

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
WITH  
MARGARET WRIGHT

19 JULY 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE  
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.029

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Albert Gore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH  
MARGARET WRIGHT**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.029

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith Collection designated as QMS 1995.29. This is Regina Forsythe, I'm interviewing Margaret Wright. Today is Wednesday, July 19, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the home of Margaret Wright, located at 614 Shawnee, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The tape of this interview along with the transcripts of this interview will become part of the Quintin Miller Smith Collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publications. Is that all right with you, Mrs. Wright?

WRIGHT: Certainly.

FORSYTHE: I want to ask you about your mother?

WRIGHT: Well, three months before mother would have graduated from the two year normal school, they needed a teacher so desperately very near her home on the Franklin Pike, at the Franklin school. It was an eighth grade one-room schoolhouse and they couldn't find anybody to teach there for the coming year. Mother dropped out of school and taught. She filled in the three months at the end of that year and taught there several years. She always wanted to go back and finish those three months, and she was so mad that she never had the opportunity to do that. But she started out that year of 1911, in the class with Mr. Q.M. Smith.

FORSYTHE: Did she tell you any stories about being in school here?

WRIGHT: Very few. She drove a horse drawn carriage to school and she would pick up some of her students on the way. I've heard her tell about one or two storms they went through, when the lightning and thunder was so bad and the rain so heavy, that over the very rough roads, they were not so sure the horse could pull the carriage with about eight children and my mother driving. That's what she did.

FORSYTHE: When was your husband born?

WRIGHT: He was born September 21, 1916.

FORSYTHE: What was his full name?

WRIGHT: Neil Hutchison Wright. It's H U T C H I S O N. He was born in Nashville but his father was the son of Canadian Wrights, David William Wright. Neil's father's mother died when he was quite young and his father died when he was ten years

old. Papa was raised by Uncle Billy and Aunt Janet Kennedy. He was Scottish, lived in Nashville and had a business there. They were really Neil's grandparents, as far as he knew. All of his relatives by the name of Wright are Canadian. We have been in touch with some of them over the years. Some have married into French Canadian families now, but the name Wright is Scottish.

FORSYTHE: He went to Vanderbilt you said?

WRIGHT: He went the first year to Vanderbilt because his father would have liked for him to have been an engineer, but that was depression days. He was playing in a dance band to pay his tuition, well along with what help his folks could give him. He just about worked himself to death, that one year at Vanderbilt, and he didn't really want to be an engineer. He wanted to be in music, so he went over to Peabody and talked with Mr. E.J. Gatewood, who was head of the Music department at that time. Mr. Gatewood gave him an N.Y.A. job and a scholarship arranging for orchestra and band. That's the way he got through Peabody, where he graduated.

FORSYTHE: I want to go back and finish a few names we have, Joseph Smith.

WRIGHT: Well, Joe Smith came here just after the war, fresh out of the Marines. A handsome young devil, very bright, a fine percussionist, and he was a great help to Neil, organizing and working with the band. He graduated here, taught in, I believe Manchester, a town close by, and then he went to Georgia and taught in several Georgia towns. . .Covington. . .and I can't recall the others. He became quite well known as a marching band and a concert band director. Then Neil had him come back here when there was an opening, to take over the bands, here. He has done an outstanding job. He has been recognized by a number of both national and international band directors organization. He has done clinics in Chicago, Canada, and all over the United States in marching and concert band. Horace Beasley was his assistant after a few years. Horace came here on the faculty after Joe did. Joe did it all for a few years, just like Neil and I had done it all. I worked with the majorettes all those years, even after Joe came. It was fun.

FORSYTHE: Helen Trivitt.

WRIGHT: Helen Trivitt? Helen came here as a music education person, for the Campus School, the Pittard Campus School. It has been called various things over the years. It was called the Training School for many years, then it became the Campus School and then it was named for Homer Pittard. Helen came here to teach music there and to teach music education at the college. She was with us a number of years. She married and moved to Columbia, taught there. She has a daughter, and I've lost track of her daughter, but Helen died some years ago and so did her husband. She was a big addition.

FORSYTHE: Lynn Thomas Hutcheson?

WRIGHT: Tom came here from Florida State, where he received his doctorate. He came here as a French horn specialist, which he still does, but he also had done a great deal of work in creative music. He composes widely. Later on, Neil taught him voice, and he was a soloist at the First Presbyterian Church. He has a lovely voice, and certainly is a fine musician. Has added a great deal.

FORSYTHE: Cynthia Perkins?

WRIGHT: Cynthia came here as Jerry Perkins' wife, with a brand new baby when they came. I never know which decade these things fall into, you'll have to look it up in the annuals. Cynthia taught voice with us for a number of years. She had done Broadway shows in the Northeast, very successfully, and also some opera. She was a fine teacher and has a beautiful voice to this day. They have two sons, I've heard programs she's done with her older son. He also has a fine voice.

FORSYTHE: Jerry Perkins?

WRIGHT: Jerry Perkins has contributed a lot to the department and the school. He is a fine pianist and a fine teacher. He has turned out many artists, who have gone on to become doctorates, and concert artists, and college teachers. He is still doing a fine job.

FORSYTHE: Douglas Williams?

WRIGHT: Doug Williams was a student, who came from Nashville. He was a student of mine, just after the war. I started teaching Doug marimba when he was about twelve in Nashville, when we were doing refresher work at Peabody. He graduated, then came up here and studied with me once or twice a week during his high school, then he came here to school. It was Doug Williams who wrote the Alma Mater that has been in use after the old Russian hymn was discarded. That was done by a committee, I was not a member, but they did not know of course, who wrote these. They were submitted by numbers and it just turned out that Doug had the best Alma Mater. He wrote the lyrics and the melody, but it was an original melody, not taken from another source. He won the Arthur Godfrey Show when he was about a senior in college, and it was a thrill to look on television and see him win it. He won it with Classical music, "Flight of the Bumble Bee" and all sorts of things. He went on later to study with Claire Musser, who had taught at Northwestern and ended up teaching at UCLA in California. Doug went out there to do his masters, but due to a family crisis he did not complete that, he came back to be supportive of his family.

FORSYTHE: How did you get involved with the Sacred Harp?

WRIGHT: When I was very young I had a friend down the street, a professor of German at Vanderbilt, by the name of Dr. George Pullen Jackson. Dr. Jackson's hobby was

Sacred Harp music, the early hymns of the Sacred Harp collection. It's an oblong book, and quite distinctive because of its shaped notes. The shaped notes, Fa, So, La, and not Do, Re, Me came long before the Italian Do, Re, Me did, and they date back to the Pre-Renaissance period. --They are names for the notes of the scale--Fa, So, La, Fa, So, La, Me, Fa. Dr. Jackson talked a lot about this to me. I would sit on his front porch and talk with him about the music. He would go to England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and trace the origins of the melodies and wrote a very scholarly work called, "White Spirituals in the Southern Atlands." He told me all this long before he wrote the book. I was quite excited about it. He would take me with him to some Sacred Harp singings South of Lawrenceberg, close to the Alabama line and some in Georgia. I was in high school then. He was very kind to share his enthusiasm about Sacred Harp with a young child and then a high school and later a college student. I became fascinated by it. When I could drive, I often went with a group on my own, to the singings. I knew many of the people who were leaders in the Sacred Harp singling movement. It has a folk song background. The melodies are mostly folk melodies of the countries I previously mentioned. When the pioneers came over here they brought the melodies in their heads and in their hearts. Often they put sacred words to these tunes that were so familiar. For generations it was passed down orally, but in the early 1800s they were written down. There are several different versions of this. The Dennison version happens to be the one that we used, and that was written in Georgia. The singing masters went around from small town to small town and led the singing and taught the rudiments of music. That's all in the front of the Sacred Harp book. That was really the first form of music education, I think. Parents taught children. In many Sacred Harp singings that I've been to, I've seen babes in arms and also very elderly singers. I was so interested in it, that when we came here after World War II in 1947, the second year we were here, I organized a group of twelve singers and we sang madrigals--the backgrounds of these folk tunes. Not that they were actually connected but they were the music of England, Ireland, Scotland. We sang that in the first group and often we would use solos accompanied by a dulcimer or a rap harp or an Irish harp, a small harp you hold in your lap and play. We would have solos and duets accompanied by those while we often changed costumes and sang the Sacred Harp music with the second group. Then another group of solos and duets, then we changed costumes. The last group was not Sacred Harp, but traditional folk songs, many of which I had learned from my own family or collected over the years because I was so interested in traditional folk music, not the stuff that is passed off as folk music today. If it is composed and not very old, the chances are its not really folk its psuedo-folk. I'm not casting aspersions on the composers of country music because they do compose some interesting tunes, but I was glad when WSM, which started out as a 100% Folk Music Grand Ole Opry, changed the name from Folk Music Grand Ole Opry to Country Music Grand Ole Opry. That was much more accurate. At first Uncle Dave Macon from Woodbury and a number of other folk singers, folk dancers, and folk instrument players--he was a fiddle player, they were 99% of that program. Charles Bryant was the director of this, very fine Tennessee musician, over the years--40 years later--it was 99%

psuedo-folk, country music really--that you heard on the Grand Ole Opry. Only once in a long while did you here traditional folk--things like "The Preacher and Bear," "Paper of Pins," you'll run across them in the programs, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia. "Goober Peas" was a great one from Georgia. They were such fun songs that my Sacred Harp group did over thirty years of their concerts and singing for many clubs and many Alumni banquets all over the place. In our tour each spring, we did a concert during our vacation break, we covered the Southeast, I felt this was a link between the layman and the conservator musician. Many people came to this school, I think, because they enjoyed the Harp singers. Some of them were not even majors, yet some of them sang in my Harp group. It was a fun experience. I had wonderful kids all those years. They were very cooperative, even though we spent time on the road and they could have gotten in each others' hair. They were 99% great.

FORSYTHE: How did you get the program started here at MTSU?

WRIGHT: I selected the singers by audition. I just collected the singers that I wanted and we rehearsed two or three times a week. It was three times most years, it had to be, we covered too much material. It was strictly by audition that I selected them.

FORSYTHE: What about the organization, itself?

WRIGHT: I did not have to go through any red tape, no. Those were wonderful days, because you didn't spend hours writing letters and reports. We simply did it and we rehearsed hard. Incidentally, we sang for WSM, recorded for many, many years a program of Christmas folk music. They would always broadcast it on Christmas Eve. It was such a compliment to hear that a number of people at WSM in Nashville felt that it wasn't really Christmas unless they had the Sacred Harp singers half hour of music. We appreciated that a lot. I have missed the fact that it has not been carried on since I was there. I think it was a great link between the person who knows nothing about music but just knows what they like to hear and the people who really knew quite a lot. Well, for thirty years the Sacred Harp singers did a lot of entertaining and we did serve locally at the school too. We played annually and semiannually doing special programs of folk music. Most of it was from the Sacred Harp hymnal, they were the Christmas songs.

FORSYTHE: When you sang on campus, Where did you sing?

WRIGHT: Old Tennessee room, and before that the old cafeteria, which later became the music building, before the Saunders building. Also in the auditorium, it had beautiful acoustics. It was just too bad that we couldn't save that auditorium.

FORSYTHE: Are you talking about where the business building is now?

WRIGHT: Yes, that was done later. Dr. Cope just didn't understand until it was too late. That auditorium had very special acoustics and could not be replaced, although we are very happy with the acoustics in the present music building.

FORSYTHE: When you went on road trips did you all go together or just go in separate cars?

WRIGHT: We went together and we stayed together because we did two or three concerts a day, or sometimes four. We sang at high schools, churches, colleges. We traveled in the MTSU van and in my car. I generally drove the van. Bob Abernathy often went with us and sometimes he drove the van and I drove my car. Sometimes one of my students drove my car, if I had an especially good driver, and often I did.

FORSYTHE: Would you all stay in a motel together?

WRIGHT: We'd stay in motels. We sometimes stayed in homes, but only in towns where some of the singers had families. In that case the families would arrange for us to stay with them and sometimes neighbors. Most of the time we stayed in motels, close to where we were going to sing at 8:00 the next morning.

FORSYTHE: Where did you all get the money to go on the road?

WRIGHT: The school backed us. It was budgeted, and I'm sure that the group more than paid for itself in the long run. We each paid for our own costume, the students did all those years.

FORSYTHE: What were your costumes like?

WRIGHT: It varied. We started out with formals, and that was only the first half of the first year. After that we had little checkered dresses with little white collars for the girls, and the boys had checkered shirts. They varied in color, but it was a pattern, so it made a good picture on the stage. We sang, of course, around a table, Madrigal style.

FORSYTHE: What is Madrigal style?

WRIGHT: The singers are seated on three sides of the table and the empty side of the table is towards the audience. It's similar to a horseshoe.

FORSYTHE: Did you all change costumes every year, or use the same ones?

WRIGHT: We would use the same one for three or four years and then we would think of something we thought was a little bit better. I can show you some. I've given away all but two of my costumes. I still have one little flowered, just above the ankle-length dress. In that case the boys wore blue shirts. It was an informal type thing, except for when the girls were in formals and then the boys wore a shirt,

tie, coat, and slacks. We sang unaccompanied, except for the folk instruments. It was all acappella, except for the ones were did with folk instruments.

FORSYTHE: Which instruments would you use?

WRIGHT: We used the dulcimer, the lap harp, the hammer dulcimer (for instrumental solos, not as an accompaniment) Irish harp was the other one.

FORSYTHE: Did you all ever make records?

WRIGHT: We made an awful lot of tapes. That is another thing that was done both with the concerts and with the Christmas music. We would tape our programs, normally at school. Several times we did it at WSM or some radio station. These were duplicated and used by radio stations all over the Southeast. We only made one disc recording, and I still have that.

FORSYTHE: What was the women's trio?

WRIGHT: That was a thing that went on for years, a soprano, mezzo-soprano and an alto. We did all sorts of show music. They also did regular concert music. Most of the women's trio and men's quartets were lighter, for banquet use and civic club programs, not really all Sacred. We sometimes mixed that with the Sacred Harp singers, they were usually the same people involved. The women's trio and the men's quartet did a lot individually, separate from the Harp singers, but also with the Harp singers.

FORSYTHE: What kind of costumes did they wear?

WRIGHT: It varied over the years. If it was a formal occasion, the girls wore formals. If it was an informal occasion, they simply tried to blend colors and style. The costumes were not really very often set. Sometimes we used the Harp costumes.

FORSYTHE: Did the women's trio go on the road?

WRIGHT: Only as a part of the Harp singers. We sang in Shelbyville and Chattanooga for Alumni banquets and that sort of thing, Knoxville, where ever. They did not go on the road as a concert entity, and neither did the men's quartet. They were each often featured with the acappella chorus and with the mixed chorus, which Neil directed.

FORSYTHE: The Men's quartet?

WRIGHT: Well, that just about covered it. It started that the same year, 1947 and it went on for years. I don't think the last few years, we used as may, but I could be wrong if I looked back in the programs, we could have done it straight through '77, but I do

not remember doing so. I think we did less and less of that after about twenty years.

[END TAPE]

FORSYTHE: This is a continuation of the interview with Margaret Wright by Regina Forsythe on Wednesday July 19, 1995. Would you like to talk about John Duke?

WRIGHT: John came to the faculty a number of years ago, I don't recall the year. He is an excellent saxophonist, clarinetist, and flutist. He has done a fine job of teaching and of playing. He organized the dance band. Now the students had organized a dance band and a small pop band in earlier days, but they ran that by themselves. Whenever they need a special effect or something, they would come to Neil and he made sure they got it. John organized the first real music department dance band. He conducted it and did a fine job. He was quite knowledgeable about show music and pop music and had arranged much of the music for early Opryland musicals.

FORSYTHE: What about senior recitals?

WRIGHT: Well, we started that quite early. The very first graduates, like Bob Womack, coming back from the war, worked towards their senior recital and private voice lessons. I played for many of these. Another faculty member keyboard person, Mary Scott, came to us sometime early in the game, and for many years taught piano and class piano, and did a lot of accompanying for student recitals. Sometimes the students would play for student recitals, but that was rather rare. . . I think you'll find, if you look back through the student recital programs.

FORSYTHE: Faculty recitals?

WRIGHT: Well, we tried to do one every year, each one of us. There was a time when I first came, that I did some piano recital work, and Neil certainly did, over the years, a number of baritone parts, I often accompanied for him. There have been many other faculty members, over the years, who have done recitals. Each one of the faculty tried to do at least one recital a year. That was good, because the more you play, the better teacher you are, in some instances. If you quit performing, you forget a lot of things that are very helpful to students. It is better to keep playing, singing, or whatever. We have tried to do that.

FORSYTHE: The Townsman?

WRIGHT: That was the dance band. Neil may have formed that, I really can't remember. I think he did before Johnny came, but it might be that Johnny founded the Townsman. These things are very hard to remember when you've taught a long time... the details.

FORSYTHE: The Band of Blue?

WRIGHT: The Band of Blue was first directed by Neil. I think the name might have been given by Joseph T. Smith. There were they days, when we first came, when the half-time show was done by a show band. The band did not do, particularly precision marching, although we tried to keep the line straight. There was a theme for each show, it was always a different show for each football game. That meant a lot of choreography for the majorettes and we had baton twirlers, and fire baton twirlers at times. It was not just a straight precision band. When Joe came, the pendulum had swung, and marching band was primarily precision marching and not much show music used. More Classics actually, "1812 Overture" adaptations, and things like that. Now as I watch the Contest of Champions each year, and see the high school bands, it blows my mind. Joe's influence has been very great, but he has also followed the trend, up until his retirement last year. Now, it is a combination of precision marching and show. It involves a great deal of choreography. I believe we had the first flag twirlers in the state, probably in the South. Flag twirlers were unknown, the Swiss flagatory, we managed to buy a set of the Swiss flags and trained the girls to use them. Now, there is a great deal of that and it is very beautifully done. It takes a choreographer to do it and that was my job. It was a simpler job in those days. Life was not as complex and neither was choreography.

FORSYTHE: What about the Pep Band?

WRIGHT: Well, the Pep Band I mentioned awhile ago. It was first started by students, Jack Allen, and I can't remember all the boys who did it, it was a small group. They pulled all sorts of antics, some not repeatable.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember some?

WRIGHT: No, I'm afraid I do not remember the details, Neil would have. They were under the auspices of the department, consequently he was responsible, when they went too far. They did not do that very often. They played for a lot of the basketball games. I can't remember the other athletic events they supported. They did add a lot of fun, and they had a ball.

FORSYTHE: Delta Omicron?

WRIGHT: I will have to go get my bracelet, to be exact about that.

FORSYTHE: What about Phi Mu Sigma?

WRIGHT: Well, Phi Mu Sigma was both men and women. It was the predecessor of Phi Mu Alpha and of Delta Omicron. I can't remember when. The men's group at that time was Phi Mu Alpha, I think they are both integrated now.

I should talk about the Varsity Choir if I have not. The ones I can tell you about if I go get my bracelet. The AGO stands for the American Guild of Organists. The String Ensemble was Rubye Taylor Sanders' group, but later after she retired, there was a trio of faculty members who named themselves the Sanders String Trio. The members were pianist Ray Bills, cellist Jean Bills, I think maybe Lawrence Harvin was the violinist. We were the seventh student organ guild in the United States. Delta Omicron was an international group. Neil was a Phi Mu Alpha at Peabody. Our son was a Phi Mu Alpha, here. I'm not sure if it is integrated now. The Saundarian Society was named for E. May Saunders and it preceded the Music Educators Student Group. I thought we had already talked about the University Community Orchestra?

FORSYTHE: No

WRIGHT: Let me get that bracelet. [She is talking about a charm bracelet, which has various charms representing the years she was involved with certain activities.] Tennessee Outstanding Musician, First Presbyterian Youth Choir, Teacher of the Year. . . This one came from Governor Harrington, the Harp sang for him a number of times. He gave me this charm and you can only get them from a governor, that was June 23, 1970. March 26, 1965 is the date on the Delta Omicron charm.

FORSYTHE: What is the Delta Omicron?

WRIGHT: Delta Omicron is an international women's honorary fraternity. I believe it is integrated as of several years ago now. Men are also members. It was founded some years ago, at Cincinnati Conservatory, I believe. It is one of the outstanding professional groups for women musicians.

FORSYTHE: Let's talk about the Varsity Choir.

WRIGHT: Well, Neil founded the Varsity Choir, not too many years after we came. It must have been in the late 1940s. At first they did oratorios only, in the fall and in the spring they did a different oratorio. We met at night at first, then on Saturday mornings for rehearsal. It was a soprano, alto, tenor, bass, chorus. Members were selected from the larger chorus. Later, they did operas for many years, I think 18. The first opera was "Caballaria Aurusticana," the second was "Palatii," they are both fairly short operas, often done in one evening. After that we branched out and did a number of other operas, which you will have record of in the programs. We still did oratorio once a year and an opera once a year. It took a lot of rehearsal to put the opera together, with the singers and with the choruses. We had children's choruses in "Carmen," we did "Carmen" twice. We did "Marriage of Figgaro" twice. Our son, the older boy, was one of the minor leads in it the second time. He was in the children's chorus for a while.

FORSYTHE: Who selected the program?

WRIGHT: Neil chose the opera and the oratorio. He always chose the work by what he had to work with. He did not want to import lead singers. We possibly could have done that, but he felt that the students should have the experience. I think they will tell you now, in later years, that it was very valuable experience to sing the leads themselves, rather than being just in the chorus and having outside professionals come in and do the leads. We never did hire outside leads. Memphis State started doing operas, a little bit after we did, but they brought in their leads. Neil preferred to stick to having our students do our leads.

FORSYTHE: The choir?

WRIGHT: The choir was the large group. They traveled once a year in the Spring, doing a tour of the high schools, one day at a time and we would come back home at night on two buses.

FORSYTHE: What was the difference between the Varsity Choir and the regular choir?

WRIGHT: The regular choir did regular straight concert literature, some of it sacred, for the first group, and secular for the last groups. The Varsity Choir was a much smaller group of about 36-40 singers and they did the oratorios and operas. There was a big difference, although there was cross-over, of course. The Varsity Choir was chosen from the regular choir.

FORSYTHE: The University Community Orchestra?

WRIGHT: That had been going on for some years before we came. Mrs. Rubye Taylor Sanders, a violinist and our violin teacher here, formed that group. She used people from the community and students from the college. She continued to play in that orchestra. I played cello and timpani, whenever they needed me. I had played timpani for the Nashville Symphony before I married, when it was just a community orchestra. There were very few professionals in the early Nashville Symphony. I enjoyed playing with them. Then Rubye started bringing in guest conductors for the concerts. She would largely train the orchestra, but the guest conductor would be here for several rehearsals and conduct the concert.

FORSYTHE: The chorus?

WRIGHT: The chorus and the choir are the same group.

FORSYTHE: The majorettes?

WRIGHT: I did the majorette training for Neil when he had the band the first few years that we were here. I brought in the Swiss flags. For, I believe 13 years after Joe Smith was here, I also did the majorettes training. I enjoyed it, it was a lot of fun, they were great kids.

FORSYTHE: The AGO?

WRIGHT: We had the seventh AGO, American Guild of Organists, for students in the United States. It was formed around 1948. It took a core of eight to ten organists students to found it. The you asked permission from the National American Guild of Organists for you charter. I still have that charter among my souvenirs. We met at least twice a month, and visited various organs, and the students had a chance to play them. We listened to a lot of organ recordings. It was an enrichment program for the students. They certainly seemed to enjoy it. We often went to Nashville for recitals of guest organists. Robert Baker. . . The very famous Norman hymns is based on a Sacred Harp tune. That is why my friendship with the outstanding man from Salt Lake City, the organist, Alexander Shrine, was so dear. When I met him in Nashville he was asking around if anyone knew anything about Sacred Harp, and of course, some of my organists were in Sacred Harp and went crazy, yelling all over the church, where he was giving the concert, for me to come. That is how I first became acquainted with him, and he was here many times after that, in concert. He was an amazing man. He was still playing organ recitals, many from memory, when he was in his 90's.

FORSYTHE: The Concert Choir?

WRIGHT: The Concert Choir is the same thing as the choir and the chorus.

FORSYTHE: The String Ensemble?

WRIGHT: The String Ensemble was lead by Miss Rubye Saunders for many years. She would use both community and college players because the string program has been hard to developed in Tennessee. I think it is certainly, with the Suzuki method, getting there now. After Miss Rubye retired and maybe in her last few years teaching, we did not have a string ensemble. Three of the faculty members- -Raymond Bills pianist, Jean Bills cellist, and Lawrence Harvin was the violinist with the faculty group that was called the Sanders Ensemble, in honor of Rubye Taylor Sanders. She was still living at that time.

FORSYTHE: The Saundarian Society?

WRIGHT: That was a music education group. Miss E. May formed it and they named it for her. That was the predecessor of the music educators student group, which was sponsored by the music educators National Association. Members were band directors and choir directors for both primary grades and high school. They listened to a lot of music recording, went to concerts, read papers, and reviewed books on music.

FORSYTHE: Phi Mu Sigma?

WRIGHT: Phi Mu Sigma was the music honor society. It was a local group. It prepared for the later petitioning for Phi Mu Alpha for the men and Delta Omicron for the women. This is the Omicron Si chapter of Delta Omicron.

FORSYTHE: The Treble Coral?

WRIGHT: That was after my time there. Anne Moss Bets directed it and probably formed it. She was one of our graduates, she came back here to teach after she earned her masters at Louisiana State. She also directed some of the women's coral groups and maybe some of the mixed chorus groups. That was after we retired. She taught private voice also.

FORSYTHE: What other ensembles were there?

WRIGHT: There were also wind, brass, and woodwind ensembles of various kinds. These were sponsored by the brass teachers, like Horace Beasley and Tom Hutchinson. The woodwind ensembles were sponsored by faculty like John Duke, other woodwind players.

FORSYTHE: What was the Music Educators National Conference?

WRIGHT: That is what I was referring to when I said that the Saundarian Society was a predecessor for it.

FORSYTHE: What was the Tennessee Music Educators Conference?

WRIGHT: That is a group of mostly music education people. It has been around, I think, since the late 1800s. Most of our faculty have belonged. Neil and I certainly belonged to it as long as we taught. We had to drop something, so in favor of staying with the Music Teachers National Association, which Neil served as state president one year, we dropped it. Jerry Perkins has served as Southeastern president of MTNA. Earl Hinton has served as state president of Music Educators Association. It is what the name applies. It is people who have been trained to teach in grade school, middle school, or high school. Conservatory type musicians and college professors belong to Music Teachers National Association.

FORSYTHE: Fanny Battle Social Workers?

WRIGHT: Well, that is a Nashville group. That is not connected with the school. I did belong to it when I came back from the war for a couple of years. It is a social work organization, not connected with MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Tennessee Education Association?

WRIGHT: That is a group composed of all the public school teachers and college teachers in Tennessee. It is part of the NEA National Educators Association. They normally

met only once a year in the Spring. We did a lot of programs for the state group. It is not music only, the NEA is all subjects.