We pulled candy if it rained or make fudge and played cards.

Mr. Pope: That sounds like a wonderful childhood.

Mrs. Baskervill: It was.

Mr. Pope: It was quite different from the childhood of today,

but it was a clean, good, healthy environment, wasn't it?

Mrs. Baskervill: Oh yes, it really was!

Mr. Pope: You mentioned the fact that your father had died when you were a debutante, so evidently, he died as a young man.

Mrs. Baskervill: He was sixty-five years old, but he didn't look that. He was very active. He had played football and was never substituted in a game. He was on the first famous team at the University of North Carolina. So, we went to all the football games and the circuses. He loved the horses and the animals. He was from Hyde County and he loved to see them at the picture show on Saturday nights. He would go and wait and come by the jail after the movie and sew up the people who had been in fights. By the way, the health department is something that I'm very proud of today. When my father took it when no one else would, as part time health officer, he was paid fifty dollars a month. He and a secretary, Mrs. Ellison and Miss Mable Dunn, an older woman who was a health nurse, and one black health nurse whose name I can't remember right this minute, but she was there for many, many years and did a wonderful job. They did everything from testing the open wells to checking the children's teeth and throat and vaccinating all of them; plus charity patients and jail residents.

Mr. Pope: Now at this same time, he still has his private practice?

Mrs. Baskervill: Oh yes.

Mr. Pope: How was he paid?

Mrs. Baskervill: During the Depression, no one had money or cash, so it was really a barter system. His good friend across the hall

in the Elk's Temple building was our lawyer. Upstairs in the Elks Temple was the dentist who exchanged my father's services to assist him when he had to use anesthesia. My father would run up and help him and then in turn, he took care of our teeth. The butcher would send meat and then daddy would help his family when they needed him.

The shoe repairman's family needed help, and so they exchanged services, also the car repairman. So, that helped a lot because there was very little money in those days. We had good food; collards and sausage and ham at Christmas, cakes, candy, pickles from the patients.

In the summer, the watermelons would be lined up. Sometimes we'd come home and find ten of them. Some people would carve their initial on them so he'd know whom he should credit.

Mr. Pope: Quite different from our doctors today. Right?

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. He always went to Richmond in those days to the hospital with his patient in the ambulance, and he would stay all night when needed. He would be there with the family and the patient when they were critically ill. He worked hard and it had it's toll when he died as a young man.

Mr. Pope: What school did you attend?

Mrs. Baskervill: I started in kindergarten around the corner with Miss Elizabeth Richardson and Miss Harriet Dunn, Mark Dunn's sister. Then, Miss Molly Heath was our first grade teacher. We thought she had eyes in the back of her head because she always knew what we were doing. (laughter) She would write on the blackboard and tell us to stop. Then, Miss Lizzie Hancock in the second grade wasn't very

well, so we had a substitute every afternoon for several months, and she taught us reading. But Miss Molly started us right with good phonics. In the third grade, Miss Ruth Berry would march out about two or three people and the rest of us sat there til we had done some extra work to learn the tables or whatever we were behind in. And so she had a little session after school with most of us. Then, Miss Louise Bell in the fourth grade was wonderful. She took us out on the school green and we dug the Great Lakes. We never will forget their location because we poured water in them and learned the states surrounding them over in the Central school yard. We had wonderful field days. New Bern had Central school downtown and Ghent school and Riverside school, and there was great competition. The bus students from Brinson school came in. When they finished the seventh grade, they came to high school in New Bern. There wasn't a cafeteria for the bus children to have something hot, so at first the PTA mothers would go and take turns making hot vegetable soup or something for them. There was a little chicken coop we called it. It was a little building on the sidewalk next to the Central school. Later, Mrs. Gossard had lunches there. We only had one session on rainy days, so most of us came home. That's another thing I remember. The Blade's house, where the Citizens bank is now, was a beautiful old home with columns and a marvelous porch. One room, Alice's playroom, had a blackboard on one wall, so we played school a lot. We used to play school around on East Front Street lots of times after school. Children liked school in those days, even the spanking. Sometimes the teachers

spanked their problem children. Alice Blades had rolling stock cars, scooters, skates, tricycles with stop and go signs. Then when Easter came, the Episcopalian friends had mite boxes and we would all help them fill their mite boxes. We picked flowers in the Blades' garden and rolled around to the corner to Middle Street and sold them, little bouquets, and made money for her mite box.

Mr. Pope: So, you went to grade school at Central school?

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. Then, New Bern High School was located at Central School. Our class was the very first class in the new front. They built new classrooms. The business department was in the middle, and up and down there were four new classrooms.

Mrs. Smith was a wonderful educator. I can remember right now some of the things she would say; like, "You are the ermine of stupidity without one stain of intelligence!" Or she called our attention to describe a dormer window. I never see one that I don't think of the narrow eye-like windows that she told us about. And she taught us to say "cocky" instead of "khaki" which we always called it. Her family was the Wright family from Wilmington. Her mother was a famous school teacher there, and her brother was one of the first presidents, I guess, of East Carolina. He, I think, deserves the credit for landscaping the campus. It's so beautiful now, and he started it when he was there.

Mr. Pope: Who was principal at the Central School at that time?

Mrs. Baskervill: Mr. Shields was principal of high school.

Mr. Pope: Was he principal right on through the years?

Mrs. Baskervill: He was in high school as long as I remember

being at Central. When we got to Seniors Day, the seniors used to dress up like children, as a first grader. Alec Meadows was a year ahead of me, but he came to school with a big toe tied up and a little duck on a string, and then Mr. Shields wouldn't let our class do it.

I can remember how mad we were and we went in to petition him. He wasn't there too many more years after we left.

Mr. Pope: Who was the superintendent of schools at that time?

Mrs. Baskervill: Mr. H. B. Smith.

Mr. Pope: I've heard the name.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. I'm sure being Presbyterian, you have. He was a fine man. He came from up near Greensboro to New Bern in 1916. He had a wonderful family, two daughters and a son who have all done mighty well.

Mr. Pope: What church did you attend?

Mrs. Baskervill: The First Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Pope: All your life you've gone there.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. I joined when I was twelve years old. You waited until you were twelve then. It was an Easter Sunday sixty-one years ago.

Mr. Pope: So, you've been a lifelong member of the First Presbyterian Church?

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes I have.

Mr. Pope: You're one of the very few in that church of life members now?

Mrs. Baskervill: That's right.

Mr. Pope: Probably Alec Meadows that you mentioned.

Mrs. Baskervill: No. He was Episcopalian.

Mr. Pope: He was and transferred over. I know his wife, Sue, was Catholic and she transferred.

Mrs. Baskervill: I didn't know that. Sue was in the Red Cross and he was on a LST ship, and they met during the war. They first lived in the little house behind the library across from the church which had been a little slave house at one time.

Mr. Pope: I suppose that the First Presbyterian Church did have Sunday school?

Mrs. Baskervill: Oh yes.

Mr. Pope: You know Sunday school has not been in existence forever like we think of it. Someone told me not too long ago that Sunday School in the Presbyterian denomination, as most other denominations, started somewhere around 1913.

Mrs. Baskervill: That was before my day. I went every Sunday. I had eleven years of not missing. They gave an attendance pin. I went to the World's Fair when I was fifteen years old. We got there on Sunday, so we had Sunday school in our room at the hotel. We didn't know just where to go to Sunday school but they wouldn't count that.

It made my father mad, and he wouldn't ever stop for us to go out of town again. When the Neuse River bridge washed away, we were at the Blade's cottage in the mountains, Black Mountain. A lot of New Bern people went to Black Mountain in the summer. The slope was nice.

The Hollisters, the Mungers, the Blades, and different ones went.

All day Mr. Vernon Blades and my father were asking quietly about the 1933 hurricane, buying a newspaper or calling somewhere or checking with the radio stations up there in the mountains. Finally, we got back to the cottage that night. Miss Jane Stewart had sent us a telegram listing everything - Blades' cutter dock, hotel, Gibbs house safe.

There were all right and our house was all right, but the Neuse River bridge had washed away. We just hurried home the next day as fast as we could come. We stopped and went to Sunday school on the way home, and got here late that night. The tree was down across the drive, but didn't hurt too bad.

Mr. Pope: Do you remember as a child any particular illnesses that you may of had?

Mrs. Baskervill: Oh yes. I had everything: mumps, measles, whooping cough. The worse was the measles. Mother was taking my temperature and I asked, "How high does your fever go?" She said she didn't know, about 106. Then a few days later, there was a telephone in our bedroom and I heard her say, "Dr. Pollock, what in the world must I do? My husband's gone on a labor case in the country and Jane's fever is 106." I thought I was dying, but it was a very peaceful feeling and I've never really been afraid of death since then.

Mr. Pope: Do you remember what they did to bring your fever down? What did Dr. Pollock suggest?

Mrs. Baskervill: I guess cold wet cloths and ice maybe.

Mr. Pope: How long was it before your father got back?

Mrs. Baskervill: I know he was very worried when he got here

because he thought a lot of his children. All people had to do to make him happy was to give us a compliment and he would be pleased.

When I was born, he had post cards made with my picture on it and sent them to all his patients. I had over 100 baby caps because of his friends and patients. He was a bachelor for a long time. When my baby arrived, I got them all out and picked out the prettiest ones and I washed and ironed them, and I had a little boy and he never did get to wear them. They were too fancy. (laughter) My uncle brought me a little Paris lace cap from France. It took him so long to get home, I was wearing little bonnets when he arrived. When Tryon Palace opened, I wore it with my costume as a little cap for special occasions at the Palace when I was a hostess.

Mr. Pope: Of course I know you don't remember this, but I know you must have heard your parents talking about it, who actually did the delivery of you at that time being that your father was a doctor? That's the only reason I'm asking this question.

Mrs. Baskervill: Well of course I really don't know, but I imagine Dr. Pollock and maybe Dr. Wadsworth assisted. My father was in there I know. When I fell off a horse and broke my arm, Dr. Pollock was getting ready to set it and at the last minute he did it himself because he didn't want me to have a bump when I played the piano, which I don't do very well. I broke my arm riding on the Streets Ferry Road. The one that goes to Weyerhauser. I call it the River Road now. It was not paved of course, and it had deep ruts where the sun had dried the tracks. Mary Turner Willis Lane and I were riding a pony down the

road and we headed home. He was headed for the barn, but we thought he was running away. So, my brother was coming to tell us they were dishing up the strawberry ice cream, to come and get some. We said, "Save us. He's running away." He threw his bicycle down and rushed up to grab the horse and the horse shied and we both fell in the ruts with Mary Turner on top of me. That's how I broke my arm. We didn't have an ambulance. Her family was the funeral director family. They wanted to do something nice. They felt so bad. I was being x-rayed down in Dr. Pollock's basement in his office, and they came to say that I could ride home in the hearse. I said, "Thank you so much, but I don't believe I want to til I have to."

Mr. Pope: We've talked about a lot here. Is there any one particular event in your childhood that still is prevalent in your mind? I know it's hard to tie down one thing from a life time, but maybe one or two things that you can remember as being a real happy time in your life. You said a while ago that there were two occasions; one was when you were a debutante and the other was in your marriage.

But as a child, is there any one particular thing beside falling off the horse and breaking your arm, that you can remember?

Mrs. Baskervill: I didn't have to play in the music recital. That was good. I was in the seventh grade then I remember. I went to the recital and stepped through the hem of my first long dress getting out of the car and tore a place in it. But I enjoyed the recital not having to play. I can't think of any one thing. It was exciting when the Marines opened Cherry Point Air Station. All the girls enjoyed

dating Marines. I was a Jr. Hostess for the City at the Union Point Woman's Club building. We had so many things. It was exciting to have the Governor come and visit with Mrs. Duffy when she was trying to interest him in New Bern and the Tryon Palace restoration. I can remember when Mrs. Reynolds decided not to restore the stable wing which was a residence at that time. Marion Terwilliger and I sat on her sand stone steps next door and wept and cried because they weren't going to restore where the George Washington ball was held. We said, being good Presbyterians, "maybe it's for the best and maybe someday they can restore the whole thing." But we said that nobody would have that much money, and it burned, where would they get the furniture, we said, to put in there that was that old. I have been interested in the Palace all my life. So, Tryon Palace restoration was one of the highlights of my life. One of the sad events was when they closed Flora Macdonald College and moved it sixteen miles. But it's doing well now. I recently went to a lovely evening, a Scottish affair, at St. Andrews. They are going to be the center for Scottish heritage in North Carolina. I just wish it had been at Flora Macdonald in Red Springs. My grandfather gave that campus.

Mr. Pope: I'm gonna stray here just a moment for a particular reason. I'm gonna ask you about your marriage, your husband's name, where he went to school. The reason I do this is because I know that your husband was on a very famous football team.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes, he was. He's lost three teammates since Christmas.

Mr. Pope: Tell me a little bit about how you met your husband. There's something about him in his college days when he attended Iron Duke University.

Mrs. Baskervill: Right. They were the original Iron Duke Football Team. Bob was Robert Dortch Baskervill, born in Virginia just over the Roanoke river near the North Carolina line. His people came into Yorktown back in the 1600's and moved on down the river. It's an interesting family. He has lots and lots of cousins. They're all scattered throughout Virginia mostly. He attended Virginia Episcopal School in Lynchburg, Virginia and excelled in athletics. He went there five years, then he went to Duke University and was one of the team members that was selected for football. All of them had been outstanding in athletics at different schools. There's one interesting thing. There was one man on the team, Mr. Bolo Perdue, who had a PhD in Education, and was the school principal in Norfolk during integration. He had been an orphanage child. One day our trash man here in New Bern was asking Bob about the team, and he told him that he had been offered a scholarship when he was at the orphanage but he had turned it down and they had given it to Bolo Perdue. Well, anyway back to my Bob. He played Guard for Duke when they went to the Rose Bowl in 1939 for New Year's game. It was the 'Thirty Eight team.' They had not been scored against the whole season, and it has been very famous. We had the first reunion at the twenty-fifth, but they had such a good time they said let's meet in five years. Since then, we've met every year. They came to New Bern two years ago.

This year it was in Durham.

Mr. Pope: Where was that Rose Bowl played?

Mrs. Baskervill: In California.

Mr. Pope: What was the score?

Mrs. Baskervill: They lost it the last few seconds by a "Hail Mary." I'm not sure what the score was, but it wasn't very big against them.

Mr. Pope: And this was a team that had not been scored on all year and they lost the Rose Bowl in the very last seconds by a "Hail Mary."

Mrs. Baskervill: Right.

Mr. Pope: I know it was a disappointing end to a good season.

Mrs. Baskervill: It was. One of the manager's filmed it. He's been with Eastman Kodak all these years. He's just retired. He had color film of that game, and so occasionally he brings it. We never let it finish. We always stop it just before that play occurs.
(laughter)

Mr. Pope: Now, the topic you have selected to talk about is schools. Jane, we've talked very briefly about schools a moment ago; the Central School. You didn't mention this, but I know there was a building, a part of that school, the Bell building.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. My mother taught in the Bell building. My favorite building is the Academy building. I was in the fifth and sixth grades there. One year we had wonderful Christmas programs and pageants and operettas. I remember being a reindeer in the

Christmas program in brown cambric. Our mother's worked hard on the costumes for the Christmas pageant in the fifth grade. In the operetta of Toyland, I was a balloon. I have the costume today up in the attic. It was a pretty costume. That was in the sixth grade. The seventh grade was in the Bell building, and the eighth grade was there.

Mr. Pope: You said there was a school at Riverside and at Ghent.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. The two outlying divisions of New Bern. All the students came down to Central School in the seventh grade. I remember being so unhappy because most of my friends were at the last of the alphabet, and in the seventh grade we were divided alphabetically. I didn't know anybody in my classroom, and I never had a happier year than I did that year. It was grand. We all went to high school as friends then in the eighth grade.

Mr. Pope: If I remember correctly, at that time, there were two school systems in the county; that being the city school system of New Bern and the Craven County school system.

Mrs. Baskervill: That's correct. You remember it as well as I do.

Mr. Pope: I believe they were merged about 1970.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. Back in the sixties though we had to merge the black systems into ours, so we really had more than two systems. We had three.

Mr. Pope: I was going to get to that in a few moments, but since you mentioned it, let's go ahead and talk about that. If I remember correctly, not only did you go to school in this city school system

of New Bern, in later years, as a school teacher you taught in the Craven County school system and you were teaching during the first days of integration. Tell me a little bit about what you remember.

Mrs. Baskervill: You remember too, I'm sure, the highway patrol cars led the school buses to school the first day. We were so relieved that there were no incidence and everything went over smoothly. They gradually merged all the blacks and the teachers into our Craven County system. We were accredited due to the efforts of Miss Ruth Hoyle, who helped us. We had good schools I thought in each community, and they were the heart of the community too. They added a great deal of stability to our rural areas.

Mr. Pope: This was during the early to mid sixties?

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes it was. I went back to East Carolina to get certified as a guidance counsellor in 1966. I was an itinerant counselor and I worked at several of the school systems. At first I had two, and then unfortunately I was stretched to being in five. It was sort of hard to build a strong program in any one school. Things were just being settled down and I would arrive. They didn't want to upset the apple cart by bringing it all up again, so I did a great deal of testing to try to identify some of the problems of the children and to help the teachers understand about dyslexia. It was brand new.

They didn't believe me. I had one student who was a seventh grader who didn't know his ABC's, and yet he knew what a fact simile was.

This was hard for some teachers who had to work with these children everyday to believe that they had IQ's that were not below the norm.

Mr. Pope: I know during the intermission that we had a few moments ago, you mentioned the fact that you were one of the first white teachers to go to what was known then as an all black school.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes I was. They had many problems. Health problems were bad. Some attended with little stocking caps on. We were very fortunate that year to have the services of Dr. Verna Barefoot. She visited the schools regularly. It was nice to be able to refer the problem cases to her when she would come and get help for the children.

Mr. Pope: Jane, you think having been in the all black school at that time that they were up to par with what you might say the all white students? Were they several grade levels behind?

Mrs. Baskervill: They were several grade levels behind. The teachers were not all master teachers, but they were soon weeded out of the system. Some were able to work as teachers and today may be giving good service. There were some problems but nothing that was frightening or something that couldn't be improved upon.

Mr. Pope: You mentioned the fact that your mother was also a teacher.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes, she taught fifth grade in the old Bell building. She loved education. When she married my father, who was a doctor, she didn't teach. When I began school, she thought well, I'll be staying home with my son who was two years younger and I might as well start a little kindergarten. So, she busily got equipment and materials and had playthings built in the yard and turned over

the old kitchen on the back porch of our home as a kindergarten room. She had little tables and chairs made. They're in the attic now. They studied a little French. She gave them an appreciation of art. You could buy little penny pictures of the Boy and the Rabbit or the Aged Minister or Washington Crossing the Delaware. It acquainted these children with the outstanding artists of that day and of an earlier day. They had little programs. They cooked sometimes. Elfreda, our good cook, would help her with making biscuits, etc. I remember the jack-o-lantern caught on fire one time when we had our costume party. The salt got in the ice cream one time when I had a birthday party back there at the little tables. She gave them a good start, and they have become doctors and lawyers and are now some of the outstanding men and women of this state. They started right here.

Mr. Pope: How many years did she have this kindergarten on the back porch at home?

Mrs. Baskervill: It was from Dr. Billy Hand and David Lawrence and Dr. Grayson Waldrop and that age down through Emma Katie Guion Davis and Frances McClure Peters and Ella Meadows Ward and Katherine Ives. They're the last group. She had lovely kindergarten children.

I think it was about that time Miss Bessie Hollister, who was Presbyterian, had a good kindergarten. I think they were pioneers in the early days.

Mr. Pope: This was long before the state kindergarten came about?

Mrs. Baskervill: Oh yes. It was private. I think fifteen dollars a month is what they paid. She taught Sunday School too, using sand

tables Bible story illustrations.

Mr. Pope: Going back to your childhood school days, do you remember any fights that they might have had on the school grounds?

Of course it would have been in completely segregated schools at that time.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. Sometimes the boys would have a fight, and soon the teacher would put an end to that. There really were no big fights. The rivalry was with the other schools, with Ghent or Riverside. We had field days and each team competed against the other school, and that was great rivalry.

Mr. Pope: How was discipline carried out then?

Mrs. Baskervill: I'll never forget the sixth grade. That was the year we hated. One teacher whose husband was on the newspaper, Mrs. C. Green. She was cross eyed, and you couldn't speak to your neighbor because you didn't know for sure if she was looking at you or not. But she put us on our honor. If we made one motion or said one word, we stayed after school and she assigned many words to be written. We'd go across the street to Julia Bishop Smallwood's and we would take three pencils and we'd write and we'd write and we'd write, and we'd come home and I'd write and write and write. Mother would make me go to bed, and I hadn't finished my written assignments, and so mama would sometimes help me finish it or do a little on them and then I had to go to bed. She'd say, "if they ask you just tell them your mother helped you." So I went to school and I hadn't finished my homework. I was sent out on the steps which went up to the attic

of the Academy building and I had to do my work out there before I could come into the class. I was very slow in the fourth grade. I still don't like long division. If I finished three examples, I could walk around the room three times. There were three of us who had that privilege. We were the slow pokes in arithmetic. I was a day dreamer.

I can remember watching the flag over the Battery D out the window instead of doing my arithmetic. Sometimes I was scared of a little snake Peter Arpin kept in the inkwell in his desk behind me.

Mr. Pope: I know you were never involved in any real bad punishment or things of that nature, but I know that some of the boys would get involved in a fist fight or some prank.

Mrs. Baskervill: It really didn't happen often. We had big boys who sat in the back of the room. Some lived up at old Long Wharf, South Front Street, and some up on Griffin Street or North Craven it's called now I believe. I see some of them every now and then. They are good citizens and have families of their own now. But they got behind. I guess we didn't understand how to help them learn to read for the main problem. They were sent to Mr. Smith. I don't believe they had too much corporal punishment in those days. We didn't have problems worthy of that.

Mr. Pope: I know when I was a young fellow going to school one of the punishments they would give would be; for instance, if some boy had misbehaved, they put him down in the basement shovelling coal into the boiler or raking the yard.

Mrs. Baskervill: That's a good idea. They may have done that

and I didn't know about it. Mr. Fillingame was the janitor. When I'd come to school, I'd be almost late, he'd keep ringing the bell until I could get into the classroom. Unfortunately, that follows me today I guess. It's hard to get places on time.

Mr. Pope: I'm going to backtrack just a moment. We were talking about the early sixties and integration of schools. Do you remember because of integration, any private schools that may have come about?

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. There was one down on South Front Street which is now Governor Tryon's Drive. We always called it "Billy Hand's" School. Other parents were interested in it too. I don't remember the name of the school. Then they built a new building out in River Bend. It's now the Howell School for handicapped people.

Mr. Pope: The old Trent Academy building.

Mrs. Baskervill: Trent Academy was the name of that, exactly. Thank you. That is what it was called, and it was a good school I'm sure. I had no contact with it because my children were in public school. I always felt that it was important to be a part of your community and be able to have rapport with all kinds of people. Until my mother was ill and my children were sophomores in high school and it was integrated with great big men from other schools, I felt that the time had come, instead of waiting until they graduated, it was better for them to go on to a private school. So, Jane went to Vardell Hall, old Flora Macdonald, and Bob went to Virginia Episcopal School in Lynchburg where his father had gone. They both chose to come back here and graduate, and they've always been so glad that they did because

they have friends now in New Bern that they wouldn't have had if they had graduated from a private school. It was a little unusual. They both needed, for different reasons, to go. Bob needed the inspiration of a good man teacher, and Jane, because my mother wasn't well, and I just was busy working.

Mr. Pope: Tell us what you remember about the Community College here in New Bern. I know it's been here for several years, and I know it came about all over the state. Tell me what you can remember about that.

Mrs. Baskervill: The goal was to train young people for industry and for vocational jobs that they didn't get trained for in high school.

It was not planned originally for the college bound. Today of course, it's serving a wonderful need. I was looking in the wedding write-ups in our local paper just this week and they had graduated from the Community College and had gone on to college and their lives have been changed because of this opportunity. It costs much, much less to have those first two years here than it would in a college situation. We have good teachers here and a good program and I'm very proud of it.

I took music appreciation all over again last winter after fifty years, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. I took it from Mrs. Pollock, whose husband is the Belk's store manager here now. She's a wonderful musician and a wonderful teacher. There were doctors and retired lawyers and friends there. Some of my mother's kindergarten children were in that class with me out there.

Mr. Pope: In the very beginning, though, they were considered

technical schools.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. They fought very hard to maintain that status, but the need I guess demanded that they serve the college bound children also. Now they have music, athletic programs, a radio station, and things they didn't intend to have in the beginning.

Mr. Pope: I think that's very true from what I have observed, they also have technical training.

Mrs. Baskervill: Absolutely. They have a wonderful technical library and nurses' training.

Mr. Pope: They are closer to what a junior college would have been in yours and my day, than it was in the beginning.

Mrs. Baskervill: Right.

Mr. Pope: Jane, I want to thank you so much for your time and interest in this. As you know, there will be a book written on the Memories of New Bern, and people like yourself have contributed so much and for this we are very appreciative. It's going to be a long hard process, but we're well on the way. I have talked with several interviewers who have already interviewed a good number of people.

We'll be taking everything that we've done, such as what we've done here today and it will be compiled and put into transcript and print a little later on. When we get through, we'll hopefully have a real historical book on what people remember about New Bern.

Mrs. Baskervill: Thank you, M.B. It's been so nice to have you here. I can think back to lovely dinners at Mrs. Hands with her two servants; Lettice and Mary Eliza serving. She would serve the salad

and Dr. Hand would always serve the big plank Shad or the roast or whatever. Then all the older friends would all sit on her side porch and I would listen to them talk. They would talk about the cotillions long ago when the gentleman would never call without a carriage and flowers and they never danced without gloves at the Bachelor's Club.

There have been wonderful cultural things going on in New Bern over the years. Right up here on the corner, my father and some other bachelors had a bachelors's club where Hubert Tolson lives now. They said in the summer, you could hear them stirring ice tea a block away.

I have a lovely picture of it in the snow. Dr. Tholley Huske, an Episcopal minister, was one of the ones, and John Parker. There are just so many things you've brought to mind that I hadn't thought of recently. I would like to say though that my father did not serve during World War I. He was not married, but he was a surgeon left to take care of the people here. He thought if the men could fight for him, then he could take care of their families free. The flu epidemic came and he worked very hard. I can show you the walrus tusk beads that a man from over near Bridgeton made for my mother because he was so appreciative that my father had delivered his son. Then, my mother was proud of the fact that she was asked to serve on the school board. Some people didn't think ladies should be able to do that. She was appointed for life. She was the first woman. Then there was one other member that wasn't too popular, so they had an election and they were pushed out and they now elect school members today ever since that time.

Mr. Pope: This has been quite interesting. Having listened to you for about the last hour, I have gathered one thing, you really had a wonderful childhood.

Mrs. Baskervill: Yes. We were so fortunate.

Mr. Pope: Thank you so much again, Jane.

Mrs. Baskervill: It's good to have you come to New Bern from Wallace and stay with us. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW